



## Summary of some of the Positive Findings from the Local Authority Review September 2016

### **Positive findings of review on the effectiveness of leadership and management.**

- In the 6 months since the last LA review, the Headteacher has ensured that the recommendations made by the team have been taken forward and considerable progress has been made in embedding new systems and monitoring their impact.
- Senior leaders are now confident in their roles and they have put robust accountability systems in place to test the effectiveness of their actions and the impact of new policies.
- Considerable care has been taken to consult and involve staff in new developments, and this has helped to create a greater sense of teamwork and shared ambition.
- Staff morale is more positive, and increases in pupil numbers indicate that the school is gaining a good reputation in the local community. Pupils say that the school expects more of them in all aspects of school life. They also recognise that there is more consistency in the application of these expectations now so they have a clear framework within which to learn.
- There has been considerable investment in providing well-tailored CPD that has helped staff to develop their teaching and leadership skills. There is also more emphasis in sharing good practice across the school.
- Middle leaders have good subject knowledge and are beginning to develop their role in monitoring and evaluation. They are benefitting from CPD and from partnerships that have been established with other schools, and are committed to making improvements. Middle leaders have recently produced their first development plans that are subject to scrutiny by the SLT. Once these are agreed they will help to provide a clear framework for their work. Further involvement in data analysis and monitoring the impact of activity will help them to become more confident in their roles.
- The school development plan sets out clearly the priorities for development. The LA review team found that these show a very close correlation with the areas for improvement that were identified during this review, indicating that leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of education in the school.
- The safeguarding policy has been updated to reflect the latest national guidance and staff training is also regularly updated to ensure that awareness of safeguarding is high across the school. Notices around the school remind all members of the community and visitors of the school's vigilant stance on safeguarding.
- The curriculum offer for the school's most vulnerable students has been revised and updated, in order to provide them with learning experiences that better meet their needs, along with positive progression routes. Effective liaison with parents, alternative providers and local colleges ensures that progress is carefully monitored and that these pupils have the maximum opportunities to gain formal qualifications.
- Governors continue to provide strong support and challenge to leaders and have a very good understanding of strengths and areas for further development. The school's website is easy to access and provides a comprehensive range of useful information.

### **Positive findings of review on quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

- Nineteen part lessons were observed during the review, with ten of these undertaken jointly with senior leaders. There was a good level of agreement in the strengths and areas for

development in these lessons. Visits were also made to lessons in 'The Bridge' (provided for vulnerable pupils) and to Respite Centre (internal behaviour management.)

- The lessons observed demonstrated some examples of very effective teaching and learning, which was well planned to challenge pupils of differing abilities. Where teachers ensure that pupils fully understand concepts and methodology, progress is good and pupils engage well in activities. Pupils would benefit from more opportunities to take a more active role by providing ideas and extended contributions to the lesson. Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive and the atmosphere around the school is calm and purposeful.
- Teaching Assistants are playing an important part in supporting learning in many lessons and there is evidence of differentiation by task being used more often.
- The use of examples of effective modelling by some teachers in some lessons really helped pupils to understand what is required of them. There is also increasing evidence of the effective use of a range of resources, including IT, to enhance learning.
- The work seen was well presented, indicating that pupils take a pride in their work.
- Books showed evidence that marking is regular and that the revised marking policy is being used more systematically across the school; pupils say that they find it helpful. Pupils have also responded positively to the early introduction of KS4 courses.

#### **Positive findings of review on personal development, behaviour and welfare**

- Feedback from all groups of pupils about their experiences in school was consistently positive.
- They all feel safe and agree that behaviour in lessons and around the school is more consistently good.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying in school and that any incidents are addressed promptly by staff.
- They feel well supported in their learning and personal needs, and now understand and appreciate the systems that are in place to promote good attitudes to learning.
- The school's monitoring of all aspects of Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare is much more robust so leaders are able to evaluate the impact of their actions and then respond accordingly.
- A group of teachers have been involved in a working party to review the behaviour policy, working with SLT members, and school records indicate that behaviour is improving and that rewards and sanctions are increasingly effective.
- Teachers are applying the Attitude To Learning system more consistently and there is rightly more emphasis on individual leaders and departments taking responsibility for behaviour in lessons. Pupils say that the systems are clear and fair and there are reminders in every classroom.
- Observations of behaviour around the school endorse the feedback from pupils and monitoring undertaken by leaders. During the review day movement around the school was calm and orderly. There are some areas of the site that restrict the flow of pupils, but these are well supervised by staff in order to maintain safety and order.
- Older pupils also help with supervision and are highly vigilant. Outside at breaks and lunchtime pupils were seen to interact well with each other and informal feedback from groups of pupils of different ages again indicated that they feel safe.
- Staff supervision is evident in all key areas of the site.
- Senior leaders have recognised that improving attendance is a key priority for the school.
- Actions to improve the effectiveness of rewards and sanctions systems for attendance are underway, with internal procedures refocused to promote the earliest possible intervention. The involvement of the Local Authority Education Welfare Service service is also a positive step forward.

- Welfare systems have been strengthened with the Head of Year role refocused.
- Staff training focused on issues associated with pupils' welfare and safety take place regularly and these are supplemented by regular updates through briefings and pupil support meetings.

### **Summary**

- There is clear evidence of improvements in the provision made by the school.
- Senior leadership is more robust and data and monitoring systems are more developed.
- The quality of teaching and learning is improving.
- Systems to manage behaviour are greatly improved and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning and the overall climate in the school.
- The recommendations shown below link very closely to the priorities already set out in the School Development Plan and this indicates that senior leaders have an accurate grasp of priorities for improvement.

### **Recommendations**

In order to further improve overall effectiveness the school should:

1. Further develop the roles of middle leaders, ensuring that they have a clear overview of the strengths and priorities for development in their areas of responsibility. Ensure that they are held responsible for evaluating the impact of actions taken on outcomes of key groups of pupils and for improving outcomes.
2. Further strengthen the analysis and presentation of data so that it provides a clear picture of the progress made by groups of pupils and by the school as a whole in both academic and pastoral aspects.
3. Ensure that close attention is paid to closing gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.
4. Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - Continuing to develop the skills of teachers through Continuing Professional Development opportunities, both within and beyond the school.
  - Increasing the participation of pupils in their own learning.
  - Using modelling techniques to help pupils to consolidate their learning.
  - Ensuring that the pitch of lessons activities is tailored to the needs of pupils of differing abilities.
5. Improve attendance to ensure that overall absence and persistent absence are at least in line with national averages.