



North Tyneside Council

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT VISIT REPORT

School: (1100) Moorbridge

LA: North Tyneside

Date: 23/05/2022, 10:00

Adviser: Gina White

Term: Summer : 25/04/2022 - 21/07/2022

Focus: Summer SDP Visit

Headteacher: Karen Croskery

Attendees:

Latest Ofsted Grade: Good

LA Category: SLA Level 2

Summary of Visit

During the Summer SDP visit English and geography lessons were visited, English books and the books from pupils receiving additional literacy intervention support were reviewed. Discussions took place with a group of 3 girls and a group of 4 boys. Meetings were held with the headteacher and staff responsible for literacy and numeracy interventions, the safeguarding, attendance and behaviour lead.

Curriculum

- Many more pupils than usual joined the school with significant disaffection and learning difficulties this year. This is particularly the case with pupils who join in Year 11. Pupils typically enter with very low reading ages. Modifications to the timetable to create more time for literacy and maths has helped pupils to make stronger progress.
- The use of specialist staff who are skilled in identifying the delays or gaps in pupils' learning, and in providing support tailored to individual needs, has led to rapid gains in pupils reading, writing and spelling.
- The school's focus on reading is well-established and consistent. It has been enhanced and developed further through partnership with the National Literacy Trust. Teachers are drawing effectively upon training and literacy research. Staff read to pupils each day in a timetabled session. A wide range of reading material is provided in the school library and in classrooms. Book reviews by staff and pupils show that reading is enjoyed.
- Specialist vocabulary and subject specific terms are identified in every subject and Key Stage 4 course. They are explained clearly in lessons to enable all pupils to understand and participate meaningfully. This work strengthens and supports pupils learning and provides them with the knowledge needed to interpret exam questions that require them to 'research', 'recommend' or 'describe'.
- The curriculum is becoming more carefully sequenced to build pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils say that the extra help they receive in lessons together with work that is structured to their needs is helping them to make progress.
- Work in pupils' English books shows a sequence of tasks that develop and consolidate pupils' understanding of plot, characters and events. Pupils books also showed significant development in their participation, ability to write at length, organise their thoughts and express them clearly.
- The range of work across the year shows that pupils are following an English curriculum that is rich in content and is in keeping with the expectations of the National Curriculum.
- The maths curriculum has developed during the year. Teachers have a much clearer focus on diagnosing where a child is struggling and they are able to meet individual needs using a wider range of approaches. Greater depth and consistency to teaching and learning are evident in pupils books and in lessons.
- Teaching about relationships and sex education is firmly embedded within the school's comprehensive PSHE programme.
- All essential content is carefully structured to support pupils in recognising and dealing with immediate concerns around relationships, such as peer pressure, to developing a wider understanding of equality, racism, different cultures and faiths.
- Pupils say that the opportunity to learn in depth about topics and to hear different views is helpful. Their books show lessons have clear learning intentions, and a consistent emphasis on using appropriate vocabulary, spelling and presentation. Pupils capture key points well and are increasingly responding with their personal views.
- A stronger focus on what pupils learn is starting to emerge in curriculum planning. In lessons teachers are using recap sessions and quizzes to check what pupils have learned and to identify gaps in knowledge from previous key stages.
- All the required information about the content of the curriculum in every subject has yet to be published on the school website.

Safeguarding

- Keeping children safe remains the school's highest priority and a culture of safeguarding is firmly embedded. The school is safe and secure and undertakes all statutory checks when recruiting staff to work with children. The school's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are clear and are easily available for reference on the school website.
- An increase in the designated safeguarding teams, together with thorough training for all staff, are enabling the school to cope with the significant increase in concerns and referrals that have escalated this year.
- A case, reviewed on CPOMS, showed that incidents are securely logged, all procedures are followed and children receive swift support. Emerging concerns are escalated and the Designated Safeguarding Lead is persistent and works effectively with external agencies and services to ensure children and families receive timely support.
- All pupils are confident that there is someone to talk to if they are worried or have concerns. School leaders note that the number of 'disclosures' tend to increase immediately after the weekend, when events may have occurred that unsettle or worry some pupils.
- Discussions with single sex groups found that boys and girls are aware of sexual harassment and what to do if they are asked to send inappropriate images online or if they receive them. Boys are more aware of issues such as using appropriate words and language in conversations and both boys and girls understand about consent.

Leadership and management including governance

- The headteacher and senior leaders have a thorough understanding of what is required to enable the school to recover and develop following the pandemic. Support for safeguarding and mental health issues has been extended to meet the significant needs of pupils who joined the school this year.
- The school has moved forward on every priority in the school's sharply focussed development plan. The quality of education is much stronger as a result of the work that has taken place in planning the curriculum, developing teaching, and identifying and supporting pupils who arrive at the school with significant gaps in literacy and numeracy.
- Developments have been secured through training and the use of research to inform practice, particularly in relation to how reading is taught, and trauma based approaches that are supporting pupils personal development and behaviour. The middle leadership team is much more securely developed.
- Each of the Early Career Teachers (ECT's) who have recently joined the school has a mentor and they also have a well-established programme of support with regular input from the local authority.
- The school has retained the vast majority of staff during the difficulties of the last few years. Throughout this year staff have remained positive, patient and enthusiastic and some have said they love working at the school. This comment from a member of staff in the summer term is typical; "It's hard work but you see how pupils progress, especially in their behaviour, and you feel you are really making a difference".
- Leaders have been mindful of the impact on staff welfare and workload. Coaching and feedback, along with setting aside time each day to support planning and marking, are helping staff to manage the workload.
- The management committee exercise good governance and oversight of the school's work. Members of the committee have continued virtual visits to see for themselves the work taking place in their specialist areas such as safeguarding and check the school's work to keep pupils safe.
- Parents views about the school and the difference it is making to their children are overwhelmingly positive in recent surveys. Many have written comments and thanks to show their appreciation of all that the school has done to support their children, and family.
- The school is well placed to meet the challenge of the forthcoming Ofsted inspection as a result of the work undertaken this year. Challenges ahead include ensuring all staff can talk about progression and sequencing of the curriculum and the impact it has on pupils' learning more and remembering more.
- Challenges ahead include meeting the expectations set out in the DfE's White Paper to extend the length of the school week by 2030. Plans to increase this incrementally, beginning in the autumn term 2022, are being considered.

Behaviour and attendance including exclusions

- Many pupils have experienced much upheaval and chaos in families during the pandemic and the number of children who have been taken into care has increased. The school's work to train all staff in trauma informed techniques and practices has helped pupils to regulate their emotions and support their positive mental health.
- Pupils are mostly settled and calm as they move around school. They participate in lessons; undertaking tasks, responding to questions and listening to others. Pupils say they are enjoying a wider range of subjects than they did prior to coming to Moorbridge. They are achieving success and can see this reflected in the positive written and verbal feedback they receive from staff.
- The school's behaviour policy and rewards system are applied consistently by staff. Key Stage 3 boys explained, "You have to earn them and put effort in to get rewards". Bullying is rare. Pupils say that sometimes events that happen outside or over the internet are brought into school. Staff are quick to tackle such issues and are skilled in using strategies such as restorative conversations to diffuse situations.
- In discussions pupils observed that, "most pupils behave well, unless they have a bad day". They note that, "this doesn't happen every day". Incidents have decreased considerably since the start of the year. When a pupil becomes angry they are managed swiftly, calmly and safely by staff. Pupils say this helps them to feel safe at school.
- Fixed term exclusions have risen in the last two weeks in response to an outbreak of damage to school property and smoking. Both problems have been resolved. The school rarely needs to exclude a pupil twice.
- Covid has continued to affect attendance during the Autumn and Spring terms and especially the school's work to establish the habit of pupils regularly and consistently attending school. Attendance has fluctuated throughout the year, but it has remained consistently well above the published weekly national average for alternative provision.
- The school's latest attendance review shows that 85% of pupils have improved their attendance compared to their baseline and 81% of pupils have met their latest attendance targets. Vulnerable pupils who are in the care of the Local Authority, and those who have an EHC plan have the highest rates of attendance. Despite a wide range of strategies the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, who are supported by Pupil Premium funding fell below the school average. Further investigation is recommended to determine what is needed to improve attendance further for this group.