



# SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT VISIT REPORT

**School:** (4163) Harrow Way Community School

**LA:** Hampshire

**Date:** 27/04/2021, 09:00

**Adviser:** Beverley Murtagh

**Focus:** CONFIDENTIAL - LLPR

**Reference:** Inspection & Advice LLPR2020-21

**Attendees:** Headteacher, Deputy headteachers,  
Assistant headteacher, Chair of governors, SENDCo,  
Curriculum leaders for history & technology

## Actions

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**Who:** Senior Leadership Team, Subjects leaders

**Timescale:** 24/09/2021

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### Action

To continue the curriculum development work by providing further opportunities for middle leaders to share potential cross-curricular links.

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**Who:** Senior Leadership Team, Curriculum leaders

**Timescale:** 23/07/2021

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### Action

To further link up the citizenship, PSHE & relationships education provision to enhance personal development for all pupils particularly after the recent periods of lockdown.

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## Summary of Main Findings

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There is good leadership capacity across the school and the programme of professional development for staff is a strength which will support continued school improvement. Leaders have a very clear picture of the strengths and areas for development. There are some strengths in science and other subjects have also shown good improvement recently like history. Some good appointments and careful planning will also support more rapid change in other subjects like geography and technology. English is an area which needs to improve consistency across the team.

The school is very outward looking and leaders keep abreast of recent educational research about what works effectively. However, disadvantaged pupils remain a key group for further improvement as a priority.

The school is **low priority** for LA support.

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## Activity reason

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LA Funded

## Activity focus

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Annual review

## Context

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The school was last inspected with a short Ofsted inspection in April 2017. It remained a good school. Areas for improvement were:

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' achievement in English improves so that it matches the strong progress in other subjects
- disadvantaged pupils and boys continue to make rapid progress so their outcomes are equal to others
- attendance continues to improve for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

In more recent times (October 2020) Ofsted also undertook a monitoring visit to look at remote education during the last period of national lockdown. This was not part of the usual inspection programme and no gradings were issued. Inspectors noted that the school has plans in place to deliver the full curriculum remotely if, in the future, the school is fully or partially closed because of COVID-19.

For the LLP review it was agreed with the Headteacher that alongside the usual interviews the LLP would speak to the curriculum leaders for history and technology as both are areas of the curriculum which are rapidly developing. Oral feedback was given to the Headteacher and Chair of governors on the day.

This visit was conducted remotely due the current restrictions in place due to the global pandemic.

## Commentary

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Leaders have ensured that personal, social and health education (PSHE) is valued and it has always had lessons specifically on the timetable. This ensures that pupils have regular opportunities to talk about important issues in a safe environment. Leaders have responded to recent national concerns raised on social media around sexual harassment and reminded all pupils about how they can report any concerns. Leaders ensure that staff protect themselves following the school procedures and different aspects of the safeguarding culture in the school are monitored on a rolling basis. There are a small number of pupils who are on part-time timetables but they have been done in consultation with the LA and staff keep track of their attendance and academic progress. Attendance has been an improving trend. Behaviour systems have been refined and relationships across the school are strong. Exclusions have reduced over time and the year leader assistants are able to be very proactive in supporting any behaviour issues very quickly and so this pattern of low exclusions should persist now.

Staff used a combination of live and recorded lessons to support pupils while they had to remain at home. Leaders changed arrangements for the second period of lockdown two and found that engagement with pupils' own teachers was so much better. The department teams worked well together on providing remote learning especially as it was a steep learning curve for some. Since pupils have returned to school staff have ensured that they felt welcome and settled quickly back into school routines. Improvement has continued during this period. Now is more teasing out gaps for pupils and ensuring this is addressed in lessons. Engagement was good generally although leaders are aware it was slightly lower for some pupils in Year 8. The pupils are really pleased to be back. The Year 7 transition work was done remotely and they are still in bubbles. They will work socially with groups as the main issues were around that not the learning necessarily. The year leader assistants are very proactive around the site now to keep a watch on individuals who they are concerned about. The OAK academy online resources can now be used for pupils who can't access lessons for any reason.

Progress 8 was positive in 2018 and has remained broadly in line with national outcomes for both progress and attainment overall. In 2020 (centre assessed grades) mathematics attainment continued to improve as did some of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) outcomes. However, progress in English will be something to continue to work on. Leaders are aware, and are working with staff to provide strong challenge in lessons and to further improve outcomes for boys and high attainers. Disadvantaged pupils are also a key group for further improvement.

One has to exercise caution in interpreting the data for certain groups like pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) as some of the cohorts are very small (10 pupils in 2019 for example). The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) has developed the SEN drive with student profiles. They have the broad area of need indicated with hyperlinks to give more information about pupils' specific needs. There is also a fortnightly SEN bulletin which keeps staff up to date and issues key reminders. The SEN team have run team meetings with a group of staff or made videos about the individual needs. The SENCo has done learning walks with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and they observed with student profiles in hand to check how the information was being used in lessons. The SENCo does follow up with staff. They also monitor behaviour issues. The focus on "do now" tasks are helpful and the knowledge organisers support SEN pupils. The school emphasis is rightly on high quality teaching for all. 50% of Teaching Assistant(TA) time is in running interventions. They have a Scheme of work for 20 week interventions. They have reviewed TA deployment and ensured there are effective interventions in Key Stage 3 (KS3). They have done pre and post testing to show impact. Attendance for this group is 93%. A lot of the TAs are key SEN champions for these pupils and support them for mentoring. They are very good at communicating as an inclusion team with the other staff and pupils.

Pre-covid the team ran a coffee morning for parents with demos and sharing resources and these will be done termly once covid restrictions are over. Year 11 are allocated a TA to ensure they have access to all the revision resources and are organising themselves. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) governor meets the SENDCo once a term. There are Teaching and learning briefings on Wednesday morning and the SENDCo addresses topics there a couple of times a year. SEN in a nutshell is an overview of the cohort data which is available for all staff with areas of need for year groups. The bulletin focuses more on individuals. They have got some additional funding to provide some bespoke teaching for key groups of pupils in Key Stage 4 (KS4) now from Test Valley.

In 2019 the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils were below expectations. This is a big focus for leaders. They have carefully tracked attendance with daily updates to key staff. Members of SLT are involved for the different year groups with a strong oversight. Staff have also consulted parents re any specific barriers to further achievement. Work has been done with staff re mindset and shifting attitudes as senior leaders feel that this is how real change can happen. The focus is not on tips and tricks but on making classroom practice more responsive to individual pupils' needs. Senior staff did academic monitoring in 2019-2020 and met with parents as part of that work. Other staff are now involved and this has been further refined to look at some smaller key groups with tailored work (high attaining disadvantaged pupils and also a group of disaffected pupils). This work is now well-focused and as a result is having a greater impact according to senior staff. There is a clear strategy in place for the catch-up funding which is publicly available. There is a clear handbook for teachers and staff are invited to become part of this work which adds status. Governors are also involved in monitoring impact of the work in this area. Leaders are optimistic that outcomes will improve and certainly there is a good strategic plan and strong oversight now of the work to support disadvantaged pupils.

A growing group of middle leaders have grasped the need to carefully sequence their curriculum and as a result the Key Stage 3 work is now providing a better experience for pupils which gives a good grounding for further Key Stage 4 qualifications if appropriate. There are some subjects where further support is needed as they are a bit behind. Senior leaders have taken a long term view in developing the strategy for curriculum change. Leaders have researched extensively and have given staff a shared language and drip fed ideas to stimulate thinking. The ongoing professional development of staff is a priority for leaders. Consequently, staff are ambitious for all students and are aiming to address individual pupil's needs so they can flourish. Having established the key drivers and vision, the important work has been to break the curriculum down to the detail. Middle Leaders can talk about the sequencing of the curriculum and this ties in with work on cognition and retrieval. This has given clarity about the need to really build the KS3 curriculum. Leaders normally do in-depth department reviews but this has been on hold due to the lockdown periods. Leaders are working with another leading organisation and have looked at the curriculum in schools that do well for disadvantaged pupils. All models are shared. The challenge for senior leaders is the theoretical background but it needs to be practical for middle leaders so they can make changes quickly at classroom level. They are keen that middle leaders are part of wider communities and ensure they are networking to have further professional dialogue outside the school. Senior leaders are well-versed in the recent educational thinking about what works to improve outcomes and they have focused their plans on some key areas to shift thinking.

The science department have a trend of positive outcomes and are very consistent in their practice. They constantly review their curriculum. They are also great at adaptive teaching. They plan collaboratively and they are clear about the building blocks. Other strengths are the performing arts (although this involves smaller numbers). History has a rising trend. They appointed a lead practitioner and allowed time for curriculum planning development. This has helped build understanding for the curriculum leader. Art and photography are also doing well and support developing talent. They have built in fundamental skills in art and many go on to do A' level. English are now becoming more consistent as a team. The curriculum is getting stronger and they now need to get it taught consistently. They are looking carefully at boys performance to push for even greater progress. The maths team are very stable and outcomes are stable but they need to get more consistency across the team. Another big piece of work is going on for citizenship and PHSE and relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) and ensuring it is a coherent and sequenced curriculum to support pupils' personal development. They have the curriculum time and specialists to support this effectively. Leaders feel this will be key to settling pupils and looking after their personal development given the time they have missed at school over this year. The well-being of staff and pupils is a priority for the leadership team and the governors.

Modern languages as a subject has underperformed but is now on a journey of improvement. Leaders are trying to broaden the number of pupils who opt for languages in KS4. There has been a good focus on getting the component skills right from year 7. The development of retrieval skills is also a vital part of successful language learning which they are working on. Design technology has had some fluctuation in recent years but the LLP met with the leader who is passionate about driving through improvements and is working through the new GCSE requirements. The teaching of practical subjects has been challenging during periods of lockdown. The history leader is also very clear about the sequencing and progression in the history curriculum. Leaders will use the expertise there now to support improvements in geography.

Leaders have produced some robust documentation which shows they know the school well and are ambitious for all learners. The senior staff have spent time really getting to grips with their own thinking about the curriculum and have been measured in how they will involve other leaders in the school to further drive whole school development. The school self evaluation document is concise and indicates clear areas of strength and areas for further development. The senior team work effectively and have built up capacity among the middle leader tier. The Headteacher is very strong at spotting early talent and providing further development opportunities so that there is growing capacity across the school. The school rates itself as Good overall and the conversations with the LLP would concur with this judgement. There have been some excellent appointments of new governors who bring a wide variety of professional expertise to ensure that leaders are challenged and supported effectively.

## **Funding**

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LA Funded