

# SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT VISIT REPORT

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

**LA:** Hampshire

**Date:** 08/02/2022, 08:30

**Adviser:** Beverley Murtagh

**Focus:** CONFIDENTIAL - LLPR

**Reference:** Inspection & Advice LLPR2021-2022

**Advisers:**

**Attendees:** Headteacher, Deputy Headteachers, Assistant Headteacher, SENCo, Careers advisor, SLE attendance, a group of middle leaders, two groups of pupils

## Actions

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### Curriculum/Teaching and Learning

To continue to support teachers in refining their pedagogy and planning for mixed-ability groupings.

**Assignee** Beverley Murtagh

**Due Date** 23/07/2022

**Status**

Incomplete

## Summary of Main Findings

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The school continues to have strong leadership capacity across all levels. The senior team are consultative and ensure that any new ideas are well thought out and researched before implementation. Leaders are very conscious of staff wellbeing. The school is well organised with clear systems for review and quality assurance. They seek the views of staff, parents and pupils in determining next steps. Governors are active and hold leaders to account and find ways to get to know what is happening at school level.

They have continued to refine the curriculum offer and the way it is delivered. Staff are well supported with a wide range of development opportunities. The school leaders ensure they visit other schools so they remain outward-looking.

**The School remains LOW PRIORITY for LA support.**

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## Activity reason

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Annual LLPR

## Activity focus

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To look at the tutor reading programme and visit a number of lessons to see how teachers are implementing strategies to challenge pupils. This is in addition to the usual LLP activities.

## Context

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The school was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2017 for a short inspection and was judged to remain a good school.

Areas for further development included:

- 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.

The school also had an Ofsted monitoring visit in October 2020 as part of their work to review how England's education system was managing the return to full time education after an extended break in formal schooling due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As well as the usual activities for the LLP visit, the Headteacher arranged discussions with some middle leaders, two groups of pupils representing the different key stages, a discussion about careers provision and some lesson visits to look at teaching and learning in a range of subjects. There was also an opportunity to see the tutor reading programme in action.

The LLP was accompanied on this visit by an experienced Challenge Partner who is a deputy headteacher at another Hampshire Secondary school. Full feedback was given to the Headteacher at the end of the visit. The written report should be shared with the governing body when published.

## Commentary

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### Impact of Leadership

It is clear that the SEF is a document that is constantly developed within the leadership team, and it carefully paints a clear picture and is an accurate reflection of the many strengths and the key areas for improvement. The new behaviour policy is clear and simple for all stakeholders to follow, and pupils and staff felt it was effective. Leaders want to ensure that pupils can make the most of every minute in their lessons and reduce any low level disruption to learning. Staff engaged with research and surveyed the staff and pupils before making the changes required. The needs of all students are considered, and students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) have also been taken into account in responding to incidents in a restorative way.

The Headteacher has over staffed in both English and maths, which has had a positive effect. This has helped with curriculum planning and workload and enabled teachers to share good practice and engage in deeper dialogue around strategies for teaching and learning. Leaders have a strategic plan covering three years, and distil the first year of this into the current whole school priorities. The priorities for this year include the development of the reading programme, continued development of the curriculum and pedagogy and the reduction of any lost time in lessons due to behaviour.

Leaders have regular processes in place to quality assure all aspects of the school's work. The quality assurance process for middle leaders is robust, with the schools 'METAL' process in place to support middle leaders' knowledge of their subject. The leadership team are proud of the enrichment and extracurricular activities currently being offered to students, which are very varied. It is obvious the leadership team care about their staff and their wellbeing, and this is at the forefront of decision making.

There is one Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and two deputies who triage the referrals which come in via the electronic communication system. Other members of the senior leadership team (SLT) have also completed safeguarding training. There is always someone available to give advice to staff and talk through any concerns they wish to raise. Staff also have regular updates to their safeguarding training including slots at the weekly staff briefing. Extra training was provided around the topic of peer to peer harm for both staff and pupils. Leaders track data carefully to pick up any trends but currently any incidents have been "one-offs".

Additional resources have also been added to the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme to cover sexual health and this year some of this was tweaked to include discussions around sexual harassment. The pupils who were interviewed felt very safe at school and could give examples of how they are taught to be safe online. They felt that the house system vertical groupings encouraged good relationships between different age groups so that older pupils look out for younger ones. The Chair of governors takes the lead on safeguarding matters. There was a virtual check-in this week and the Deputy headteacher updates governors each half term. The Business manager has oversight of the single central record.

## **Quality of Education**

The predictions for Year 11 look strong, with a further improvement from 2019 which is when the last available data was published. Leaders have used a Progress 8 calculation to create the current predictions. Year 11 have had a formal mock examination period and will have a second round later in the Spring term. The overall progress is in line with national average expectations. It looks strongest in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and open bucket subjects overall. Mathematics looks to be stronger than English but English is on an improving trajectory and both core subjects should improve before the GCSE examinations. English staffing is now very steady with a high quality team in place. The team have spent a substantial amount of time reviewing the curriculum and they are ambitious for every pupil to do well. Leaders have provided extra staffing which has given more planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time for the team to work together. The move to mixed ability teaching has enabled the team to be much more flexible and able to move pupils around groups to get the best match.

The leadership feel the outcomes for Year 11 will remain on an improving trend and put this down to the Quality First teaching strategy and the work they have done on the curriculum. This improvement is most stark in the disadvantaged performance where the gaps have been closing more rapidly.

From September, for three mornings every week, students in Years 7 to 10 have taken part in the new Tutor Reading Programme. All students have access to a reading book and are encouraged to follow along as their tutor reads to them. The key Tier 2 word for the day is highlighted on the board which is then broken down and discussed with students. Students and staff have both enjoyed this new initiative which has led to a very calm start to the learning day. The staff leading the programme will be doing some further student and staff voice after this term to see if any improvements need to be developed. Leaders have worked with staff to ensure a more consistent standard is in place across all of the tutor groups. On the day of the visit all the groups seen were listening very carefully and following the text of the chosen book which the teacher was reading to them. It is clearly taken seriously and pupils looked to be enjoying this as a start to their school day.

There is a very calm, purposeful feel to the school where students are safe and happy, which leads to good learning. There is a mixture of good teaching strategies on show, such as cold calling, use of the visualiser to give feedback, and excellent modelling. There is an inconsistency in what is seen in terms of feedback from staff, which leads to a variation in standards seen in presentation of exercise books. There are some excellent examples of teacher feedback such as in English and history, but in other lessons no feedback was seen at all. Pupils did say that whole class feedback in mathematics is not always helpful, depending on the task. It may be some of this is kept in separate assessment books or online. The classroom learning walls could be more of a focus in some areas.

The middle leaders interviewed are proud to work at Harrow Way. They provide a rich curriculum and set high expectations for all students in their areas. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. Students from Years 7 to 11 study a wide range of subjects, leading to a broad and balanced curriculum. Students' learning is sequenced well. The order of learning helps students to build their knowledge and make connections with earlier learning. Staff have broken down students' learning into manageable chunks. They have identified the subject content that they want students to know and remember. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Many teachers show expertise in their subject areas. Staff are well supported by leaders to develop their specialist knowledge and with career progression. Staff like working here and feel involved in making whole-school decisions.

Middle leaders explained they had control over the feedback they gave to students, and this was different depending on the area of the curriculum. They felt the 'METAL' process gave them an opportunity to delve into

their subject area and give them thinking time on what needs to be developed.

### **Vulnerable pupils**

Staff have access to the pupil profiles on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) drive and are easily accessed. There is also a regular SEN bulletin with updates and staff are also given a copy of the SEN handbook. As part of the regular agenda items for middle leaders the profiles will be checked in team meetings. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) also attends some of those meetings to share recent data. The SENCo also takes part in formal learning walks to look at how students are coping in the classroom. There is a termly data capture where the SENCo will check any under performance and add in interventions where useful. At the next staff INSET day leaders have planned for some more in-depth review of strategies which are successful in supporting pupils who have SEN.

The most recent documentation outlining the Pupil Premium strategy is in place. The Assistant headteacher has recently reviewed how resources are provided and this is now streamlined. There is ongoing up to date training for staff but the overall focus is around providing high-quality teaching and ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are known as individuals. The Assistant headteacher has released a number of short training videos to support staff expertise and mindset.

Leaders pay real attention to ensuring that pupils have a wide choice of trips and visits and other extra-curricular activities to increase cultural capital for all pupils, and especially for the most vulnerable. This year they also have a focus on building up transition work to Post-16 colleges for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN.

### **Behaviour, attendance, personal development**

Attendance for Year 11 is at 90% and they are trialling making all lessons 'live', so students at home can join remotely. When students are missing from the classroom, they are encouraged to use Oak Academy resources. There are two highly trained support staff who track attendance and have high level safeguarding training. There are an agreed set of letters which are sent to parents to escalate action around poor attendance. The team continue to work with more medical referrals and a number of school refusers following on from the pandemic. Persistent absence is usually below national average but there are more hardcore cases that the team are working with this year. Exclusions for the school are in line with the Local Authority average.

The school website is up to date for CEIAG and follows all guidelines. The school use COMPASS well to benchmark and work well with Hampshire careers advice service. The school are confident they have implemented all the Gatsby strands. The school are keen to restart work experience for Year 10 and are working to find a solution to this in a post pandemic world. Leaders are aware that careers needs to be interwoven into all of the curriculum through each subject.

93.3% of pupils remain in education or training which is similar to the Local Authority. This is slightly below the national average. The leaders are carefully looking at the data in regards disadvantaged students, and if there are extra supportive measures they can put in place to help them with post 16 options.

Students are keen to do well. They enjoy their lessons and appreciate the support and encouragement they get from staff. Students said they enjoy being part of the school and always know where to go to get further support, such as through their tutor or through the support button. They feel comfortable and safe. As one student said, expressing a view typical of many, 'We are a community that helps each other'. Students are encouraged to play an active part in school life. They have lots of opportunities to discover new interests and nurture their talents. Many students spoke excitedly about taking part in sports, Friday fun club or Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM), for example. Students like the wide range of clubs on offer.

## **Funding**

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LA Funded