

RECORD OF VISIT 2021/22

School:	New Park
Headteacher:	Almut Bever-Warren
Head of SPA :	Neil Fazackerley
Date of Visit:	10 June 2021

Context

This visit was made at the request of the Headteacher. The purpose of the visit was to work with some of the senior and middle leaders to prepare them for meetings with Ofsted inspectors. Prior to this meeting, I delivered a training session to staff about the requirements of the Ofsted inspection framework, focused specifically on Quality of Education. The Headteacher created a timetable of meetings and chose the staff for me to meet during the visit. This visit was conducted virtually and no visits to lessons, deep dives or other inspection type activity was undertaken. In this respect, the notes below are limited to the conversations I had with subject leaders.

During the visit I had meetings with the following staff:

Almut Bever- Warren (School improvement focus)

Laura Clegg (Attendance focus)

Yahna Pemberton (Safeguarding focus)

2 staff from the office team (operational matters relating to inspection)

Kieran Halliwell (English and Literacy focus)

Ian Thomas (Curriculum)

Karen Silikas (RSE Focus)

Phillipa Peploe (Assessment)

Claire Brennan (Maths and Science)

Nicola Webster (Primary)

Main findings

- It was clear that the staff are strongly committed to the students and families of New Park. They all want to provide a good quality experience for the young people in their care. Staff know their pupils and families well and put in place good support to meet their needs. There is clearly a lot of strong practice in the school. It would be useful if leaders and all staff could articulate the vision and values of New Park much more clearly to inspectors at the start of the inspection. "What is it we want for students when they leave New Park?"
- It is evident that a lot of progress has been made since the last inspection and in particular, this progress has accelerated in the last 2 or 3 years.
- The school's response to the Covid-19 pandemic is to be commended. Leaders acknowledge the challenges that the school faced during the Covid-19 lockdowns. This affected both student and staff.

- Leaders and staff made every effort to encourage students to attend lessons in school during lockdowns. Young people who did attend complied successfully with the enhanced safety requirements. Leaders know the reasons as to why some of the students did not engage as well as others. Where attendance was not possible, a range of other solutions were found including individual tuition and the provision of online learning and work packs. The school aims to have the normal curriculum and timetable fully in place by September. At present three subjects are still not on the timetable, largely due to staff absence. An interim recovery curriculum is in place which includes literacy and numeracy plus a range of outdoor activities and project work, including a focus on mental health.
- There is a good focus on making sure that the curriculum is appropriate and engaging for all students and a range of courses are available, some are taught off-site and some students have individualised plans. Leaders want to launch the Duke of Edinburgh scheme to improve students' resilience. Life skills are delivered via ASDAN and the PSHE curriculum. There are a range of interventions in literacy and numeracy and other aspects, though leaders acknowledge the impact of some of the others aspects is not always tracked as well as those in basic skills. The normal school curriculum broadly follows the national curriculum. Statutory subjects, including RSE are all delivered.
- There is a strong commitment to ensuring students in Year 11 to make sure they have positive destinations when they leave New Park at the end of the year. The school has done some good work on the Gatsby benchmarks, though leaders acknowledge this is not always reflected in NEET figures. Leaders have established good relationships with the local college. Leaders want to improve provision further by having a 6th form centre at New Park.
- Leaders and other staff says that the school is an orderly calm environment. Lots of work has been done with staff on trauma informed practice and restorative justice. Leaders want to develop this further.
- Processes for tracking and following-up attendance were well articulated and seem robust. Issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed. Leaders know who is on and off-site. Inspectors will only have attendance data from the IDSR so leaders need to be able to present the data in a way that reflects provision at New Park (e.g. the different groups i.e. those in school full-time, those in external provision and those following a different curriculum such as EOTAS). Case studies of how school have improved attendance for individuals are needed and we discussed how school could show how attendance has improved for students in comparison to that of their previous school.
- Safeguarding practice is well articulated. Leaders know their context well and respond to local safeguarding issues effectively. The curriculum is planned to reflect the local context and individuals get good support. The school is outward facing and involves a lot of agencies and outside organisations to support this aspect of the school's work. Staff training is thorough. Policies are updated regularly in line with government requirements.
- The English and literacy lead is relatively new to the school. He is committed to making sure literacy is high profile across the curriculum and has met with subject leaders. A lot of work has been done on whole school reading and on reading intervention. There is a commitment to all students having literacy targets. The leader will need to articulate the impact of all this work clearly to inspectors. If this was followed up in a deep dive inspectors would want to know what approaches staff use for teaching reading and vocabulary development in their own subjects. The English leader said that there was a long term curriculum plan for English in place, but what was less clear is the medium term planning and link to assessment.

- The school has a published RSE policy and a scheme of work and related resources. Themes covered in the curriculum are very relevant to the needs of New Park students. A range of external partners support the delivery of this. Students work towards a PSHE accreditation in KS4. What was not as clear is how the PSHE curriculum is assessed at KS3.
- The Assessment Leader was able to articulate the approach to tracking progress in the curriculum. This system identified gaps in learning and the pupils who are not making progress. The leader follows this up with discussions with teachers about individuals and also check for evidence in books. Reports on progress of students working in alternative settings are gathered termly.
- Science is taught by one specialist and two non-specialists. Students have only one lesson of science per week at present. This does somewhat restrict the coverage that is possible. Students study 6 units per year and these are based on national curriculum content. The leader supports non-specialists with subject knowledge and I recommended a link to STEM for further training opportunities. The science leader is now taking on responsibility for the leadership of maths. The school uses a commercially available scheme of work and then adapts this to meet the needs of students. Training has been provided by the LA SEND team. I recommended that the leader contacts the Turing Maths Hub about further training opportunities for maths mastery.
- The primary leader has made good progress in improving provision. There is a formal approach to the teaching of reading, including regular phonics sessions. Data presented suggests this is making a considerable difference to improving pupil's reading skills. Phonics teaching is linked to real books that pupils can access linked to the stage they are at in their phonics development. Provision for wider reading is in place and reading across the curriculum. Books provide a strong context for learning. In maths the leader has put in place a commercially available scheme that is adapted appropriately for pupils. Assessment is used to inform planning and to identify learning gaps. There is a thematic approach to other subjects, but the leader says that the subject specific skills are mapped onto this. Lots of enrichment opportunities are provided to increase engagement in learning.

Areas to consider (Ofsted critical)

- Ensure the full range of subjects are in place as soon as possible so that students have access to a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum.
- Have a clarity of vision that can be presented and articulated to inspectors by all staff.
- Be clear about attendance data (see comment above).
- Demonstrate the impact of the literacy work in school, particularly reading and how students are improving their skills.
- Finalise the medium term planning for English.
- Ensure that pupil progress is captured and tracked beyond that covered in the PSHE KS4 qualification.