

New Park School

Review report 5 December 2018

Evidence

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, lead teacher for EOTAS, assessment leader, and lead teacher for computing.
- Lessons were visited in KS2 and work in pupils' books was examined. A learning walk to lessons in KS3 and KS4 was conducted jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- The school's development plan, headteacher's report to the governing board, pupil premium funding plan and maths department meeting minutes were considered.
- Case studies of a number of EOTAS students formed the basis of a discussion about this aspect of the school's provision.

Context

- Since the last review the school has become an academy. It joined the Sovereign Trust on 1 June 2018.
- There are currently 110 students on roll, above the school's SAN.
- The school expects to be inspected before the end of this academic year as part of Ofsted's pilot of the new s5 inspection framework, due to go live in September 2019.

Leadership and management

- Following the previous review, the headteacher made helpful amendments to the school's self-evaluation form (SEF) so that it now includes, for example, much more about the KS2 provision. It is also more compact and accessible to readers. Sensibly leaders are waiting until publication of the draft s5 inspection framework before updating or restructuring the SEF further.
- A new comprehensive, three-year school development plan is in place. It is wide-ranging and, while this has the advantage of covering all areas of the school's work, it does mean that priorities and maintenance areas are all included. For instance, regular reviews of safeguarding policies, procedure and practice form part of the plan. While these are crucial, they are a regular, non-negotiable part of the school's work rather than a development priority. Success criteria are included but these are not sharply defined or broken down by academic year. Timescales are, in the main, long or described as 'ongoing'. This makes it hard for staff and governors to evaluate how effective strategies are in meeting the school's priorities.
- The pupil premium funding plan reflects the school's priorities well because these

are rooted in meeting students' needs. The rationale for spending is explained. The plan takes account of EEF research, funding 1-to-1 support for increasing students' literacy levels. Since most students experience communication difficulties, some funding is used for SALT support. Other support is linked directly to students' individual PEPs. Some funding is also used to support the new girls' group where barriers to learning and personal development needs are very high.

- There has been an increased focus on developing middle leadership. Two teachers are working towards the NPQML qualification. The development projects they are leading as part of this are clearly increasing the school's capacity for improvement. For instance, one member of staff has made considerable headway revamping the school's marking procedures.
- A new teacher joined the school in September to lead the KS2 provision. Leadership in this area is at an early stage of development and requires support, for instance with the development of the curriculum.
- The leadership of maths has strengthened. The head of maths has brought staff together as a maths team. She holds regular subject meetings which cover a suitable range of areas such as schemes of work, qualifications, moderation of assessments, and resources. She draws on external expertise such as the LA's Learning Support team who have helped develop teachers' understanding of dyscalculia. In addition, support comes through links with subject leaders at local mainstream secondary schools and the PRUs. Links between maths provision at KS2 and KS3 are at an early stage of development.
- There have been no structural or operational changes as a consequence of academisation.

Curriculum

- The alternative provision at a local gym, which operates each afternoon for KS4 students, is appropriately organised and makes a positive contribution to students' physical development. Students work well with trained sports coaches, and alongside school staff, to keep fit through activities such as completing circuits and learning to box.
- The privilege of attending these afternoon sessions motivates students effectively to attend morning sessions and behave appropriately.
- Although staff know that this provision has a positive impact on students' social development, regular measures are not in place to demonstrate this.
- Gym staff have DBS checks and no members of the public use the gym during these afternoon sessions.
- The school has reviewed its curriculum for computing in the light of national changes to qualifications. Computing is confidently and effectively led by a teacher whose commitment and enthusiasm are evident. She takes considerable responsibility for her own professional development in this area.
- At KS3 the new computing curriculum has a realistic focus on the basic skills

essential for the workplace as well as some aspects of coding. At KS4 the school is investigating a functional skills course, or similar, to replace the OCR course which is being withdrawn in July 2019.

- Staff have a helpfully flexible approach to the delivery of the PSHCE curriculum. Issues such as joy-riding, gang-culture and misuse of drugs are covered both as part of set programmes and in response to incidents.
- During the review concerns about the breadth and structure of the KS2 curriculum emerged but there was not enough time to investigate these. The leadership team agreed to organise a more comprehensive review led by KS2 specialists to ensure an accurate view is gained and support for further development can be put in place where appropriate.
- There is no systematic programme of phonics teaching at KS2, although when pupils join the school their communication and language skills are well below those expected for their age. Where phonics is taught, it is through written rather than oral work and no evidence was seen that it is consistently linked to the spelling or reading schemes across school.
- There is some discrete teaching of grammar as well as daily handwriting, spelling and one-to-one reading sessions. The discrete teaching of reading strategies is less obvious. However, there are regular opportunities to develop reading comprehension.
- A daily programme of multiplication tables practice is on place. However, it is unclear how other aspects of mental maths are being taught systematically.

Teaching, learning and assessment

- Following consultation with staff, a major development, still underway, is the introduction of a new assessment system - classroom monitor. Considerable work to customise this to the school's curriculum has taken place and further developments are planned. Areas of the school's work such as forest school and bike workshop will be included in due course. Leaders expect the system to include information related to the school's bespoke KS4 curriculum by July 2019.
- All students, including those re-entering mainstream, have targets in all subjects founded on baseline testing. They also have targets for their social and emotional development, a key part of the school's work, and progress towards these will be tracked on classroom monitor.
- Staff use a range of tests and assessments to establish students' attainment on entry. In maths these are diverse in style and intent. It is unclear how these various tests are brought together effectively to identify gaps in students' learning and suitable targets for their progress at either KS2 or KS3.
- Once the system is fully operational targets will be reviewed and revised each half-term, although there is the flexibility for teachers to increase targets in the interim when students make rapid progress.
- A number of face-to-face training sessions on classroom monitor have been run

for staff and online training is also available.

- There are sound plans to scrutinise students' work to check on the accuracy of assessments so that information captured is reliable. Helpfully, classroom monitor allows staff to attach evidence of students' progress to their assessment.
- The marking policy has been revised and simplified and is now fit for purpose. Teachers identify *what went well* (WWW) and *even better if* (EBI) and give students time to make corrections or complete an additional question to reinforce learning. A recent scrutiny of work showed that staff are implementing the new policy but identified the need for more focused follow-up tasks. The teacher leading on this development demonstrates exemplary practice in this area.

Strengths seen in the lessons visited:

- There has been an improvement in the overall quality of teaching at KS3 and KS4. It is now more consistently good than at previous reviews.
- Staff maintain good relationships with students and these form the foundation both for students' personal development and learning.
- Teachers' high expectations of students are spelled out. They know students well and challenge appropriately, for instance introducing new technical terms to those who enjoy learning these.
- Because adults know students well, they are adept at gauging when students need assistance and when they are avoiding work.
- Teachers stage tasks well for students so that they can tackle demanding topics successfully and apply the skills expected of their age-group. Teachers are skilful at raising students' self-confidence so students are often keen to succeed.
- Students demonstrate good recall of prior learning. In most classrooms, displays support learning and help to prompt recall.
- Students present their work well when expectations are high and clear.
- In maths, older students are given some responsibility for choosing the level they begin at when practising new skills.
- Teachers explain learning and tasks clearly. Careful questioning draws out students' understanding, allowing misconceptions to be identified and dealt with.

Areas for improvement noted in the lessons visited:

- In one of the KS2 groups, scrutiny of work indicated a lack sufficient differentiation to meet pupils' individual needs and too heavy a reliance on worksheets that are not bespoke enough.
- Some good ideas, such as daily early-bird arithmetic practice, are not built on effectively. Arithmetic practice is not linked to what is being learned in maths lessons.
- At all key stages, new teachers require support as they settle into the school and build relationships with students.

EOTAS

- The rigorous monitoring of the whole spectrum of EOTAS provision has been maintained.
- Leaders have produced helpful case-studies that demonstrate the wide range of students' needs and the extremely flexible provision put in place to meet these. Such case studies show that staff are relentless in checking that students are safe and offering them tuition in a wide variety of forms to suit their individual needs.
- The EOTAS leader can demonstrate considerable success with some, although not all, students.
- Full-time provision remains the aim for all these students.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- Leaders decided to create a girls' group following the admission of a number of high-needs girls this term. These students are involved with or at high risk of CCE and CSE. The behaviour of these girls is very challenging and leaders have arranged regular supervision for staff who support and teach them.
- The school provides high levels of care for these students who are regularly missing from home overnight.
- Recently, the headteacher convened a multi-agency meeting to discuss what support could be put in place to protect these students over the Christmas holidays when school is closed. The outcome is uncertain.
- In the main the mobile phone policy continues to operate effectively. It is least successful with the current group of girls, some of whom are new to the school.
- Secondary fixed term exclusions this term total 10 ½ days. The majority involve a Year 9 looked-after child and include use of cannabis.
- The use of cannabis on school premises is not a problem currently. However, the cannabis panels have been convened twice this term to good effect.
- The therapy dogs are a well-established part of the school community and were seen to provide comfort to students experiencing difficulties.
- Leaders have reviewed the number of restraints used last term which were very much higher in KS2 than elsewhere in the school. This reflects the higher proportion of pupils with ASC.

Outcomes

- The school continues to use a range of entry level qualifications at KS4. Staff are adept at supporting students to complete the assessments which measure small stages in learning whenever possible so that these accumulate successfully.
- Work is underway to locate appropriate courses for Year 11 when they leave next summer. Staff try hard to source placements that meet students' stated preferences and are sometimes very creative in their approaches to this.
- The school purchases additional time from a careers specialist to support students in making their decisions as well as throughout the summer holiday and autumn term after they have left school.

Recommendations

- Ensure that the school development plan focuses on the priorities for improvement, has measurable success criteria where appropriate, and clear deadlines.
- In due course update the school's self-evaluation in line with the new s5 inspection framework.
- Rationalise baseline testing in maths so that it provides teachers with the information they need to plan students/pupils next steps in learning.
- Ensure that the impact of the KS4 alternative gym provision is evaluated and any appropriate accreditation is gained from these sessions.
- Support the new KS2 leader to further improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Provide appropriate support for teachers new to the school.
- Strengthen links in the teaching of maths between KS2 and KS3.