



Buckinghamshire **Learning Trust**

Westfield

Review: 4th March 2015

This review report has been produced on behalf of the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust to contribute to supporting the school's improvement.

REVIEW REPORT

School Name and address	Head Teacher	Reviewer	Date of Review
Westfield School High Field Road, Bourne End, Bucks SL8 5BE	Geoff Allen	Andrew Blow	04.03.15

CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Westfield is a day special school for primary aged pupils who experience prime presenting needs of Communication and Interaction Difficulties, and/or Social, Emotional and mental Health Difficulties. At the time of the last Ofsted inspection on 13 & 14 February 2014 the range of needs was described as BESD, ASD and SLCN. The change in designation of needs since then describes the change in profile of needs in the school which is still on-going.

- Parent satisfaction is high.
- There are 41 pupils on roll (10 in KS1 and 31 in KS2) and the school is managing a planned increase to 45 pupils through an additional two classes.
- The school is self-funding the capital costs and training aspects of this expansion.
- There are 4 girls in the school only one of which has been on roll longer than 2 terms.
- The school experiences high pupil mobility with pupils entering the school at different ages and points in the year. Approximately 50% of pupils have been in the school less than a year. In observations and pupil discussions this variation enabled the reviewer to be able to assess the rate at which pupils are assimilated in the school and their respective progress since entry.
- In the last year 4 pupils have had planned moves to mainstream schools and 3 have transferred to other non-behaviour settings.
- There are 19 pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium funding.
- The school is experiencing difficulty in securing educational psychology support.
- Pupils are grouped according to need, as opposed to age, in 7 classes, each of which has one teacher and one learning support assistant.
- This structure is: Saturn Base, KS1–1 class social cognition difficulties, and 1 class social and emotional regulation difficulties. Mars Base KS2–2 classes social cognition difficulties plus 1 class to open April 2015. Jupiter Base KS2-2 classes social and emotional regulation difficulties. Saturn Base also includes a Specialist Provision for 5 pupils with highly complex needs. This class has 2 teachers and 4 specialist support assistants.
- The school has recently experienced greater staff mobility than has been the historic norm with 4 staff leaving to promotion and alternative careers. Just under half the class staff have been in the school for less than a year with 2 NQTs, 2 teachers new to the school and 2 returning staff. There are also new LSAs.

Ofsted areas for development from February 2014.

- Ensure that more teaching is outstanding by making sure that marking consistently leads to improvement pupils are writing frequently enough and for different purposes in lessons other than English lessons pupils make more use of their mathematical problem-solving skills more able pupils are always given challenging and more demanding targets in all subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that the school's strategies to improve the teaching of temporary teachers is more effective the development of newly appointed subject leaders continues to be supported so they become more effective in their role of closely checking the quality

of teaching and its impact on the progress of pupils in their subjects.

- The school was seeking a review to test their understanding of the school.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Evidence sources

- SEF.
- Discussion with senior leaders.
- Case studies.
- 7 part-Lesson Observations.
- Last Ofsted report.
- School progress data.
- Pupil work books.
- Meeting with Chair of Governors.

Evaluation:

- Ofsted judgement – Good.
- SEF judgement – Outstanding.
- Review judgement – Outstanding.
- Taking into account: The pupil needs and starting points on entry, both academically and in presenting capacity to engage with learning and other challenging behaviours, the identification of the prime need on statements as behaviour and the consequent need of the school to re-assess the pupils on entry to identify the underlying causes of behaviour, the need of the school to put in place appropriate strategies, in some cases before and at least alongside academic learning; pupils' academic progress is outstanding.
- The school's academic data is clear and detailed.
- Progress measured in terms of social engagement, self-management of behaviour, self-awareness of their own needs and the impact of their social interactions on others, and their contribution to a harmonious environment is also outstanding.
- Ofsted identified that the levels of attainment when pupils leave at the end of Y6 are broadly in line with similar age in mainstream, taking into account their needs on entry and the varied times of joining the school, is a remarkable achievement.
- On the basis of evidence seen during this review the reviewer concurs with this judgement.
- The trend in progress that Ofsted identified as set to continue has done so.
- Writing was observed in most lessons and evidence of pupils routinely and frequently recording and writing was seen in all groups. Pupils were seen taking a delight in achieving a good script, which indicates that they are aware of the importance the school places in that skill.

Suggested steps to take:

Suggestions with respect to teaching and the impact of those on achievement will be found in that section.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

Evidence:

- SEF.
- 7 Lesson observations.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work.
- Scrutiny of planning documents.
- Discussion with senior leaders.
- Discussion with middle leaders.
- Discussion with NQTs, newly appointed and returning staff.

Evaluation:

- Ofsted judgement – Good.
- SEF judgement – Good.
- Review judgement – Outstanding.
- Despite the recent staff changes there is a strong sense of team-working, sharing of practice and shared vision across the school, and in all lessons observed all class staff were seen working as a seamless team.
- Discussion with NQTs, newly appointed and returning staff confirmed the support identified by senior leaders and middle leaders, and the mutual atmosphere of the pursuit of excellent teaching in order to give maximum opportunities to the pupils both in learning and achieving independence.
- The school's view is that because there are 2 NQTs and 2 staff new to the school since September there has been only a short time over which to judge the teaching and therefore judgement should be cautious.
- The progress made by the pupils is outstanding and so this review sought to understand why the teaching should not be also outstanding as the progress pupils make is a consequence of their interaction with the school staff and the classroom teaching.
- The school leadership has a very clear vision of the nature of the pupils they cater for and how they should best be helped to learn. This was used in the selection of the new staff, all of whom have made a conscious decision to work in the school and support that ethos, and each bringing with them enthusiasm, and prior understanding and experience of the nature of the needs they would be working with, even the newly qualified staff, and a thirst to learn. This was coupled with an induction process that was as thorough as could be achieved given the individual circumstances for staff prior to starting in the school.
- The induction period was followed by continued professional support from the senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff in collegiate learning ethos with daily reviews and mutual advice and support.
- For new staff this had been in place since September enabling them to develop their practice, make their contribution to the whole staff, building on the existing teaching judged as good in February 2014, and now secures a judgement of Outstanding.
- The practice seen in lessons confirms this.
- The planning is detailed and the use of the planning sheets to record by hand pupil progress and notes for the next lesson in the sequence gives both a secure record of progress and helps detailed short-term planning.
- The outstanding progress of pupils is achieved through staff's detailed observation of pupils, and analysis and relentless reflection on their own practice and how that needs to be changed.
- Expectations are consistently high and staff do not accept that future progress for an individual pupil cannot be achieved if they can identify how to unlock the next step. This is modelled by the senior staff.
- Oral language demands are high and pupils are expected to engage in thorough self- examination in terms of their thinking, feelings and ideas in all areas of their learning and social interactions both in groups and individually as is appropriate to the need and the moment. They are given the tools with

which to do this. For example the use of the arousal wheel in an assembly taken by the headteacher in which the pupils used the appropriate vocabulary with understanding, and were able to use the wheel, and linked resources, to analyse situations and reflect on different possible interpretations on a given situation.

- The therapists visiting the school make a significant contribution in this respect.
- The marking seen was consistent in giving helpful comments and useful suggestions for the next step. What was not seen was where teachers are working with the pupils on the comments and using them to progress learning, but this may have been as a result of not observing complete lessons.
- In one-to-one sessions teachers try to pause to give room for the pupils to think and generate responses. Questioning is probing and is designed to generate thought and extended responses.
- The Learning Support staff are highly valued professionals and are full involved in the education of the pupils and professional discussions.
- Temporary teachers are fully engaged in the professional development of all staff.

Suggested steps to take:

- The school could look at the consistency of the language used in maths. E.g. use of “up” and “down” instead of “bigger” and “smaller”. Also the challenge of setting down the calculations and maths thinking in a consistent way. Possibly developing a consistent problem solving approach which would give a framework which can be used across the school.
- The school may wish to develop a buddy system for supporting new teachers and existing staff working in an action research model to develop teaching and learning and thinking and problem solving strategies. Various possible models could work, for example pairing two new teachers to the school with an experienced mentor with each new teacher working on a particular aspect.
- The overhead projections used, particularly in the hall are not always easily readable. This is a combination of the amount of light on the screen, but also because of insufficient contrast between the background and the text. This will generate a barrier to learning and engagement.

BEHAVIOUR AND SAFETY

Evidence:

- SEF.
- SCR.
- Ofsted.
- Training records.
- Observations/discussion with pupils.
- Lessons.
- Breakfast Club.
- Lunch time.
- Movement time.
- Assembly time.
- Meeting with pupils.

Evaluation:

- SEF judgement – Outstanding.
- Ofsted judgement – Good.

- Review judgement – outstanding.
- Attendance in 2013- 2014 95%, 1% unauthorised, no absence is unexplained.
- Current 95%.
- SCR meets requirements.
- Training schedule up to date. Safe handling training – All staff are required to be trained. New staff scheduled for 13 March 2014. All staff awaiting training are paired with a trained member of staff at all times until trained.
- Due care is taken over travel arrangements as all pupils are transported to school.
- Fixed term exclusions are very rare. No permanent exclusions in last 3 years.
- Pupils' behaviour is relaxed, they enjoy school and learning. Social behaviour at breakfast club was very good. Pupils were playing games (e.g. Connect), talking and advising each other. At lunch they had good table manners, talked with each other. Smiled a lot. They welcomed visitors to their tables and were conversational. The small number of girls are socially engaged.
- If a pupil showed any distress it was picked up very quickly and quietly managed. In discussion with pupils they identified that their ability to go to a quiet space under their own judgement and resolve their feelings and return to the lesson was highly valued.
- They consider their time in the school as valuable and that they get very good teaching.
- They felt secure enough to joke, in the presence of the deputy head, that the one thing they would change would be the teachers!
- They could describe how they had changed in the way that they manage their days and that they are understood and feel better about themselves.
- They feel that they are now in a position to learn and enjoy their lessons and generally they concentrate well. They do use the quiet spaces constructively to support their learning.

Suggested steps to take:

The school should think about putting in place complete consistency in terms of the personal behavioural frameworks. In some areas these are very strong, e.g. in moving to and from the hall for assembly, and the general principles are clear, clearing up in classrooms. However pupils with the type of needs in the school may have difficulty in applying a general rule to all situations. As they may not perceive the commonality of the settings. An example would be clearing plates after eating where they were not stacking tidily, yet they do stack books in the classroom. Work could be done to explore commonalities of situations, and behaviours, which could also feed into problem solving strategies.

QUALITY OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Evidence:

- SEF.
- Development Plan.
- Pupil files.
- Curriculum Plan.
- Ofsted.
- Discussion with Chair of Governors.
- Discussions with senior leaders throughout the day.
- Discussion with middle leaders.
- Discussion with NQTs, newly appointed and returning staff.
- Governors minutes.
- Paired lesson observations and discussions.
- All documents reviewed during the day.

Evaluation:

- SEF judgement – Outstanding.
- Ofsted – Good.
- This Review – Outstanding.
- Various aspects of the leadership of the school have been referenced throughout the report.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership in a form that may be described as the leading professional in the school. In this he is very well supported by the deputy head, and they are a consistent presence throughout the school. The pupils are known in detail by the leaders who provide support and guidance to the staff.
- A strong feature of the school senior leadership is the continual reflection that they bring to the work of staff with individual and groups of pupils. This has built the school into a learning community. This is felt by all staff and was commented on by the more recently appointed staff, who also commented on the very good support from middle leaders.
- The middle leaders discussed how their role contributes to this culture. They are keen to continue their self-development. Particularly they recognise the changing profile of needs of the children and how they need to adapt and learn as a result.
- The headteacher and governors seek consistent policy and practice providing flexibility of individual approaches according to the needs of pupils and preparedness on the part of staff to take planned, calculated risks with strategies to achieve breakthroughs with pupils learning.
- The curriculum is well organised and the grouping of children provides a secure learning environment.
- The governing body has recently been re-formed and now has an appropriate structure which provides good support and challenge to the school, and it is able to carry out its statutory responsibilities. Individual governors are linked to aspects of the school and their visits are clearly recorded and reported to the full governing body.

Suggested steps to take:

The school works very closely with parents who, it correctly sees, are central to the success of the children. It does not at present articulate this vision and practice in its school documentation, and as part of its succession planning it could rectify this, and use the process to reflect on how completely its documentation fully reflects the character of teaching, learning and care at Westfield and the vision it holds for its pupils and families.

The reviewer and SLT discussed the difference between learning a piece of information, a strategy or process, and being able to demonstrate independent performance having learned it, and then storing that somewhere so that it can be later recalled. It was discussed how these are distinct operations and whereas the knowledge and/or process may be visible, the storage, and pathway to that storage will not be and are likely to be idiosyncratic to that child, particularly in a school like Westfield. The school may wish to explore this concept and how the school can develop its curriculum in order to embrace this aspect of the pupils learning.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Evaluation:

This is a very effective school. The leadership of the senior team, middle leaders and governors are providing a clear direction and it knows what needs to be done for the next steps in the school's development. The staff and the leaders are working as a united team to achieve these goals for the pupils. The school is very open to external evaluation to move forward.

Suggested steps to take:

These have been described above.

Reviewer's evaluation of key documents:

The SEF is accurate and provides an appropriate sense of direction.
The data report is comprehensive and communicates clearly.

Points for development in key documents:

None to include.

Strengths observed during the review:

These have been commented on above.

Areas of disagreement with school self-review and reasons why:

There were none on the day of the review.