



LA Mini-Review of Oak Tree Primary School (Cheadle Hulme)

Tuesday 25th September 2018

Context

Oak Tree Primary School was judged to require improvement following a section 5 Ofsted Inspection in October 2016.

Ofsted identified the following areas for improvement:

1. *Improve teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that all groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, make better progress than at present by:*
 - *providing appropriate, high-quality training for all staff, including in the early years, to improve their practice in the teaching of reading and writing*
 - *making lessons more challenging so that pupils are engaged and appropriately stretched*
 - *insisting that all adults raise their expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving*
 - *using the good practice in nursery as a model for other classes in the early years.*

2. *Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:*
 - *setting out clearly the impact leaders expect the actions in the school's strategic plan to have on outcomes for pupils*
 - *refining the senior and middle leadership structure so that lines of accountability are clearer*
 - *increasing the capacity of the deputy headteachers and other senior leaders to undertake regular and rigorous classroom monitoring to secure the consistent application of agreed policies and practice*
 - *regularly evaluating the impact of support programmes to ensure that they are making a positive difference to the pupils that receive them*
 - *further developing the role of middle leaders so that they have greater influence on improving teaching, and the responsibility for improvement is shared evenly across the school*
 - *extending the assessment and tracking system to include all subjects in the curriculum*
 - *sharpening governors' focus on improving performance across the school, by challenging and holding school leaders to account to raise standards for all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged*
 - *ensuring that governors fulfil their statutory duties, including checking that the school's website meets requirements.*

The school was also asked to commission a review of how the pupil premium grant is spent and an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The school received a monitoring inspection from HMI on 23rd November 2017. This inspection stated that senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the section 5 inspection.

The inspection stated that leaders should take further action to:

- accelerate the progress made by disadvantaged pupils
- further develop the role of middle leaders so that their strengths are shared and their impact on pupils' outcomes increases.

Organisation of the Mini-Review

Three primary senior school improvement advisers (SSIA), and the principal primary adviser (PPA) from the local authority (LA) school improvement team visited the school.

The review was led by the link SSIA for the school with the focus for team members as follows:

- 1 PPA - disadvantaged performance/attendance and standards in Y1
- 1 SSIA – mathematics and English standards, and standards in key stage (KS)2
- 1 SSIA – curriculum, assessment, impact of school leaders and standards in Y2
- 1 SSIA - standards in EYFS, SEND and pupil voice.

All the classes were observed including brief visits to the newly qualified teacher and new teachers to the school. Pupils' books were examined in the classrooms as part of the lesson observations and by the SSIAs. One SSIA met with a group of pupils. Pupils' understanding of a range of issues including, challenge in their learning and school behaviour was discussed.

The PPA and SSIAs met senior and middle leaders and discussed the school priorities, pupil performance data and assessment, disadvantaged pupils' progress and attendance of pupils with special educational need and disability (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. Middle leaders discussed their areas of responsibility. These included the leads for English, mathematics, assessment, the early years foundation stage (EYFS), SEND and pupil premium. SSIAs also observed pupils during the lunchtime period.

Findings from the Mini-Review

The local authority review of the school in October 2017 commented on the significant improvements the school has made. School outcome data for 2018 suggests these improvements have been maintained for all key stages and there has been a significant increase in attainment outcomes at the end of KS2.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

There is a strong working partnership between leaders and all staff in the department and a shared vision for improvement.

Enabling language used by teachers, including questioning, supports pupils' learning and development. Provision is well-managed both inside and outside and there are a wide range of self-directed and teacher-led opportunities. Provision areas enable great opportunity for self-enquiry amongst pupils. Rewards are well-used and the department has happy pupils who play well together.

Assessments are captured on an electronic system called Tapestry which allows parents to contribute towards assessments and ensures next steps in learning are clearly planned. Learning journeys are very well used and weekly newsletters keep parents fully informed of learning in school and how they can support their children at home. There is great consistency in assessment practice across the department. The outdoor environment is big and bold, providing pupils with excellent opportunities to learn and develop. Attainment outcomes continue to improve within the department.

The EYFS leader has ensured great consistency across the department and professional development needs have been well considered. The implementation of the Tales Toolkit has had significant impact on the acquisition of language and imaginative play as well as the supporting of the teaching of phonics. Shared video clips and observation of each other's teaching ensures best practice is shared within the department. The EYFS leader has implemented weekly team meetings where ideas are shared, teaching and learning reviewed and next steps and action plans developed. Boys are a current focus for the department and ensuring their needs are being catered for. Staff are absolutely clear on who the disadvantaged pupils are, how funding is spent and the impact of this expenditure.

The following points were identified as areas for further development:

- Continued development of support staff and how they support pupils' learning and development through their interactions and questioning.
- Ensure interactions between staff and pupils in the nursery class support pupils' learning and development.

Key Stage 1

Data outcomes suggest improvements across the department in 2018. Phonics outcomes are now in line with national outcomes and have increased again from the previous academic year. Additionally, 15 of 17 pupils who had to re-sit the phonics screening check in Year 2 met the standard. Progress across KS1 is above or in-line with national percentages in reading, writing and mathematics for all prior attainment groups. Attainment outcomes have increased; however there is a significant gender gap in reading and writing attainment outcomes.

Within one Y1 class there was clear focussed learning with a range of engaging activities. The teaching assistant was being used effectively and her enabling language was supporting learning. Pupils were working co-operatively and fully understood the purpose of their learning.

There was great consistency in Y1 there were clear systematic approaches to ensuring that children could understand and see patterns within number bonds. Provision areas were used to support learning and understanding well.

All class rooms have engaging learning environments.

The school has developed quality first teaching standards that are the expectation within the classroom. It would be prudent for school to re-visit these expectations, particularly some of the responsive teaching techniques.

There was great consistency in Year 2 and teaching assistants were well deployed. All classes were involved in mathematics lessons and all classes were delivering the same curriculum content and strategies. Challenge was interwoven into each of the lessons. A useful moderation activity would be for all the teachers to reflect upon, and debate, their individual lessons. What worked well? How do outcomes differ across the classes? Are all children being asked to reason

and explain? Try to ensure best practice across the classes is being shared. For example, are our expectations of how to be an effective talk partner modelled consistently across the classes?

The following points were identified as areas for further development:

- How is best practice in teaching being shared and modelled for the less experienced teachers in this phase and how do we moderate as a team to ensure best practice is reflected upon and debated?
- How as teachers are you ensuring all children are purposefully engaged?

Key Stage 2

Within lower KS2 there were elements of strong practice. There are a number of new teachers to the school, including an NQT, in this department. Ensuring the agreed quality first teaching statements are understood and being used by new staff is essential, particularly the agreed techniques for building pace within lessons.

Within upper KS2 pupils were fully engaged in their learning and making good progress. Pupils' books showed great consistency in presentation and staff have high expectations of pupils.

Pupils in Year 6 stated that they enjoyed the element of challenge in their learning and that they found their work to be challenging. They were very clear about writing expectations and how to edit and improve their work. Pupils articulated very clearly about how teachers help you to improve. The pathway was self-editing, peer support and finally teacher support. Additionally pupils were very clear that they knew how to be safe in school and when using ICT. Pupils felt that bullying was not an issue at Oak Tree Primary School and, that if needed, problems are dealt with by teachers.

The following points were identified as areas for further development:

- Eliminate the passive nature of some learning, which occasionally slows pace in the classroom, by embedding some agreed responsive teaching techniques.
- Ensure the strong practice of leaders in the department is being modelled and shared with new school staff.

Pupil Premium

There has been a vast amount of successful work completed to develop provision and learning opportunities, improve attendance and to diminish the difference in outcomes for children who are entitled to pupil premium funding. The school has very clear evaluative impact statements in place to support the work that has been completed. Leaders know the group of pupils very well and have clear evidence to show progress and attainment for these pupils. Barriers to learning for pupils entitled to pupil premium funding are identified and learning pathways are quickly established. The impact of any support or learning intervention is closely monitored and leaders have an accurate picture of the progress and attainment for this cohort of learners across school.

The school has employed a learning mentor who has had a significant impact on both attendance and learning for pupils entitled to pupil premium funding. The attendance of this group of pupils is closely monitored and clear strategies are in place to maximise attendance at school.

The school fully embraced the findings of the pupil premium review and all details around the pupil premium strategy and expenditure are fully up to date on the school website.

The following points were identified as areas for further development:

- Consider how moderation activities of outcomes for pupils entitled to pupil premium funding can be developed across school.

English subject leadership

The English subject leaders had a clear understanding of all the data across school and where any underperformance lies. They were also clear as to what has been put in place to address areas of underperformance. Data outcomes and information from pupil progress meetings informs pathways of intervention and support for groups of pupils. Robust systems for monitoring teaching and learning are in place.

There is a consistent approach to presentation and the teaching of the basic skills are fully embedded across school. There is a whole school approach to writing across school. Children are immersed in a theme or book to generate writing opportunities. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught as part of the writing approach.

The school approach to the teaching of reading focusses on the teaching of the content domains and is consistent across school. All staff have received training around the content domains. Initiatives to engage pupils in reading have included visits from the poet Tony Walsh, Portico library challenges and weeks dedicated to engaging with books.

The following points were identified as areas for further development:

- Are pupils able to fully articulate their understanding of the reading skills they are using linked to the content domains?
- How are drafting books and 'best' books working together to ensure progress in writing?

Mathematics subject leadership

The mathematics leaders have a full understanding of data across school and this provides a pathway of support. All teachers understand prior attainment in mathematics and how this links to target setting. Moderation opportunities, both within school and across cluster schools, are in place. Leaders believe these opportunities support accuracy of judgements in the subject.

Monitoring of teaching and learning across the subject is fully in place and feedback of their findings is shared with teachers and school leaders. The school works from the national curriculum but they ensure the focus is on practical activities. Developing challenge for all pupils is evident in the whole school approach.

The following points were identified as areas for further development:

- Leaders within this subject need to be able to clearly articulate the strengths and priorities for the subject. These are our strengths and priorities and this is how we know. This is what has been done to tackle priorities and here is the evidence of impact.

The Curriculum and Assessment – discussions with senior leaders

Oak Tree Primary School has been on a significant journey of improvement since it was judged to require improvement in October 2016. The school has worked collaboratively as a whole

school staff to create quality first teaching statements which recognise best practice within the classroom. Following disappointing results and behaviour issues after the school amalgamation, leaders ensured a relentless drive to develop consistency in pedagogical approaches, behaviour, governance and approaches to ensuring all pupils enjoy and attend school and make good progress against an engaging, rich and deep curriculum.

All governors have been skills tested and the new chair of governors fulfils all his roles with great diligence. A monitoring committee was set up to monitor the recommendations from Ofsted and the progress school is making against all of those recommendations. Leaders produced a requires improvement plan based entirely on the recommendations from Ofsted.

Assessment has been a key focus for the school and there is clear evidence that this is enabling school leaders, including governors, to develop an accurate overview of pupil attainment and progress over time from differing starting points. All staff are now fully aware of prior attainment for individual children and groups. Quality first teaching is matched to the needs of children. Through the schools involvement with the educational endowment foundation project in Stockport, teaching assistants have been supported in how to develop independent learning. Interventions are monitored with clear entry and exit data. There is a consistent assessment and tracking system across school with teachers involved in moderation processes both within school and across local clusters. Assessment data is collected on a termly basis, following a clearly structured monitoring and evaluation cycle and leaders were clear on how this informs pupil progress meetings.

The school has fully re-designed the curriculum with the core values of the school incorporated. The intentions of the school curriculum are represented via the core values and key stakeholders were involved in the curriculum design. Curriculum coverage is fully mapped out by school leaders and immersion in writing is reflected across the curriculum.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

The school knows this population well and SEND children are included appropriately in classrooms. The primary needs of all pupils on the SEND register were well-known and lesson observation outcomes of teachers and teaching assistants supporting SEND children were clearly presented. Provision maps are in place and pre and post outcomes for most interventions were presented by the team to show impact of specific support. The team presented clearly and articulately about the impact of their work. They have skilfully managed the needs of a number of pupils with complex learning needs.

Lunchtime and break time

Following playground and lunchtime observations, it was evident that there are now a range of specific activities for pupils to engage in. Staff now wear high visibility jackets so they are easily recognisable to pupils and careful placement of staff on the playgrounds has been considered. Routines for moving back into school at the end of the break time to ensure pupils are in the classroom without time slippage have been developed.

Conclusion

The school has made good progress against all the areas highlighted for improvement following the Ofsted inspection in October 2016.

Focussed leadership and dedicated hard work from all stakeholders are having significant impact. Outcomes for groups of pupils have increased and projections and practice suggest that these will continue to improve. Where issues with specific cohorts and groups of children remain, clear plans are in place to support and develop learning. Attendance for all groups of pupils has improved. Support is in place for teaching where necessary and CPD has been well-managed.

Displays within classrooms and around school are attractive and consideration has been given to the purpose of displays. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural provision has clear priority within the curriculum and within the core values of school and is reflected in displays around the school.

It is the opinion of the review team that the school is now on track to meet the challenge set by Ofsted inspectors in October 2016.

Feedback was given at the end of the day to the headteacher, deputy headteachers, phase leaders and a group of governors.

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