

School Improvements

At Northmead we are continually striving to improve. Since our last Ofsted inspection much work has gone in to improving the provision for the children in our care. Below we have outlined our current situation with reference to each strand of the Ofsted framework.

1. Overall effectiveness

Overall, teaching is consistently good as evidenced through rigorous monitoring by the senior leadership team and external agencies.

Since the last inspection, outcomes for children have improved because the improved quality of teaching has raised standards.

Leaders have ensured behaviour for learning inconsistencies have been addressed. This has resulted in a learning climate where time in lessons is used effectively and productively.

Our staff are hardworking, highly motivated, enthusiastic and committed to accelerating the rate of progress and raising standards. Our judgement has been validated by Babcock advisors who stated 'staff are highly motivated and enthusiastic. Leaders have created a culture of innovation where teachers are encouraged to explore a range of strategies to further improve the quality of teaching and approaches to marking and feedback – teachers have high expectations of all pupils'.

All staff, governors and children share the same ambition for the school's future. The school council re-wrote our school vision so it could be understood by our whole community and it has been shared with staff, governors, children and parents.

The school has a happy, caring atmosphere where all are valued as individuals and are positively encouraged to take pride in their school and enjoy their learning experiences, as evidenced in pupil interviews.

Leaders have maintained a commitment to providing a broad and balanced curriculum which develops the whole child taking care to provide for their social, artistic and moral needs as well as their academic.

The school finances are well managed and used effectively to support children's learning. A good example of this is the impact sports premium has made on the range of clubs available and the increased number of children taking part in active sport activities promoting children's physical development.

Staff are led by a dedicated leadership team who evaluate the school's work accurately. As a result of a focus on rigorous monitoring, leaders know the school well and are able to target interventions to continue to raise standards and increase the school's capacity to improve.

Leaders continue to ensure robust safeguarding processes establishing a culture of high vigilance in the school. This strength of the school has been validated by a local authority audit.

2. Effectiveness of leadership and management

The leadership team consistently communicate high expectations and ambitions for the school promoting equality of opportunity resulting in a positive inclusive school culture.

This has been validated by a local authority leadership review which stated “All staff now show an understanding and commitment to the head teacher and SLT’s ambitious ambition for moving the school forward, as evidenced during the review and through the overwhelmingly positive staff survey”

An effective model of distributed leadership is in operation throughout the school meaning that the vision for excellence and the focus on improvement is shared. Succession planning to senior leadership level is evident in the school for example; 50% of our senior leadership team were NQTs at the school.

Governors know the school well and share the head teacher’s vision. They are aware of the key areas of strength and areas to develop. They ask rigorous questions and hold senior leaders stringently to account for all aspects of the school’s performance, providing challenge and support.

Rigorous monitoring is having a positive impact on progress as leaders have a secure understanding of the current quality of education at Northmead enabling them to plan the next steps for improvement. All teachers have high expectations. This is as a result of consistent and continual exemplification by leaders of what is expected in terms of planning, teaching, work outcomes and behaviour in lessons. The impact of the whole school monitoring schedule has been very positive in rapidly improving presentation and pride in pupils work. Leaders continue to pursue excellence and as a result there is an expectation that the quality of teaching and learning is high at all times, not just in pre-planned observations. Clear non negotiables have been established where good is the minimal expectation.

We have continued to ensure our curriculum is broad and balanced for all children at Northmead. This curriculum provision is a great strength of the school and its impact on pupil enthusiasm, engagement and behaviour is evident. Extra- curricular activities support and extend this curriculum.

Self-evaluation of school data has led to the implementation of interventions to accelerate progress.

Staff across the school model professional standards in their work showing high levels of respect and courtesy for children, each other and visitors. The positive relationships which exist between staff members and children are a strength.

There is a demonstrable impact of high quality middle leaders which the school has developed. Staff development enables staff to take on increasingly greater responsibility and leadership roles within the school. For example, the P.E and games subject leader has increased the number of children involved in sport and the expertise of the teachers through new planning and CPD.

Well planned use of pupil premium has enabled all children to take part in enrichment activities.

Performance Management is used effectively to encourage, challenge and support teachers improvement. Performance management is used for all teachers and teaching assistants in school, contributing to our relentless focus on improving teaching and therefore the learning and progress of pupils. Our effective NQT induction programme has allowed us to develop high skilled practitioners. Teacher and Teaching assistant communication books provide good evidence for TA

appraisals helping to develop teaching practice and inform future objectives.

In order to develop a highly skilled and motivated workforce, the job profiles of support staff have been restructured, so they now have specific roles. Specialised training has enabled them to deliver targeted interventions which has had a significant impact on pupil progress.

Leaders promote a climate for learning within our cohesive community where the promotion of children's social, moral, cultural and spiritual development and British values are a high priority within the curriculum, general ethos and also through enrichment opportunities.

Safeguarding is the very highest priority and procedures meet all statutory requirements. Leaders and staff take appropriate action to identify pupils who may be at risk of neglect, abuse or sexual exploitation, reporting concerns and supporting the needs of those children. Staff have been trained to be aware of radicalisation and extremism. Child protection updates for all staff form a regular part of our weekly bulletin meetings.

3. Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Triangulation activities (Including observations, learning walks, work scrutiny, pupil voice) provide evidence of a good standard of teaching and learning. Consistently outstanding teachers are used as models for others, including NQTs. Shared and individual actions arising from regular scrutiny are implemented and regularly monitored. This has led to greater consistency in quality of teaching and learning outcomes.

All lesson observations have shown teacher subject knowledge is high. Continuing good practice is being shared through the whole school professional learning culture.

Lesson observations have provided evidence that time in lessons is used effectively.

Monitoring of books show that rigorous marking and feedback is provided to children and this allows them to further extend their learning. This judgement has been validated by a local authority teaching and learning review (25.1.16) which stated that it had found evidence of "Examples of highly effective marking including assessment grids which provide clear precise feedback to pupils on how to improve, the impact of which is evidenced directly by improved skills in books."

We have devised an assessment system which is understood by all staff and monitoring shows it is being consistently applied. Its design is allowing teachers to further tailor their teaching to the learning needs of the child as the system allows teachers to see easily any gaps in children's understanding. The effectiveness of our system has been endorsed by our feeder infant school who have adopted our system, which will allow for greater consistency across the key stages.

Data is captured every six weeks and the resulting analysis is discussed during pupil progress meetings. These are highly professional and focus rigorously on the learning and progress of individual children and on each teacher's actions to ensure the best outcomes for children. Parents are provided, at the consultation evening, with information about how their child is progressing and their next steps. The pupil progress meeting also identify children who have not made progress and interventions are planned to accelerate their learning. These plans, in the form of provision maps, and their outcomes are shared on a regular basis with parents.

There is a clear vision with high aspirations for SEND which is reflected in effective practice across the school including a wide range of SEND Interventions. The high expectations staff set for SEND pupils is reflected in the exceptional progress made by children in the literacy and language centre.

The recent teaching and learning review conducted by the local authority (25.1.16) confirmed our knowledge that “pupils from the centre successfully integrate into mainstream lessons. Sensitive support provided by TAs enable pupils to fully contribute to lessons and make progress”.

Our use of teaching assistant communication books ensure support staff are well deployed and used effectively within lessons.

All teachers provide termly evidence of their performance against the teachers standards which feeds directly in to their appraisal.

4. Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Since the last inspection strategies to eradicate low level disruption in lessons have been successful as evidenced by our own lesson observations and drop ins and triangulated by a local authority teaching and learning review; ‘The high focus on eradicating low level disruptive behaviour in lessons with non-negotiable expectations for pupils and staff has resulted in a calm, orderly and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms.’

The good levels of behaviour outside of lessons has been sustained (Babcock leadership review 24.9.15) Children enter and leave the premises calmly each day as evidenced in the Behaviour for Learning walk (21.4.15) undertaken by Jackie Foley (Senior area lead specialist for behaviour support)

The vast majority of pupils’ behaviour is good. This is evidenced through consistently thoughtful behaviour towards one another, towards staff and towards visitors, in and out of the classroom context, which is intrinsically linked to the positive school ethos. Children show pride in their achievements and in the part they play in the life of the school. Staff are skilled in behaviour management and deploy a range of strategies to support individual children. Behaviour plans and risk assessments are used and updated regularly.

Northmead has adopted a learning to learn approach based on Guy Claxton’s ‘Building learning power’. Children are now able to articulate how to be a successful learner and though our pupil interviews have demonstrated an enthusiasm towards their learning. The school curriculum and opportunities for children to take on leadership roles promote self confidence which in turn leads to children exhibiting good behaviour.

Pupil voice is developing at Northmead and children have been involved in policy writing, making improvements to the school environment and learning, and working as playground buddies.

Staff take the time to form good relationships with children in their care and clear strategies are in place to support vulnerable pupils. For example they are given a named adult in school to support them and encouraged to put worries in the worry box to be addressed by the Home School Link Worker.

Attendance at the mid year point was 95.5%. Children with outstanding attendance 98% and above are awarded certificates. 45% of children received certificates at the mid year point. Attendance is rigorously monitored at 90% or below.

Inclusion is a strength at Northmead. Good examples of this include how children who attend the speech and language centre are fully integrated in to the life of the mainstream school, are members of the school council and take part in our whole school production.

Safeguarding is exemplary at Northmead as corroborated by the safeguarding audit carried out by the local authority. The safeguarding governor consistently checks for compliance.

We have a strong CP team who meet for monthly updates, a meeting in which our safeguarding governor is also in attendance. There is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among the governors and staff at all levels, all of whom receive regular training on safeguarding, and child protection. All staff have received PREVENT and WRAP training and are vigilant to promote an inclusive environment. Our CP team and chair of governors have also completed the Chanel training.

Children have frequent opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example; knowing how to keep themselves safe online is reinforced through our embedded practice of internet safety teaching and learning.

The curriculum support the elements of SMSC education and understanding of British values through a planned programme of PSHCE lessons and assembly programme which has weekly questions and discussions reflecting pupils responses.

The school has an active and highly effective approach to identify and tackle bullying. Instances of bullying are rare and are decreasing over time. Incidents reported by parents have decreased as evidenced in the bullying/behaviour log. All staff ensure that any use of derogatory language is swiftly dealt with and stereotypes are challenged.

Pupils are well prepared for secondary school as a result of a comprehensive programme of transition activities. This is supported by positive feedback about the seamless transfer process from year 7 parents. Our year 3 staff work closely with our feeder schools moderating work and sharing behaviour strategies. Current year 3 parents gave very positive feedback on our transition programme.

5. Outcomes for children and other learners

Although historically there was some underachievement the current data picture suggests that children, across all year groups, are making strong progress and developing secure understanding despite their differing starting points. Those groups of children who are not yet achieving age related expectations are subject to rigorous monitoring with clear planning in place to accelerate their attainment and thus close the gap.

A new assessment system, designed by our assessment leader, has been put in place which tracks both the attainment and progress of all children. The system details exactly what a child can and as yet cannot do against a set of year end objectives. Such a system allows for specific teaching aimed at each child's needs.

Our assessment of children's achievement is robust as our judgements have been validated through moderation activities with our local confederation and with our feeder school. Our year 3 staff will be involved in the year 2 moderation process this summer.

Children not making expected progress are identified and following Progress Review meetings, interventions and support are put in place. These children are then closely monitored over a half

term to ensure they have caught up with their peers.

The new assessment system allows easy monitoring of the attainment and progress of a range of different groups within the school, including: disadvantaged children; children with English as an additional language; children with a statement or SEN support; boys/ girls and more able.

Children are provided with a wide range of opportunities to read on a daily basis. For example; guided reading sessions, independent reading and home reading. Those who are not yet reading with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age are targeted and supported through intervention groups such as Project X. To promote the joy of reading we have designed our library and updated our stock of books encouraging children to independently engage with the reading material on offer.