

School Improvement Visit Report

Autumn Term 2017

I. Visit Information

School Name: Elson Infant School

Focus: LLPR

Adviser: Tamsin Austoni

Local Authority: Hampshire

Visit Reference: Inspection and Advice LLPR 2017-18 **Date of Visit:** 19/10/2017

Attendees:

- Executive Headteacher
- Head of School
- Assistant Headteacher
- Inclusion Manager

Actions:

Action	Who	Timescale
To address pupil outcomes and progress in writing to be more in line with national averages, particularly for boys. This will be achieved through improving pupils' motivation to write through the use of first hand experiences and through focused scaffolding to improve pupils' language and writing skills.	Headteacher, Head of School	01/07/2018
To carefully monitor attainment and progress for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), to include collecting evidence of the impact of focused and responsive intervention and variation.	Head of School, Inclusion Manager	01/03/2018

Summary of Main Findings:

Outcomes for pupils at all ages have improved steadily over the last two years and at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve in line with the national average in reading and mathematics. The number of pupils achieving a good level of development at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is also in line with national. The percentage of pupils working at the expected level in phonics has increased considerably as the result of whole-school development, and the school is now above national and county averages in this area.

Outcomes in writing are not as good and the school has robust plans already in place to address this. Outcomes have improved since 2016 and the school is confident of a continued upward trend in 2018. Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as their peers, although progress shows that they make progress in line with or better than their peers. The school is not complacent about disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND and have focused plans in place to improve outcomes in these areas. Evidence from the visit show that these are already having impact.

The school currently judges itself to be good overall and this is supported by the evidence presented at the visit. It will remain a **low priority** for Local Authority (LA) support.

II. Main Report

Activity reason:

LA Funded

Activity focus:

Annual Visit

Context:

This is a report of the Local Authority's annual visit to the school. The purpose of the visit is to work alongside the school, helping it to evaluate the progress that it has made in addressing key areas from its improvement plan and to identify any support required from the LA over the coming year.

The school was inspected by Ofsted in May 2014 and judged to be good. The key improvement areas are:

- Teaching needs to offer more opportunities to challenge the most able pupils
- Give pupils further opportunities to develop their language skills in class discussions
- The teaching of effective handwriting skills need to consistent across the school

There are 267 pupils on roll. 12 % of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium grant. 6% of pupils are from military families. There are 9% pupils on the SEND register. There is one pupil in Local Authority Care (CiC).

Activities undertaken during the visit included:

- a learning walk to look for learning environment and scaffolding of literacy learning;
- discussion/ evaluation on past and present standards lead;
- discussion/ evaluation past current performance of vulnerable groups;
- discussion with the Assistant Headteacher regarding middle leaders and self-evaluation processes.

Commentary:

School Self-evaluation

The school's current evaluation (outcomes from last Ofsted – May 2014)

Overall: Good (Good)

Leadership: Good (Good)

Teaching: Good (Good)

Behaviour: Good (Good)

Outcomes for pupils: Good (Good)

Key strengths that support the school's evaluation

- The Executive Headteacher and the Head of School know their school and pupils well. They are focused on the needs of individuals as well as cohorts and work hard to ensure consistency across classes.
- Pupil outcomes are improving in all subjects at the end of Key Stage 1. In reading (74%) and mathematics (73%), pupils achieve the expected standard in line with national averages. The school has worked hard to improve children's language skills to support writing and the number of pupils achieving the expected standard at the end of the key stage has risen from 37% to 59%.
- The school expects that outcomes will continue to improve in all year groups. At the end of Key Stage 1, the school expects the current Year 2 children to achieve 77% in reading, 63% in writing and 73% in mathematics.
- The percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development (GLD) at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage is also improving in line with national outcomes. In 2017, the number of pupils achieving GLD was 71%.
- There has been a sharp increase in the number of children achieving the expected outcomes in phonics, with 89% of pupils working at the expected level in Year 1, putting the school above national and county averages. The school reports that this is due to starting targeted phonics early and the new implementation of a systematic phonics programme which is being taught consistently. The number of pupils working at the expected level for phonics in Year 2 has also increased to 71%, which puts the school above national and LA averages.
- Although pupil outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are lower than for all pupils (which is being addressed in the school improvement priorities), the rates of progress made by disadvantaged pupils is in line with their peers. At the end of 2017, disadvantaged pupils made more progress than their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 1, disadvantaged pupils made equivalent or better progress than the cohort and in Year 2, all vulnerable groups, including SEND, made expected or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics, with the exception of one child.
- Predicted outcomes for disadvantaged children in the current Year 2 are high and these children are making better than expected progress in reading and expected progress in writing and mathematics.
- The school reports that teachers have, following school improvement activities, a greater understanding and responsibility for vulnerable groups. Teachers plan well for disadvantaged pupils, with personalised learning at the heart of task design. This was evidenced on the learning walk, where variation was skilfully provided so that all pupils could access the curriculum. Teachers are actively involved in delivering interventions to disadvantaged and Special Educational Needs (SEN) children, so that the impact of interventions can be fully integrated into the classroom learning.
- The inclusion leader has developed new systems for tracking progress and attainment for disadvantaged children and those with SEND. These are complemented by class-based provision maps, which provide ongoing analysis of baselines, targets and post-assessment impact for each child.
- The school has employed an in-house speech and language specialist who ensures quick identification of needs and delivery of the Language Links programme.
- The inclusion leader uses data to assess impact and inform future planning for vulnerable children, and is using case studies to demonstrate impact. Comments in writing from parents of a child with SEN and a Specialist Teacher Adviser for Physical Disabilities show that the school is both committed to and successful in provision for children with Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Evidence of this was seen during the visit.

- Children work hard and transition between tasks is smooth and quick. Behaviours for learning are good and well-supported by the super-heroes code that helps to remind pupils how to behave to be able to learn well. Pupils are on-task most of the time and respond well to adults, who in return show respect and care for the children.
- There are strategies in place to support vulnerable children and we observed the 'Rainbow Room' being used to provide nurture (including breakfast) and individual learning time for a pupil who needed space and quiet. One pupil (a CiC), was in need of emotional support and was given the opportunity to accompany the inclusion manager whilst she worked in class alongside other children, helping her to feel safe but also on-task. A regular counsellor visits the school to support children with emotional needs (including the CiC) and the imminent whole-federation training on 'attachment' will support all staff in understanding and addressing the needs of vulnerable children.
- The use of adults in the school is very effective and, in most classes, learning support assistants were actively teaching small groups or individual pupils. Inclusive practice was really evident during the learning walk, where pupils were engaged in appropriate learning tasks. For instance, in Year 1, a group of children were working on sentence composition with adjectives – the same task as their peers – but with a teaching assistant who was able to guide them more individually and help them to record their work using visual aids. A child who was unable to speak due to disability, was fully engaged in this activity by using a book of symbols and signs to compose her sentence. She was able to answer the questions by pointing and could manipulate symbol cards to compose the sentence she wanted.
- The school works hard to ensure that the implementation of whole-school projects, such as Read, Write, Inc and Talk for Writing are consistent and effective across the school. Evidence from the learning walk shows that effective scaffolding of writing is in place in every classroom and that it is having a positive effect on children's confidence to record their ideas on paper. Teachers had high expectations of all pupils and the use of variation to enable all pupils to access the learning intentions was clearly successful. Pupils were engaged in their learning and their discussions showed that they had a secure knowledge of the concepts taught previously.
- The school is working on P4C and will continue to do so during this academic year, and it is hoped that this will further impact on the outcomes in writing and in confidence, particularly for the disadvantaged and SEN children.
- The school has also focused on ensuring that first hand experiences are always part of the children's learning. This was seen on the learning walk, where children had made bugs out of salt-dough before writing about them and talked enthusiastically about the visitor who had brought in a tarantula and snakes for them to touch and feel. There is a school 'bucket list' of rich experiences which it is hoped that every child will get exposure to and a push on 'child-led learning' with emphasis on rigour in learning has recently been undertaken, led by the EYFS leaders in each school of the federation.
- The Assistant Headteacher has worked with her counterpart from their federation partner school, on developing middle-leadership capacity. Development opportunities have included the design of monitoring programmes to support school improvement and the provision of training on monitoring impact over time.
- The school has developed effective links with parents and is keen to ensure that they reach the whole community. For instance, the new 'Tree House' hub houses the pre-school and plans are in place to use this space for health professionals to run clinics and drop-in sessions so that links with families are made right from birth. The school has a good developing relationship with the nursery provider, with the area manager being a governor at the school. Activities to promote pre-school use of the library have been started and the school's speech and language specialist runs workshops with the pre-school parents. The pre-school has begun to implement a version of the school's behaviour for learning code helping smoother transition for pupils.

Risks that are could prevent the school from maintaining overall good effectiveness

- The school recognises that alongside the need to improve writing, to be in line with national averages, there is a gender gap in pupil outcomes, with girls outperforming boys in both reading and writing. The school improvement priorities reflect this and the work on first hand experiences and on talk for writing are beginning to have an impact, particularly on boys' motivation to write, as seen on the learning walk.

- There is a drive to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and those with SEND, but outcomes are sometimes hampered by the immediate and often severe emotional difficulties experienced by the children. Last year there were ten fixed-term exclusions (involving five children), despite the inclusive provision described earlier as seen on the visit. The school is hampered by waiting times for support services and the high thresholds for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and staff feel that younger children are not being supported. The school have made reciprocal arrangements with a local infant school to try to avoid exclusions in the future. There is an improving picture for violent incidents in school, with 21 incidents recorded in the year up to September 2016 reducing to four incidents recorded September 2017.
- Recruitment and retention are a risk factor for the school, with a member of staff due to retire at the end of this academic year and two teachers on maternity leave. Succession planning is a key part of the school improvement plan and rightly includes possibilities of exploiting the flexibility of the federation.
- Speech and language needs are increasing year on year and 13% of the current Year R have had speech and language needs identified. The school are endeavouring to deliver training and information to parents and hope that by increasing their involvement in the pre-school provision, they will access families earlier.

School Improvement Priorities:

1. Growth Mind-set with further development of childrens' understanding of their potential and responsibility to achievement. This will include them being involved in their own target setting.
2. The development of process feedback and process display.
3. Development of metacognition strategies
4. Further development of peer learning and collaboration. This will be achieved through Philosophy for Children being established as a key learning strategy.
5. Further development of teacher's skills in using and interpreting subject class and group data
6. Consistent outcomes in line or better than national averages for writing and phonics
7. To continue to develop and enrich the curriculum providing challenge and excitement.

Funding:

LLP core funding 9632E