



**North Tyneside Council**

# SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT VISIT REPORT

**School: (7007) Silverdale School**

**LA: North Tyneside**

**Date: 22/06/2022, 12:00**

**Adviser: Gina White**

**Term: Summer : 25/04/2022 - 21/07/2022**

**Focus: Summer SDP Visit**

**Headteacher: Peter Gannon**

**Attendees:**

**Latest Ofsted Grade: Good**

**LA Category: SLA Level 1**

## Summary of Visit

---

During the 2021 / 2022 academic year three School Development Partner (SDP) visits took place. Two of the visits were able to take place in school and one was held online. Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and leaders of subjects. Discussions also took place with pupils. Lessons were visited and pupils work was reviewed. The school website was checked for compliance and the school's work to keep pupils safe was scrutinised.

---

## Curriculum

---

- The starting points for new pupils arriving at the school was a little lower than previous years in the primary phase of the school. Class teachers and support staff were able to quickly identify what was needed to support their learning in literacy and numeracy.
- Many more pupils with complex learning and behaviour needs joined the school. Physical alterations to the Learning Centre, and adaptations to the curriculum to focus more on literacy, numeracy and preparing them for adulthood have helped to support their learning. Pupils are learning with individual support and are able to sustain attention and engagement.
- The school's reading framework is helping some pupils to acquire the habit of regular reading. Book corners in classrooms in primary and middle school support this ambition and pupils say there is a good selection of books to choose. Primary pupils are keen to read and some pupils take books home and read them most nights. Progress has remained strong throughout the year in reading and in English in the Primary phase.
- Most older pupils enter the school with the technical skills to read but many have issues with comprehension and understanding what they read. Work to support these pupils takes place in English lessons and many are able to gain accreditation in the form of functional skills qualifications to support them in moving on to further education, employment and training opportunities. The headteacher recognises that further work to embed a culture of reading throughout the school is needed and this is a priority for next year.
- Learning walks and book scrutiny found that pupils who attend the ARP follow a well-planned and differentiated programme of work in English and mathematics. Pupils do study a wider curriculum but their books showed that work undertaken in foundation subjects was sometimes not structured or differentiated well enough to support their learning and progress. Leaders are taking action to review the curriculum to ensure that it is planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and pupils are supported to make progress in their learning.
- Pupils in the secondary phase of the school are enjoying a wide range of subjects and outdoor activities such as water sports. In discussions, they explained that by taking part they are finding that they can achieve things that they hadn't previously realised they could.
- The school has revised planning and teaching of the PSHE curriculum this year to include units of work from the statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum. As a result of this work, discussions with Key Stage 4 pupils found that they were aware of sexual harassment and had a clear understanding about consent. Staff who provide these sessions are well trained and work hard to establish trust. Pupils are confident and comfortable in taking part in discussions and asking questions.

## Safeguarding

---

- The school carries out all the statutory checks when recruiting staff to work at the school. The single central record (SCR) is carefully maintained and regularly reviewed by governors.
- Staff undertake annual training to keep children safe in education and regular updates throughout the year ensure that they stay abreast of developments nationally and locally. Training in the last two terms has focused on child sexual exploitation, risks to children from County lines and involvement in gang activity in the locality.
- Pupils are taught about risks and how to stay safe. They are aware of sexual abuse and harassment. They know how to block offensive material sent to them online and how to report the offender to Tik Tok and CEOPs. Pupils say they feel safe at school. If they are upset, or worried about another pupil, they have no hesitation in telling a member of staff.

## Leadership and management including governance

---

- This year has been testing for leaders and staff. Many challenges have arisen due to the pandemic which unsettled pupils. Additional emotional and mental health support to help pupils get back on track with learning, behaviour and attendance have been successful for the vast majority.
- Leaders anticipated these challenges well and the plan for recovery has largely been enacted although some timescales, particularly around establishing regular checks on teaching and learning, slipped due to waves of Covid-19 and other illnesses that affected staff absence in the autumn and spring terms.
- Actions to improve the curriculum are taking place using the expertise of teams of teachers to plan a coherent, progressive curriculum in a few subjects. More subjects are planned to be reviewed in this way and it would be helpful to accelerate this work.
- Leaders have made progress in recruiting staff, and in providing training and support for new staff and early career teachers (ECT). A programme of development, including mentors, is in place for three teachers. Additional programmes to recruit and support unqualified staff to develop their careers and gain accreditation have been introduced. The headteacher believes these programmes are an advantage in recruiting staff to Silverdale.
- Governors are well informed, attend meetings and ask challenging questions to hold leaders to account.
- It is sometime since the school had an Ofsted inspection and the school is due a re-inspection soon. The headteacher is fully aware of the strengths and aspects of the school's work that need to improve and he is drafting plans to discuss with governors. A review of the website earlier in the year found that the school is not publishing all of the information that it is required to about the content of the curriculum in every subject. The school are advised to rectify this omission before Ofsted's re- inspection.

## Behaviour and attendance including exclusions

---

- High rates of Covid-19 and sickness rates amongst staff during the autumn term led to further disruption to attendance and the partial re-introduction of remote learning for some groups for a short time. More pupils joined the school with complex needs around behaviour and self-regulation. Many older pupils, found it difficult to readjust to learning and the routines of school. These factors contributed to higher than usual behavioural incidents and exclusions at the start of the year
- Leaders and staff worked effectively together to establish routines, reduce behaviour incidents and the use of physical restraint. Training to support staff in managing difficult situations with de-escalation techniques, a revised behaviour reward system across the school and a consistent approach by leaders and staff had a positive impact to restore a calm and productive working atmosphere in lessons and around school.
- By the end of the autumn term pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 could see significant changes to behaviour at break and lunchtimes and a more productive working atmosphere in lessons. Changes to behaviour in the upper school were noted in the summer term visit; pupils responded well to a high staff presence, improved outdoor space and facilities for recreation. Behaviour around school appears to be better than it is in lessons according to pupils views in discussions and a recent school survey. It would be helpful to investigate why, and to undertake further research into strategies used in schools who have similar cohorts to improve behaviour even further.
- Around three quarters of pupils who completed a recent survey said that they have missed school due to Covid-19. Overall school attendance has fallen to 89% compared to pre pandemic levels that were typically above 94%. There is much variation in attendance across the different school sites and groups of pupils.
- The school's approach to attendance was discussed in the summer SDP meeting. It is clear that the current strategies used to support and improve attendance have a greater impact on some pupils and age groups but appear to work less well with older pupils. Although much effort goes into tackling persistent absence the headteacher rightly identifies attendance as a key area for improvement. It may be helpful to see how another local special school, that works with some young people who struggle to achieve 90% attendance, are able to secure and demonstrate improvements. Further guidance is also available from North Tyneside's attendance service.