



North Tyneside Council

Spring SDP Visit Report

School/Setting: Silverdale School (7007)

LA: North Tyneside

Date: 23/03/2023, 13:00

Adviser: Gina White

Term: Spring : 09/01/2023 - 31/03/2023

Focus: Spring SDP Visit

Headteacher/Manager: Peter Gannon

Attendees:

Latest Ofsted Grade: Good

LA Category: SLA Level 1

Issues

- The school currently does not have a specific school policy about online safety. Leaders and governors are urged to swiftly rectify this omission.

Summary of Visit

This visit included meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff responsible for monitoring attendance and eight pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8. A joint book look was undertaken with senior leaders. The school's safeguarding policy and information about online safety was reviewed on the school website.

Curriculum

- A whole school focus on reading and writing is helping pupils to make better progress in their learning. A more structured approach to identifying the barriers to reading and writing and providing the right support, at the right time, is helping pupils to read with more confidence and to write more fluently. The expectation is for pupils to be functional readers and to build from this. The school has identified a series of progressive steps to underpin the work they do to support writing.
- Pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8 say that they can see the difference that the support has made to their learning. They can identify their progress in very specific ways for example, "I used to run all my words together, it was difficult to read but I was taught to use finger spaces, capital letters and full stops. Handwriting sessions have helped me to improve." The progress made is evident in pupils' books. Pupils are writing more and responding to carefully constructed exercises and questions about a text they are reading.
- A review of pupils books showed that they study excerpts from a wide range of texts. They also have more opportunities to develop and practice reading skills. Pupils are read to, or follow the text in lessons, and have more access to reading material in the form of books, online books that they can choose to read themselves, or be read to.
- A 'love of reading' is not fully established, although leaders are noting that more pupils are using the reading corners at lunchtimes. Some pupils say that they don't have books at home or the opportunities to read that they have at school. However, they are proudly acquiring the reading skills they need to do tasks that are important to them, such as playing complex computer games, understanding instructions and responding to texts from other users when playing online.
- Pupils are also learning skills that are useful to support their learning across the curriculum. Some pupils in Years 7 and 8 are proud of their skills; they can identify characters, parts of speech, and have learnt to pick out relevant information in a text using different coloured highlighters. The school has initiated a 'word of the week' and pupils relish the challenge of including it in their writing.
- A book review with leaders identified many strengths emerging in the school's focus on reading and writing. It would be useful to see a development beyond writing frames with more opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes, such as letters, science experiments, arguing a case, organising information and picking out key points.

Safeguarding

- The school's safeguarding policy includes a reference to staff learning about their roles and responsibilities including emerging issues of e-safety. However there is no specific school policy about online safety.
- Pupils are taught about online safety as part of the curriculum, particularly in PSHE lessons and when using computers.
- In discussions, pupils are clear about who they should tell and what they should do if they find anything online that is upsetting, or if someone sends a malicious text or image to them when using a computer or mobile phone.
- Support and guidance are provided on the school website, including access to a safeguarding team of named staff, to assist parents, carers or guardians who have concerns about the online safety of their children.

Leadership and management including governance

- The headteacher and senior leaders are moving forward rapidly with plans to improve the teaching of reading and writing. School wide training has led to consistent and well-structured approaches to better identify, and support, pupils who struggle to read and write well. Pupils' progress is improving in response to the measures taken. Book checks, discussions with pupils, and learning walks are helping to inform, and reassure senior leaders and governors that school development plans are being implemented effectively and demonstrate the difference they are making to pupils.
- Information about pupils arriving in September has already been shared with the school by the local authority. This gives the school time to plan and to implement a full transition programme so that pupils joining the school get off to a flying start. Additional training for staff on trauma recovery has already been identified as a priority to meet the needs of these pupils.
- The school continues to experience challenges around staff absence. Ongoing support from the authority's HR department and work to fill vacancies will hopefully ensure that the curriculum is back to full strength shortly.

Behaviour and attendance including exclusions

- Behaviour is generally calm around school and in discussions pupils give considered responses to questions from adults and other visitors to the school.
- The headteacher's monitoring and review has found that when behaviour incidents occur, they are typically more violent, and require more staff to resolve them. The school has had to resort to permanent exclusion of a pupil.
- Much of the change that staff are witnessing is due to the increasing complexity of children's needs. The school has responded with additional training for staff on trauma informed approaches and recovery. The internal counselling offer that operates across all school sites has been expanded further and the school has appointed their own salaried counsellor.
- Greater collaboration is also taking place with the local Youth Offending Team, the Meadowell community prevention and exploitation team, and leaders have a good knowledge of the local schemes available to support young people.
- Leaders have made much progress towards improving pupils' attendance. All pupils have an attendance target and gain points in the school's rewards system for meeting it. Attendance has risen by 10% compared to the same period last year and it is moving more securely to that typically seen pre-covid.
- Absence is closely monitored and followed up weekly to identify whether the trajectory in attendance is improving, staying the same, or declining. Unauthorised absence is swiftly followed up with formal letters to parents, support plans, and link workers to work with the family to secure improvements in their children's attendance.