

Primary School visits / virtual meetings to support a review of standards, recovery and planning for improvement 2020/21

Name of School: Glyne Gap School

Name of Adviser: Bob Wall

Date of Report: Thursday 8th October 2020 (Remote)

Aim

- This year, due to the exceptional circumstances of the Coronavirus epidemic, we are offering all LA maintained schools termly support. Through terms 1-4 (to be reviewed for term 5 and 6) this support will be either a visit or an online meeting with their external advisers.
- We are seeking to support schools in their reflection, self-evaluation and forward planning.
- We do not intend to use the process to re-categorise schools, but recognise that some senior leaders and governors may request that we do so.

Process

There are three stages to the review process:

- a) Managing the full reopening of the school
- b) Looking back at the school improvement journey between September 2019 and March 2020 (school self-evaluation prior to lockdown)
- c) Looking forward and planning the school's recovery curriculum

It is important to be flexible and respond to changing local and national circumstances and the most up to date DfE guidance. We anticipate that advisers and leaders will most likely wish to use separate visits / meetings to address each stage over time

The headteacher should send the latest version of the summary of self-evaluation and the current school improvement plan and any recovery documents to the external adviser once the date for the first meeting has been arranged.

This form should be completed by the adviser, headteachers may wish to use the form to support preparation for the meeting however there is no expectation it will be completed by the headteacher. The appendices give guidance to support the conversations and gathering of information during stages a), b) and c).

When completing this form, the adviser should consider the vision, values and ambitions of Excellence for All.

1. Summary Report *(to be produced once stages a, b and c are complete)*

The school's key challenges re recovery to a full curriculum provision

- The school, a special school, was open to all pupils throughout the "lockdown" period as all pupils have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and were "entitled" to attend school. Attendance was limited throughout the "lockdown" period to July 2020 due to the school's capacity to provide a full-time education and parent/carers' decisions regarding the safety of their children. This was particularly significant in some cases where pupils have significant health issues.
- The most significant challenge to recovery will continue to be pupil attendance. The school has planned and adopted an extremely well-structured and proactive approach to

recovery to full curriculum provision. However, these plans are reliant on both pupils attending onsite and the school being able to continue to make full-time provision.

- The school has considered in considerable detail the impact of physical restrictions to curriculum provision. For example, pupils at the co-located sixth form facility (The Faculty, based at Bexhill College) are currently physically isolated from their mainstream peers and the mainstream college building. However, the headteacher has indicated that this is not restricting the pupils' curriculum provision and the same analysis applies at the school's main site and at the co-located nursery provision.

Any risks to recovery

- The risks to the school's curriculum recovery largely relate to the full-time attendance of pupils and the school's ability to provide educational provision if all pupils are in attendance:
 - The potential impact of pupils being diagnosed with COVID-19 are significant, both for the pupil concerned but also the impact on the school community. In simple terms, such an outbreak would impact on the individual pupil and their bubble. This would have an obvious negative impact on attendance. In addition, the level of parental/carer anxiety is heightened due to the higher incidence of pupil health needs and medical vulnerability. The impact of this anxiety, in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19, on pupil attendance could be expected to be considerable.
 - The ability to provide full-time educational provision is dependent on maintaining full staffing levels. As a special school, levels of staffing and staff/pupil ratios at the school are considerably higher than in mainstream schools. The school is currently operating in a number of isolated bubbles and the capacity of senior managers to move staff to cover either "normal" or COVID-19 related staff absence is considerably more limited than normal. This will undoubtedly have an impact on the school's recovery. Indeed, the headteacher reported that there have already been incidences where provision has been reduced due to the inability of the school to cover staff absence.
 - The final risk is a combination of the above. If a staff member were to have a confirmed case of COVID-19 there would be an impact on both the school's ability to staff certain bubbles within the school, an impact on pupil attendance to those bubbles and a potential further negative impact on pupil attendance through (naturally) heightened parental/carer anxiety.

Quality of the school's contingency planning for a future local outbreak

- The school has undertaken considerable work in relation to their risk assessment and this is reviewed and updated every week.
- The headteacher is proactive in her approach to the pandemic and provision at the school. She has ensured that staff morale has been maintained at a very high level throughout the pandemic and lockdown period. The school culture and underlying values have had a significant impact on staff morale. Importantly the headteacher has maintained highly effective and regular communication with staff, maintained a clear focus of safety and as a result staff have felt empowered.
- The school is confident, from practical experience gained between March 2020 and July 2020, that, in the event of a future local outbreak, they can adapt their current provision and make effective educational provision for all pupils.

The school's key priorities for improvement

- The headteacher has been very clear that, in the current context, there is a need to both reduce demands on staff and the wider school community, and to ensure that priorities for improvement are realistic and achievable.

- The school has created a one-year detailed development plan with longer-term development areas included as an appendix, with an awareness that these longer-term areas will not be focused on during the current school year.
- The key priorities included in the current plan for 2020/21 are:
 - Pupil Outcomes**
 - Implement a recovery curriculum approach ensuring that pupils regain friendships and relationships, skills and knowledge as quickly as possible and build on these throughout the school year.
 - Higher attaining pupils at the school's sixth form make rapid progress in employability skills including independent travel.
 - Provision**
 - Enhance the depth of expertise and confidence in the teaching and learning of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) as an essential curriculum area, including Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)
 - Ensure online safety is taught systematically.
 - Review and refine assessment measures for pupils working between P1 and P4 in light of statutory Engagement Profile, due for implementation in September 2021.
 - Develop the school's mental health strategy and ensure it meets the needs of pupils, families, and staff.
 - Leadership and Management**
 - Ensure a skilled and confident workforce through a review of professional development opportunities within the constraints of current practice.
 - Support succession planning through working to enable Assessment Only (AO) route to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for current teaching personnel.

Evaluation of the school's summary of self-evaluation

- Following discussion at the school's previous Term 6 visit an agreed action included an update to the School's self-evaluation. It was agreed that this action would be completed by 31st October 2020. This action is still on target for completion by the date planned. Details from the school's draft self-evaluation were shared both before and during the adviser visit. They clearly show a very thorough, structured and evaluative approach to self-evaluation. The headteacher's detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development/improvement is very clear. She has identified specific areas for development which have become apparent during the COVID pandemic and is realistic about the school's ability to undertake the necessary developments during the current school year (see below).
- The school has identified that they would like to use focussed adviser visit/time to review the school self-evaluation, when completed, during Term 2.

Evaluation of the quality of the school improvement plan

- The school would normally operate a strategic three-year development plan which is then further developed in detail for the current school year. This approach has been hindered by the current COVID-19 pandemic. The three-year plan was due for updating for the 2020/23 period during the 2019/20 school year. The school uses a very thorough approach to engage all school stakeholders in the construction of the development plan. This includes engagement with governors, the entire school staff, pupils and parents along with other stakeholders. This process was significantly disrupted by the pandemic and the school continues to work to develop their longer-term improvement plan.
- The headteacher has discussed and agreed with her senior leaders and governors an approach which acknowledges the difficult current situation but that has identified some important key development priorities that are achievable during the 2020/21 school year. These are identified above. The headteacher is both pragmatic and realistic and acknowledges that successful completion of these developments may be affected by

changes in the national context and the unpredictability of the current situation. This viewpoint is entirely understandable and very realistic.

- Alongside the single year development plan the school has identified longer term development areas in an appendix whilst acknowledging that it will not be possible to work on these during the current school year. Items may be added to this appendix as a result of further and ongoing self-review.
- The structure of the school's three-year development plan is very clear and easily understood. Developments are separated into four broad areas; Outcomes for Pupils; Provision; Leadership and Management; Extending Learning in the Community. Each area is then further divided into a number of sections. This structure has provided a clear system for identifying school improvement priorities and monitoring their implementation and impact over the preceding three-year period. However, changes to the Ofsted Framework, introduced in September 2019, may result in the school considering a change to their existing framework. The impact of the pandemic on the speed of current school development provides an ideal opportunity for the school to review and reflect on this structure before fully developing their next three-year development plan.

The school's involvement in local networks

- Special Schools Network
- Special Schools Alliance

Last Ofsted judgement: Outstanding (Short Inspection, May 2019)

What has the school done to address the key issues from the previous Ofsted inspection?

- **The key issue from the last inspection was:**
Continue to develop the curriculum to enable pupils to leave with the skills and aspirations to become as independent as possible, pursue purposeful activities, contribute to their family and community and, where appropriate, gain meaningful employment.
- The school continues to place a high emphasis on the development of pupils' independence. The constant review and development of the school's curriculum reinforces this priority. The current development plan shows clear examples of the importance placed on this area, with developments identified in the areas of:
 - Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)
 - Sex and Relationship Education (SRE)
 - Online safety.
 - The school's mental health strategy.

Each of these developments address the key issue identified at the last inspection.

- The recent admission of a small number of pupils from Saxon Mount School to Year 12 at the school's sixth form/faculty has coincided with the transfer of a higher ability cohort from the main school site. The school's response to this has been to place an even greater emphasis on the development of the curriculum at the sixth form to provide programmes and activities to promote work and employability skills. This is both a direct response to the changing pupil cohort and the development area suggested at the last Ofsted Inspection.

School's current LA category: One

Is the school/adviser proposing a change to the school's category?

No

What are the priorities for the adviser's ongoing work?

- The review and development of the school's self-evaluation, due for completion in draft by 31st October 2020.
- Discussion and review of the school's three-year development plan structure to ensure that it addresses the school's needs and has responded appropriately to the changes in the Ofsted Framework.
- Next Adviser's visit planned for **Tuesday 25th November 2020** to address these two items.

Further external support required:

None was identified at this time.

2. Next steps

Agreed actions

Action	Who	By When	Success Criteria
Update school self-evaluation.	Headteacher	30/10/20	Updated self-evaluation provides an accurate summary of school's strengths and areas for development.
Produce draft three-year (2020/23) school development plan.	Headteacher	01/04/21	Three-year school development plan, discussed with school stakeholders is finalised and published.
Adviser visit to discuss and review updated school self-evaluation and to consider with school the structure of the school development plan.	School Adviser / Headteacher	25/11/2020	School self-evaluation and development plan structure has been discussed and externally reviewed.

Adviser sign-off

Bob Wall

Appendix A

a) Managing the full reopening of the school

Headings below follow the format of the LA Model Risk Assessment and Recovery Plan documents

The adviser will record any key points relating to each of the areas below from the school risk assessment and any follow up discussion with school leaders.

Quality of the return to school risk assessment process

- The school's risk assessment is based on the East Sussex model. It is reviewed and amended on a weekly basis. Identified hazards have proportionate and suitable control measures in place.
- The school had been unable to admit pupils with tracheostomy in situ as healthcare management could not be delivered within the Department for Education (DfE)/ Public Health England (PHE) guidance. The school has worked with the Designated Medical Office, Matron of Children's Community Nursing Team and parents/carers to create individual risk assessments to facilitate a return to school for these children. Two of these pupils have recently returned to school.
- The school's nursery and sixth form provisions are based on co-located sites at a distance from the main school site. The school's risk assessment has made good allowance for this situation and appropriate control measures are in place.

Organisation and Staffing

- The school has allocated specific roles within the leadership team to keep up to date with the latest government (and other) guidance. The headteacher has briefed staff, governors and parents/carers throughout the pandemic. This has been in depth at a time of significant change to the guidance/practice. The headteacher continues a weekly staff/governor briefing and writes to parents fortnightly. Communication is excellent and a strength of the school's response.
- Relevant school policies (Safeguarding, Health and Safety) have been amended to cover the current context.
- The school has new procedures and expectations in place that impact on pupils, staff, parents and visitors that have been accepted and are being followed. There have been no cases of confirmed Covid-19 cases across the school community.
- School classes work in "bubbles" throughout the day with timetabled access to outside and shared areas. This impacts particularly on younger pupils who have less flexibility to be reactive within their timetable. The school's off-site sixth form operates as one "bubble" as does the school's nursery provision.
- Travel to school arrangements benefit from very strong relationships between the school and the single transport provider. This has meant that the school is able to respond quickly and efficiently to any changes. Arrival at school is managed by senior staff and the school's site manager. There has been minimal disruption to transport or any issues during the pandemic.
- The school's ability to be responsive to need since March 2020 has been evident. This is the result of a strong school culture and highly cohesive leadership. Communication from school leaders to staff and parents/carers has been praised. Staff have felt safe, well consulted and empowered through the process.
- The school is aware that partial/full class closures will likely take place as flexibility to move staff in response to staff absence has been significantly reduced as a result of working in class "bubbles".

- Staff absence has been impacted by the nature of workforce as many staff are primary carers and the impact of the delay in receiving (COVID-19) test results.
- The headteacher and governors are aware of the increased and increasing demands on the school's senior leadership team, school business manager and site staff. This situation is being kept under close review.

Health and Safety

- There have been no confirmed Covid-19 cases in the school and very few suspected cases.
- The school has implemented pro-active hygiene measures which has included employing cleaners to work and clean throughout the school day.
- The school's senior leadership team continue to make good use of East Sussex updates to share information and improve practice.
- Fire drills have taken place both in Term 1 and during the school's partial opening through the 2019/20 school year..
- School catering is provided by Chartwells who have been follow clear and expected practices.

Safeguarding

- The school's safeguarding policy has been updated throughout the lockdown period and the start of the new school year. The policy has been shared with staff through a number of Designated Safeguard Leader (DSL) briefings.
- The school's DSL has undertaken training for all staff on the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) document in September and has undertaken induction training for all staff new to the school.
- The school has now fully moved (April 2020) to Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) as a system for recording and reporting on safeguarding concerns.
- The school's DSL has continued to receive external supervision throughout the pandemic period.
- Attendance records have been maintained and monitored throughout the pandemic and there have been no attendance issues since September other than those for pupils with tracheostomy detailed above. Attendance details are included in Appendix 2 below.
- Safeguarding referrals have not increased during the pandemic or following the full reopening of the school.
- The school has noted a small number of Operation Encompass Alerts which whilst small in number have represented a significant increase on pre-Covid levels.
- The school's DSL is now based at the main school site having moved from the school's sixth form in September 2020.
- The school has three fully trained deputy DSLs who would be able to provide cover in the event that the DSL is absent.

Wellbeing

- The school has historically had and maintains a strong and positive staff culture that has provided strong support for wellbeing and resilience.
- The school has made a number of strategic decisions to support staff wellbeing. For example, all regular supply staff have been paid throughout the lockdown period. The school continues to promote wellbeing initiatives. For example, the school subscribes to the council's online support and counselling service. The school also employs a yoga teacher for staff twice weekly.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team are aware of the continuing need to pace their expectations and demands of staff at this time. For example, teachers have been

given more time than usual to produce updated individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils.

- New members of school staff, who may not yet have been able to develop their own support networks, have regular (eight-weekly) meetings facilitated by senior staff.
- The headteacher is supported by the East Sussex adviser and a newly appointed chair of governors. The headteacher meets with senior staff weekly and the DSL has termly external supervision.
- Staff absence (at all levels) due to mental health issues is low at present.
- The school's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) acknowledge that staff may be more anxious than normal at the present time..
- School staff have been in touch with families on a weekly basis between March and September 2020. Many families have indicated that they are very appreciative of this support which has kept them connected with the school community.
- The school operated a two-week summer holiday club, free to all pupils, to support family wellbeing.
- The headteacher noted that, due to the nature of the pupil cohort, it is very difficult to ascertain the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of pupils. Any responses to need in this area have been on an individual basis.

Contingency planning for a future local outbreak

- The school context and the nature of pupils' needs means that remote learning needs to be very much individualised and delivered by parents/carers.
- Should pupils be unable to attend school, teachers will provide families with weekly activity packs and individual learning targets. These will be reviewed during weekly phone calls to parents/carers.
- The school has been open throughout the lockdown period, initially to the children or keyworkers and those with identified vulnerabilities. From June 2020 the school extended provision and approximately two-thirds of pupils attended for the remainder of Term 6 and the school's holiday club. The headteacher is confident that if there were a local outbreak or a heightened level of lockdown the school could revert to a similar level of provision as previously offered. Furthermore, the experience and expertise gained will place the school in a strong position to make a positive response.

Appendix B

b) Looking back – self evaluation

The adviser will record any key points relating to each of the areas below from the school self-evaluation and any follow up discussion with school leaders.

Evidence to support the school's own judgements prior to lockdown at the end of March

Quality of Education: Outstanding

- The school was judged as outstanding in an Ofsted inspection in May 2019 and has maintained the standards of provision in place at that time.
- The school's curriculum intent is secure and highly relevant for the pupils it serves.
- The school has a clear curriculum that all pupils follow. However, there is also a large degree of flexibility within this to ensure pupils' own strengths and areas of need are built upon. This responsive aspect of the curriculum ensures that pupils' individual strengths and needs are fully addressed.
- There is a strong vocational element to the curriculum for older pupils. The school recognises this requires further development as it has recently admitted a group of higher attaining students from Saxon Mount School.
- Lesson observations were undertaken until March 2020 and the standard of teaching and learning was at least good and often outstanding in all observed lessons.
- The school views its assessment of pupil learning as a strength and uses a number of measures for individual pupils and the school as a whole. There has been a further refinement of these measures over the last school year to ensure relevance and to reduce unnecessary teacher workload.
- School leaders have made the decision to review the impact of the curriculum from September 2018 through to March 2020 (18 months). This has been undertaken at an individual and class level.
- All pupils were judged to have made at least good progress over this 18-month period with a significant number making outstanding progress.

Behaviour and attitudes: Outstanding

- The school was judged as outstanding in an Ofsted inspection in May 2019 and has maintained the standards of provision in place at that time.
- The school's culture of exceptional relationships across the school community (pupil to pupil, staff to pupil, staff to staff and parents/carers) has continued throughout the last academic year and into the new school year.
- These relationships are grounded in school values of respect, friendship, and kindness. Evidence of the impact of this on pupil's behaviour and attitudes is seen in their learning and conduct, which is exemplary. Details of this are particularly apparent in information obtained from lesson observations.
- The small number of pupils who present with behaviour that challenges as an impact of who they are and how they understand the world are well supported with in-depth pro-active plans and risk assessment. The school works closely with parents/carers and other agencies to support pupils' behaviour at home.
- There have been no recorded incidents of bullying, peer on peer abuse or discrimination over the past year, although staff are well trained to recognise and report any incidents and remain open to this as a possibility.

- Whole school attendance remains lower than East Sussex/National requirements and is impacted upon by the nature of pupils' medical conditions.
- Individual absence is always investigated daily, and the school's DSL analyses attendance for individual pupils which is less than 85% on a termly basis.
- Punctuality across school is excellent and there have been no exclusions.
- Attendance from school reopening in September to Friday 2nd October is 81.5% with 0% unauthorised absence. Whilst this level of attendance is lower than normal the impact of the continuing absence of pupils with significant health concerns remains an issue for the school. The headteacher also reported that partial closures as a result of staff impact may well impact levels of attendance in the near future.

Personal Development: Outstanding

- Pupils experience a curriculum that promotes their personal development and is considered as equally important as other areas of their development. As a result, pupils across the school make excellent progress in their personal development.
- Personal development (and the sub-areas contained within) is assessed explicitly throughout the school year and the school provides pro-active measures to further support progress if needed.
- Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development is assessed and planned for explicitly.
- The school has a system of "Supergoals" which are key objectives for each individual pupil, set by school and family. These are very often focussed on personal development and will often, when achieved, have an impact across all areas of the pupil's life.
- The school is currently meeting all of the requirements of PSHE/SRE 2020 and is supporting work build teacher confidence in teaching and assessment of this area of the curriculum over the coming school year.

Leadership & Management: Outstanding

- The school continues to have pupil wellbeing and learning central to its culture, policies, and practices. This is visible and tangible at all levels.
- Governors continue to employ a Professional Advisor to support them in their accountabilities and have an Associate Governor to support the leadership and governance of safeguarding.
- There has been a change of Chair of Governors in September 2020. The new chair of governors is an experienced special school leader and led a non-maintained school extremely successfully for a number of years. She has an excellent understanding of school management and governance and has extensive experience of entrepreneurial leadership of a school. She is enrolled on the East Sussex governor induction training.
- The culture of safeguarding has been enhanced over the last two years through training and an ongoing focus on improvement. This has resulted in a culture of pro-active safeguarding. The school works very effectively with a range of professionals and is supported by external supervision.
- An external safeguarding review took place in 2019. A follow up visit from East Sussex SLES took place in the same year to ensure short and medium term actions were completed.
- One item from the 2019/20 safeguarding audit (explicit teaching of online safety) remains a focus in this year's school development plan.

- The school has a long history of developing the talents and skills of its workforce. This commitment is evidenced through progressive school improvements over many years, including the creation of role for the management of professional development across the school. The school is currently supporting an unqualified teacher (who commenced work at the school as an apprentice) to gain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) through the Assessment Only (AO) route.
- The school is disappointed to have had that it has had to pause termly Class Team Development Meetings due the Covid-19 pandemic. These meetings are highly valued by staff and critical to staff development. The Professional Development leader has been working with teachers to develop these meetings over last school year and they have been highly successful in enabling teachers to develop their class teams as a whole.
- A number of initiatives have been implemented over the last year to support and improve teacher wellbeing. These have included a reduction in Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) requirements, maintaining pay for supply staff over partial school closure and the introduction of mental health support plans for some staff.
- Wellbeing and Mental Health for the school community continues to be a strong focus of the development plan for the current school year.

Appendix C

c) The initial steps taken towards recovery

The adviser will record any key points relating to each of the areas below from the school improvement plan and any follow up discussion with school leaders.

Understanding the impact of the partial closure

- The school extended Term 6 for two weeks to support pupils and families and consider this had a positive impact on families' ability to cope over the summer holidays. 75% of children were attending at this time (20% of pupils were unable to attend at this time due to shielding).
- There has not been a common theme to the impact of the school's partial closure. Some pupils and families have thrived and enjoyed the time, whilst others have struggled. Those who have found it most challenging have not always been those identified as most vulnerable within the school's contexts. The headteacher has noted that this impact has implications for further targeted support for certain pupils and their families and this will be discussed as part of the school's regular termly liaison meetings.
- A significant number of pupils remain on shielding lists and this may impact their ability to attend school over coming months. It also has an impact on the overall attendance of pupils at the school. The school also recognises that parents/carers may have a different view over their child's vulnerability which the school may need to support and manage.
- Many of the school staff are primary carers and have children in a number of local schools. Other school closures may impact on Glyne Gap School's ability to maintain a large enough workforce to operate effectively. This is further compounded by working in class "bubbles" with the related difficulty of redeploying available staff across the school.

Planning your recovery curriculum

- The impact of home learning has again lacked any clear pattern. Some pupils (and their families) have thrived, whilst others have struggled to engage with any learning. The school has struggled to make any general observations. However, if any generalisations can be made, it is that many pupils have progressed in terms of their self-help skills and development of independence. Two areas of pupil development that appear to have been most significantly negatively affected. The first relates to communication skills, and particularly younger pupils who are learning to use structured communication systems, for example the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), who have lost skills. The second relates to pupils who have lost skills in following an adult led agenda. The understandable reality is that families have had to let these things slip in order to manage family life during lockdown. The headteacher has noted the need to support wider family ability and confidence to drive communication development at home as a longer term are for school development.
- The school is using the first six weeks of Term 1 to re-assess pupils against previous attainment and to check/re-start provision that is needed to support learning. This process is being led by class teachers and monitored by the school's three Assistant Headteachers (AHTs) through regular class liaison meetings.
- The school is intending to provide each pupil with an individualised "recovery curriculum" (via their IEP) and these will be in place from Term 2 onwards. The school recognises that this is likely to prove challenging and unpredictable as the term progresses. It also recognises the difficulties for older pupils for whom significant learning is community based.

- The headteacher has identified priorities for the development of the quality of education in the medium term. This will focus on ensuring pupils' communication skills and PSHE are fully re-assessed, individual targets are set, and provision is matched to individual targets. At present the headteacher indicates that this work will take place in Terms 3 and 4.
- The school has also established longer term development priorities (Terms 5 and 6) which include the continuation of PSHE/SRE curriculum development work which commenced in the 2019/20 school year, and establishing an "extended" curriculum for higher attaining Faculty students (including a number who transferred from Saxon Mount in September 2020).