

Glyne Gap School Bexhill-on-Sea



Provision Review: Partnership working

Date of On Site Review: 20th June 2023

Reviewers: Claire Lillis and Ro St John

Final Issue Date: 18th July 2023

ESCC Monitoring Framework for State-funded Special Schools

Appendix 1: Monitoring Visit Report for ESCC State-Funded Special Schools

School	Glyne Gap School		Designation	SEN - VI, SLCN, ASD, PD, MLD, SLD
Headteacher	Kirsty Prawanna			
Number of places	Capacity 108 Pupils on roll is 125 (120.5 FTE due to Nursery pupils attending part time)		Age range	2 to 19
Number of classes			Class groupings	14 Pupils are grouped according to age and learning needs
Last OfSTED Inspection	Date	9 May 2019	Recommendations for improvement: Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that: They continue to develop the curriculum to enable pupils to leave with skills and aspirations to become as independent as possible, pursue purposeful activities, contribute to their family and community and, where appropriate, gain meaningful employment.	
	Grade	Outstanding		
Policies and procedures			Yes	
Is your school/trust compliant with the relevant information including all statutory policies?			The school/ trust believes it is compliant with all relevant information and statutory policies	
Safeguarding – What were the outcomes of the LA safeguarding review? What actions have been taken to address any recommendations?				
<p>No immediate actions were identified following the review in November 2022.</p> <p>The review made several recommendations for consideration. The school reviewed these recommendations and produced an Action and Monitoring Plan. All recommendations were considered and most were adopted. Two potential improvements that the school does not think are necessary at the point. Two improvements relating to streamlining practice are acknowledged but are not ready to adopt.</p> <p>Summary of Key findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online safety - The Policy has been updated and will be shared with staff Term One. The school carefully identified Post 16 pupils that need bespoke resources and learning that will support them to remain safe online. Pupils are assessed in the Pupil Progress and Liaison meetings. Support and training are also offered to parents and carers. • Health Input - The school is meeting the needs of those pupils with complex medical needs as well as those who have social, emotional, sensory regulation needs very well through their own internal 				

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systems of support. This may not be sustainable in the medium term without external resource support. This remains an ongoing unresolved issue and will be explored in this report. Health colleagues could support the school with developing an electronic system for its first aid and medical recording and reporting.

- Actions from the Safeguarding Policy and Behaviour Policy will be addressed by term 6.
- The school have moved to an electronic system for tracking and monitoring safeguarding concern.
- All items relating to the Workforce and Volunteers' section have been actioned.

Areas for consideration following this Review:

- The school is based on a reduced, restricted site. An emerging issue is that the school is seeing an increasing number of pupils starting school who have severe learning difficulties with complex speech and language needs as well as Autism. The classrooms are small with a high number of pupils and a low ratio of staff. This is compounded by a lack of break out rooms or separate areas that can be accessed easily. The LA may not be able respond to local need and demand unless there is a creative solution and Capital Investment in the school building.
- The school lost its extensive playing fields during Academy conversion. There is now very limited external area. The pupils well being could be significantly enhanced if they had access to an external play space that supported their complex needs. Reviewers also noted that the current playground leads directly onto the driveway and road. Whilst this is fenced the changing profile of the pupils with potential climbing/absconding risks may need to be reviewed.

Date of visit:	20 th June 2023
Led by:	Claire Lillis
Staff involved in the visit	HT, DHT, Post16 Faculty Lead, Chair of Governors.
Activities included in the visit	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Documentation provided in advance: • ESCC Safeguarding Visit / Report • 175 Safeguarding Audit • Safeguarding Action Plan • SDP 2022-23 • Floor Plans • SEF • Standards and Learning Effectiveness Service External Advisor - November 22 • Advisor to the Governing Body Visit report - January / February 23 • School website • Ofsted Report 2019 • There was a discussion of the external Documentation provided in advance by the reviewers. • Pre Visit meeting CL and KP (on line) • Pre Visit meeting CI and Ro x2 (on line and in person) 	

- Schedule discussed and agreed prior to the visit with the school outlining the 3 key areas for additional focus.
- Appendix one - Detailed programme of the day that outlines the activities undertaken.

Based on detail from SEF/discussions with school leadership:

Key areas of strength

The school embraces external support and challenge. This is evidenced by the extensive external advisor documentation and the HTs approach to the QA visit.

The lead Consultant and Head teacher had a pre visit contextual meeting which was useful in order to prioritise the focus of the QA visit:

- The school would like monitoring officers to consider the school's recent work regarding its post 16 curriculum and careers work for its highest attaining pupils. In the 21/22 school year, the school graded its 'Personal Development' as good and recognised curriculum development for a particular group of pupils in the SDP. Following this work, the school has re-graded its self evaluation to outstanding.
- The school recognises that it has a growing population of pupils with ASC who are non verbal communicators and (likely) have a severe learning disability. The school works hard to ensure the communication needs of these pupils are met alongside their sensory needs. The school has implemented enhanced CPD for all staff in this area this year and would be keen to use monitoring officer's expertise for feedback of impact.
- The headteacher would appreciate focussed discussion on 2 areas linked to the school's strategic planning. The first is systems to support school to school working/development in a MAT. The other is consideration of leadership structures (given recent school-led benchmarking exercise and DfE School Resource Management Advisor findings).

The Annual School Evaluation Visit Report 1/11/23 confirms the schools SEF judgement for overall effectiveness as Outstanding.

The School SEF, SDAP and SAP are detailed, evaluative documents that are robustly monitored by the experienced Governing Body.

Given the timing in the academic year of this visit, the documents will all require reviewing in Term One and much progress has been made in several key areas 2022-23.

Key areas of strength are captured in the "What the school does well" document:

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- It provides a positive atmosphere, culture, and ethos for all to enjoy.

From the minute you walk into the school it feels a happy space for the whole school community. Staff are relaxed, but purposeful and ever attentive to the pupils needs. There is a strong sense of a team working together and supporting each other. There is much laughter and smiling even when there are difficulties.

- It progresses pupils learning and has this as an unrelenting focus for all to enjoy.

Every classroom has learning boards with goals and super goals for each child. Staff can describe each child's profile and the progress they make in all areas of school life.

- It provides excellent teaching.

During the Learning walks there was a breadth of curriculum and experience for all key stages. Teachers used different activities to engage the wide ranging, complex needs of pupils.

- It provides superb care for its pupils.

Staff are trained to meet the complex needs of pupils. It is evident that pupils are well cared for despite the building limitations and lack of external agency engagement.

- It recruits the best staff and develops and grows them.

In meetings with staff, they described the comprehensive CPD programme that through the school year giving staff access to a wide range of training. This starts with a strong induction programme, In house training and twilight sessions that are linked to the SEF and SDP. Staff are also encouraged and supported to undertake bespoke CPD and many have been supported to gain teaching qualifications. This investment in staff has led to good staff retention even at a time when many other schools are struggling to recruit and retain staff.

- The school has an open door policy and encourages families in to school for a range of reasons: sports day, parents/carers evening, planning meetings and for assemblies. It also opens the school on a Saturday once a term for Family Day. It also runs termly training events to support families in gaining knowledge and skills to support children, including supporting parents/carers to make own resources in school for use at home. The school considers parents/carers as first teachers and endeavours to involve them in their child's learning.

The school's great strength is its own awareness that everything they do can always be better - this is the sign of a truly exceptional school leadership and ethos.

Priorities for development

The school SEF/SDP and SAP set out the areas for improvement and these are regularly robustly reviewed through several school and governance structures. These documents were also reviewed in the Annual Report and described as "very clear, detailed, well-structured and realistic" (BW /11/22)

There are two areas not captured in these documents due to the sensitivities and confidentiality around these strategic priorities.

Both areas formed a major part of the visits focus for the Lead Reviewer and HT.

- Transfer to a MAT - Given the pressures on funding, capacity issues of a single Academy, Leadership succession planning and the current Political Agenda the HT has wisely explored joining a MAT. Several Trusts have been considered. The GB has resolved to apply to the RSC to transfer to a local MAT in 2023-24. This is potentially a great opportunity for the school but there will be a number of decisions to make and will require careful planning in addition to the usual school development focus.
- The Post 16 Faculty which is based in Bexhill College has been given notice on 8/24. Whilst the HT and CoG are now being optimistic there remain many uncertainties that need urgent clarification. The Post 16 faculty is a major strength of the school as pupils make outstanding progress in this area of their school lives. It is from this base that pupils truly learn skills for transitioning to adulthood, so it is imperative that the new facility is as good or better as the Bexhill College Premises.

Key points discussed in respect to key aspects of school provision

Leadership and management

The school is split over 3 sites, caters for a wide age range (2-19) and the pupils have a highly complex range of education, health, and care needs. There are over 100 pupils on roll.

This is a challenging school. The leadership embrace these challenges with a positive, "can do" approach.

The current headteacher has been in role for 10 years and is well supported by an equally long serving, dedicated, experienced Senior leadership team. They have a strong Governing Body. All are very passionate about their work. They provide exceptional leadership that is evident in all areas of school life.

The leadership is a major strength of the school, and this results in considerable experience and expertise that can meet the needs of the pupils.

The school leadership managed the school through a global pandemic. They report that with its cohort at the time it had a limited impact on the pupils and that the whole community was kept safe. However, the consequences are now far reaching and can be seen in the new admission profiles. Department of Health ensured that the vaccine was available to staff at the first roll out.

External advisors have conducted deep dives into the curriculum and report that the leadership team review progress data and this impacts on strategic decisions. This is evident in the Early Reading

programme where it was identified that a number of pupils could make better progress this was actioned in the SDP. The advisor reported that this Early reading programme was a success and pupils are now making greater progress. A similar approach was taken by the leadership with the higher performing Post 16 cohort who are making exceptional progress in their internship scheme.

Areas for consideration:

- The leadership team are long standing staff and if there were a change the school could be vulnerable. There is much loyalty from the staff team to their leaders and change could lead to further change of staff and a period of instability.
- There is currently a lack of collaborative work with external agencies. One speech and language therapist one day per week, one occupational therapist one day per week, no school nurse, little work directly with social care, no involvement at Annual reviews or Transition meetings. This may be due to the lack of skill set, availability due to pressures in the system or a school pedagogy that has become embedded to fill previous gaps in service. Currently a wide range of needs are met by the education staff who are trained in house. This approach is likely to be unsustainable especially if there were a change in leadership and staff. It also places undue pressures on the three DSL and staff team.

The school's plans to transfer to MAT will put additional pressure on the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. Even a transfer involves a considerable amount of time during the due diligence process. There will be many aspects to consider including the MAT proposed Scheme of Delegation, Reserves, staffing structure, alignment of policies and TUPE arrangements. The school may need additional support or change of roles at leadership level during the next phase of development.

- The 3 school buildings sites all have major issues and the school need external support to resolve these: Post 16 termination notice September 2024. The LA is sourcing alternative accommodation but there are many uncertainties at this stage. Main site - restricted and in need of modernising, including the external space. A porta cabin that was installed as a temporary solution in 1991 is still in full operational use for staff and families. Finally, the Nursery site has a complicated history and like the playing fields was also transferred to another Trust. This also bears the same risk as the Post 16 provision and the current space is not fit for purpose. It may be that being part of a MAT will give the school leadership greater voice and capacity to resolve some of these issues. The school will need to work in partnership with commissioners to move these issues forward.
- As noted in the Annual Reviewers report the school website needs updating.

Staffing

The staff team are a major strength of this school. They are highly trained and skilled, dedicated, professional and loyal to the school's ethos. There is a feeling that leadership and staffing envelope themselves around the pupils and families. They work together to provide an exceptional level of provision and embrace the belief they can always improve.

This sense of professional progress is supported and encouraged through the rigorous approach to CPD. The school have a comprehensive CPD programme for all staff covering a multitude of relevant and identified priority areas. The twilight sessions are offered to every member of the staff community. All staff receive training and a number make career promotions through supported qualification routes. In a meeting with teachers, it was clear that on joining the school there is good induction programme. During their time employed at the school, whether this is 2 or 12 years, there are opportunities for bespoke CPD.

- Each term there is a different focus for CPD that links to the SDP. The sessions cover curriculum, personal development, behaviours, and attitudes as well as SMSC. Support staff also comment that they have regular target setting training.
- The well-trained staff team transfer and apply these skills to every aspect of school life. This creates a purposeful, safe, high ambitious school environment for both staff and pupils. They all play an integral part in the delivery of a broad curriculum.
- The development of TAs throughout the school was exemplary.
- The school have their own communication team made up of a co-ordinator and resource assistant. they work with each class throughout the term to identify communication needs and support teams to implement strategies that support the pupil's complex communication needs.
- During the review all staff expressed that their well being is a leadership priority. The DSL is part of the ESCC MHEW in school's network. This has led to a whole school approach on shared responsibility to well being. There has been a review of workload which resulted in a streamlining of some systems e.g. Annual Review paperwork. Absence rates are monitored with a "wellness offer" for those who need more targeted support. Whole staff team wider issues can be raised at staff briefings.
- Despite the challenges of the work, there is high staff morale.

Points for consideration:

- A common area of staff concern that causes them worry is the lack of engagement with social care they expressed their concern at the recent increasingly high thresholds of referrals. This can result in families being at breaking point and only receiving respite in crisis.
- Ensure that the well being approach is throughout leadership and Governance especially given the current safeguarding levels of responsibility.

Curriculum offer

The reviewers observed a curriculum offer that is broad and has great depth.

Strengths

- The overall curriculum offer is well documented in the school documents and external advisor reports.
- The school has developed their own assessment systems over time – this has been updated since the Rochford review to include the 5 areas of engagement. The school recognises the need for a highly individualised assessment system that shows progress over time for all pupils and is ambitious for all.
- During observations the teaching and learning was of the highest quality. Access to learning was highly adapted to the individual needs including communication styles, sensory needs, levels of independence and cognitive profiles. The staff are highly skilled and responsive as well as adopting proactive strategies consistently. This means pupils are engaged and regulated and where they do experience difficulty, are supported to work through this safely and calmly.

POST 16

- A focus of the visit was a review of the school's recent work with its post 16 curriculum and careers work for its highest attaining pupils. The last inspection Next Steps stated that "Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that: they 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 SEF now grades the Personal Development as Outstanding and quite rightly.
- The post 16 provision is based in Bexhill College. The facility is a real strength of the school and being based in the College could create opportunities for Inclusion that would benefit GG students and the wider college.
- Unlike GG other sites the accommodation is good with adequate space for students and flexible learning areas. The learning spaces are welcoming with up to date, relevant and creative displays.
- The provision is well led by an experienced highly committed and experienced Senior Teacher who has responsibility for employability and is the Acting Faculty Lead.
- The atmosphere of the faculty has an adult feel with high expectations of pupils.
- High aspirations are set for families through Annual Reviews, Goals and Super Goals. These are all supported by an ongoing dialogue between Faculty and Home.
- On a learning walk there were examples of students accessing a wide and rich curriculum experience from Bike Upcycle Project to shopping and cooking.
- In the early days of the Faculty had access to College facilities - PE/Theatre/Hairdressing. They are no longer able to access these due to business of college/or pupils' needs.
- Post 16 Curriculum has 3 pathways (Special Access/Skills for life and Path to Employment) these are mapped out visually in the main entrance area with positive images of pupils enjoying their work and achieving.
- Pupils are assessed in their first year at the Faculty and join appropriate bespoke pathways and are well supported to make progress.

- There has been a Pilot Internship this year that has resulted in exceptional outcomes for the 4 students. The partnership with Little Farm has truly changed lives and provided these students with supported access to the wider Community employability opportunities and routes. Students have had experience at a range of Workplaces -these include Warming up the homeless, Eggs to Apples, Battle Abbey, PE Assistant Sandown school and The Mermaid Hotel Rye. All students are moving onto employment.
- A meeting was held with the Faculty Lead, support TA and Internship student. The student has progressed from being a non-verbal communicator to being able to explain his work, describe his feelings about his success and take part in a discussion about his future ongoing paid employment. Another student on the Internship is now no longer needing his prescribed anxiety medication and has secured independent living.
- This project is exceptional.

Approaches for teaching reading

- The curriculum is highly structured and broken down into key skills and curriculum areas that are relevant and meaningful to the cohort they are supporting.
- They have developed an Early Reading policy and an early reading initiative for pupils who are able to access a phonics programme.
- Early reading and functional literacy are interwoven and embedded throughout the school and staff are highly skilled at implementing strategies that show the ethos and culture of high aspirations for all its pupils.
- Communication is very clearly given the highest priority at Glyne Gap and their individualised approaches as well as the whole school communication environment enables pupils to advocate for themselves and enhances their quality of life and outcomes.

PSHE

- There was a discussion about how the school responds to situations where a pupil may be at risk of displaying harmful sexual behaviours. The school uses the ESCC document to assess risk and when these instances have occurred, they have triggered full reviewed with key stakeholders and made the appropriate referrals in a timely manner (CAMH etc).
- The school demonstrates a highly targeted and individualised approach to teaching key functional and meaningful skills to children and young people via their Super Goal initiative. This is a coproduced (between staff, parents and pupils) target or goal that ensures they are preparing for adulthood from the earliest stages of their education. In a meeting with two pupils their Super Goals were discussed and their access to the community (the supermarket) where they work to achieve these. They showed great understanding and knowledge of their own goals.
- Staff can identify where pupils may need more bespoke support and are able to access that, for example, one pupil is accessing an LGBTQ+ group at Bexhill.

Points for consideration

- Ensure IPAs are up to date, reviewed regularly and when changed – they are shared with parents.
- Although expertly managed by staff, there were times where there was a sense of volatility in the ability of the provision to maintain those high levels of input that individuals need. This was due to staffing levels and a lack of physical space. The Key Stage 1 class had 11 full time pupils with

around 5 members of staff. In that class there was a high level of support needed and the equilibrium was maintained due to high levels of vigilance from staff – however there is concern that this relies on most of the pupils to remain regulated the majority of the time. Given the changing nature of the cohort at Glyne Gap, this may not be sustainable. This highlights the need for an urgent Facility review and partnership solution.

- This review did not consider individual school policies but given the new framework and the complex needs of a wide age range of pupils it may be useful for external audiences if in the curriculum Policy there was a summary diagram that explains the Intent, Implementation and Impact of the overarching framework and stage components.
- In the case of an inspection or as part of due diligence a curriculum document that outlines the specific developments since the short Inspection of 2019 that also addresses the recommendation.
- Seek further external advice on the needs of the emerging range of pupils with an autism diagnosis. This could include teaming up with a specialist Autistic provision which could bring CPD opportunities.

Engagement with families and pupils

The school has many forums through which it develops exceptional support for parents and families. these include BI annual parent/carers evenings/family days and events, parental workshops, and training sessions. The school has regular contact with home and further communicates through a school newsletter and home school books. the school also employs specific home learning workers to support communication skills. The whole family is included, and this is crucial for the well being of all family members.

Attendance is monitored rigorously through weekly attendance meetings where patterns and trends are explored. There is an attendance action plan in place and relevant referrals are made.

Points for consideration:

- A school council relaunch was discussed – this would be a really positive way to enhance the quality of pupil voice and get feedback from pupils.
- In a review of staffing structure when transferring to a MAT there may be an opportunity to explore a multi-agency staff team to give wider support to families e.g. social worker

Evaluating impact of provision

It is clear that the school plays a significant role in enhancing the educational and life experience opportunities of pupils throughout their time at school. This is evident in all the documentation, external visits, parental feedback and it can be observed throughout the school day and in pupil outcomes.

This is a wonderful school that provides outstanding education and care for its pupils and families. IT is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the exceptional headteacher who is supported by their remarkable staff team.

The school is a happy, joyful place of learning for all!

Feedback on engagement with ISEND and other key ESCC partners

The school reports that:

- operationally the EYS Interface is working well and this has been the case for a number of years. "Right children at the right time".
- The school has been frustrated with the therapies provision afforded to pupils and the school over a number of years. Pupils are not well supported for all their EHCP listed therapy needs and the school has inadequate support from all 3 therapies for its universal offer. Working with CITES comes with a significant amount of bureaucracy . The school believes the CITES service is not fulfilling its contractual obligations and this has been the case for a number of years. The school has to use its own budgets to support services that should be provided by Health.
- there is lack of Specialist Nursing provision. The school receives limited support and recommend a review of health and nursing services PMLD/High needs pupils. Currently the safeguarding responsibilities are too great and there is a responsibility of risk that is unacceptable and should not be held by the school. It should be held by health input.
- they would welcome a review of the high needs top up single value funding as the current system is outdated. The school believes that the single value top up amount is not meeting the needs of complex/high needs pupils and does not adhere to the Code of Practice.
- transition support has diminished overtime and there is a question as to whether the service is sustainable and meets the purpose of what it was set up to achieve.

As this is an outstandingly reflective school the reviewers will not be making any points for action, only consideration, which are highlighted throughout the report. There are also points for the LA to consider in partnership with the school.

In summary, the reviewers found that there is a lack of multi-agency collaborative working and this needs to be addressed to ensure effective partnership working . This is needed in order to address the operational and strategic challenges that the school and LA face in these complex times.

- The Headteacher thanked the Reviewers for a "Really supportive, informative and developmental day". KP 21/6/23

Agreed date for follow up meeting as relevant: 3rd July 2023 CL and KP

Report completed by: Claire Lillis

Date:18th July 2023