



Glyne Gap School
Professional Governor Report to the Governing Body
Visit to School Monday 16th October 2017
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Introduction

The purpose of the autumn term visit was to focus on:

- The impact of the communication team
- The robustness of observations and the consistency of judgements
- The interrogation of pupil outcomes from 2016/2017.

This was achieved through: an initial discussion with the Headteacher, a learning walk with Julie (communication lead) to observe the impact of the communication teams vision in the classroom, followed by a discussion, a joint observation with the Headteacher, assistant heads (Jayne and Iona) and the communication lead (Julie) using a pre-recorded lesson, attendance at the governor teaching and learning sub-committee looking specifically at pupil outcomes from 2016/2017 and the robustness of school judgements.

The Headteacher had provided a wealth of information relating to the above performance indicators to assist me in making a judgement about the robustness and consistency of school judgements and this allowed me to put together a comprehensive list of questions and challenges that formed the basis for my observations and discussions throughout the day. This included the communication policy, a wide range of pupil data, the report on special school standards by Sylvia Lamb (adviser) and a comprehensive Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy that identified the principles and purposes of assessing pupils' learning within the schools context of formative and summative assessment systems.

Main Findings

- **Communication is a real strength of the school and provides an inspirational model to visitors.**
- **The lesson observation process is robust and detailed. The judgements of learning made by senior leaders were consistent with my own.**
- **The senior leadership team are thorough in their analysis of data and use this analysis to promote school development.**
- **The series of tools used in assessing pupil outcomes provides a high level of synergy that ensures an accurate judgement, which is rigorously moderated to add robustness.**

Judgement - The evidence outlined in this report matches the evidence I have gathered over the year in my visits to school and the evidence outlined in the special school standards report by Sylvia Lamb in October 2017 that the overall progress of pupils is outstanding.

Evaluation of Methodology

Communication

The school states that communication is at the centre of everything they do and this is made clear in both policy and practice. Staff and governors have clearly worked extremely hard to develop shared values and ethos around a total communication approach and this is fully embedded into the culture of the school. This is supported by the communication charter which gives clear guidance on the key priorities for developing effective communication. The communication thread runs across the whole school curriculum and is seen as an integral pre-cursor to literacy and fundamental to children's development.

The drive to give all pupils a voice is very apparent in the school culture and observable in every area of school for example during our learning walk staff were observed using signing and symbols in lessons and as they moved around the school environment to areas such as the breakfast club or school hall. There was a wealth of evidence of the use of symbols to support communication and learning both in classrooms and the wider school community, for example, the 'wow' board, topic posters, symbol displays, communication stations and the individual symbol cards including a wheel to enable pupils to communicate and regulate their behaviour and emotions. The whole school communication stations provide an excellent example of this and are widely used by all staff and pupils. I was particularly impressed by the fact that the school cook was so committed to this approach that he learnt how to sign.

Pupils at Glyne Gap are enabled to communicate effectively because the whole school community take responsibility. There has been a real shift from the culture of the speech and language therapist removing pupils to work on individual targets to pupils developing their communication skills in real contexts supported by a multi-disciplinary team. This importantly allows pupils to generalise their learning and communicate effectively in a wide range of realistic situations.

The communication planning meetings are an effective way for the communication team to support pupil outcomes across the school and this is celebrated through such events as the Holly Shaw Award for alternative and augmentative communication. The team ensure that every single pupil is discussed, their progress evaluated and challenging goals set. The meetings take place in alternate terms and there are also regular forums and AAC update days to support pupils who have become 'stuck' or have particularly complex needs. An example of the effectiveness of this approach is around the impact of changing the headrest of a pupil which enabled them to have greater access to switch technology. The team also provide a wide range of training, support and advice to staff. This is clearly a high priority and is supported by signs and symbols of the week and termly body signs. As identified in the school development plan, the team are currently working on the production of a core vocabulary including signs, symbols, objects of reference and sound cues. This will promote total communication and ensure progression across the school.

Throughout my visits to Glyne Gap I have consistently observed a real desire to engage in communication from both pupils and staff. The impact of this is that pupils are alert, curious and motivated to control their environment and have an effective voice. This is supported by the school's data which concludes that all pupils are making at least good progress and 71% of pupils are making outstanding progress in communication.

It is my professional judgement that communication is a real strength of the school and provides an inspirational model to visitors. I will certainly be pursuing some of the ideas in my own school.

Lesson Observation

The school is totally committed to the use of lesson observation as a means to evaluate and develop excellent practice for all staff and to measure the impact of teaching and learning on pupil outcomes. All teachers are encouraged to reflect on their practice based on pupil outcomes and the nine components of good teaching.

During each of my termly visits I have had the privilege to observe classroom practice and form a judgment about the rigour and consistency of the leadership team in making professional judgments and grading lessons. Throughout my visits I have witnessed a senior leadership team who constantly strive to improve on this practice, for example the current work on shared observations. The Headteacher has continued to invest in this element of school evaluation and improvement and has recently provided additional training for her leadership team to ensure that lesson observation judgements are as robust and consistent as they can be. This has led to an increase in shared observations with more experienced senior leaders to support newly appointed observers.

During this visit the Headteacher was excited to share with me a new initiative around observations which involved extending the opportunity for senior staff to embark on group observations through the use of recorded lessons. This provided a platform for a mixed group of experienced and less experienced senior leaders to observe and compare their findings in what I would describe as a safe environment that was highly conducive to developing observation skills and measure consistency around judgements and the evidence to support them. Although there were some issues around the quality of the recording and the ability to watch from more than two viewpoints I would conclude that this was a highly beneficial exercise which could be further developed and used to train staff in observation, share and celebrate excellent practice as well as promote and encourage professional development opportunities for staff.

What will be particularly helpful is the ability to watch the session more than once and rewind aspects to promote discussion around the evidence to support consistent judgements.

Once again the senior leaders' ability to observe and identify the smallest achievements of the pupils was impressive and was clearly based on their very detailed knowledge of each individual. The detail of their observations promoted a most helpful discussion around levelling the progress of each individual and arriving at a consistent judgement which was supported by the evidence from the recording. The judgements of learning reached through this process were consistent with my own. The senior leadership team clearly recognise the importance of moderating their observations to ensure accuracy in their judgements particularly as the pupil outcomes tend to be school based. They also recognise the need to evaluate pupil outcomes in a range of contexts to ensure that pupils can use the skills learnt in a range of practical situations.

I would certainly support this initiative in terms of further developing the observation process across the school and ensuring that all judgments are consistent. The initiative will also support continued discussion around appropriate challenge and a shared understanding of what outstanding learning and teaching looks like.

Possible Action Point - to extend the use of recorded lessons for observation purposes and staff development.

Pupil Outcomes

To enable staff to make a robust and comprehensive judgement on pupil outcomes, staff compile and examine a wide range of data. The school Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy clearly articulates the rationale behind the principles and purpose of assessment and the analysis of pupil outcomes to inform school improvement and demonstrate achievement and progress over time.

The process of evaluating and judging pupil outcomes as a whole begins with and recognises the uniqueness of individuals in terms of their achievements and rates of progress relative to their starting points. This approach is in line with how Ofsted advises inspectors to judge outcomes. The individual evidence is gathered from eight sources:

- Evaluated Supergoals
- Evaluated termly goals
- Evaluated IEPs
- Pupils' zigzag books or progress files
- Pupils' individual expanded P-level pink/silver assessment files
- Annual review reports
- Progress judgements at communication meetings (termly)
- Progress judgements at multidisciplinary liaison meetings.

Each source of evidence is carefully moderated and it is the moderation around each piece of data alongside its relevance to pupil that determines how compelling each piece of data is.

Staff are continually striving to improve outcomes for pupils through developing excellent practice and a current area for development is the introduction of peer moderation with two other special schools. This will have a particular focus on the moderation of learning and progress judgements for pupils with PMLD. In addition to affirming the schools judgements on pupil progress the project has also provided another source to externally ratify lesson observation judgements with three outstanding lessons observed.

The individual pupil progress data collated from the above process is used to inform the seven key indicators for both individual and collective pupil progress. This thorough approach to assessment ensures that the judgement on pupil outcomes is based on all of the data available to the school with each set of data being rated in terms of how compelling it is (with three stars being the most compelling). The seven key indicators and their ratings are:

- Overall termly progress ***
- Termly progress in communication **
- Evaluated termly goals ***
- Progress in discrete areas - maths * all over areas **
- Learning in observed lessons ***
- Parents view of progress and happiness at school mad at Annual review *
- CASPA P level data **

CASPA data has been given a low rating due to the difference in what schools are inputting and whether we are comparing like with like. The rigour of the CASPA data is also affected by the different interpretations of the definition of need, for example the interpretation of PMLD can vary significantly from one school to another.

Governors are right to view CASPA data with caution, the other school based pupil progress data is more accurate and therefore more compelling.

It should also be noted that in response to the Rochford report on assessment the school has applied to join the pilot that is looking at the pre-key stage indicators and the seven levels of engagement for pupils not engaging in subject specific learning. This project will help to strengthen future assessment processes.

Possible Action Point – the school should keep a watching brief on the National picture regarding assessment for pupils with SEND and use this to inform future developments around assessment of pupil progress and outcomes.

The notes from the pupil analysis meeting held on the 18.9.2017 provided governors with a helpful breakdown of the progress data and illustrated how thorough the senior leadership team are at analysing the data and using it to promote school development. The report helped to provide answers to the following challenges raised at the teaching and learning sub-committee meeting:

- How do we know the the termly goals appropriately challenging and SMART? Termly goals are peer moderated by class teachers, moderated by Heads of School and set in partnership with parents. It was agreed that the fact that a similar percentage of goals not being achieved as in previous years would indicate that teachers are consistently setting aspirational targets for individuals. The data from termly targets matched the overall progress data.
- The progress identified in the multi-professional liaison meetings identified 3% of judgements as requiring improvement, which equates to 8 judgements, relating to 6 pupils. Judgements since for all pupils have been higher, as a result of interventions the school has put in place.
- The 10% reduction in outstanding judgements was due to an increase in the robustness of the judgement following staff training and the introduction of a proforma for teachers to bring evidence of learning to the meeting. With this evidence to hand, Heads of School were much better positioned to challenge/agree judgements.
- The data from the communication meetings does not include the students at the faculty as the priority for students in the faculty is to look at how they use the skills they have acquired. This progress is measured using the PSHE Personal Autonomy assessment tool, rather than the Speaking and Listening assessment tools.
- The school is clear in its position, through its curriculum model, that maths is not priority learning for the majority of pupils. The essential skills outlined by the school are Communication and Personal and Social Development. However, for pupils for whom maths is a learning priority, the school is working to improve their assessment tool to be able to credit the functional numeracy learning that is taking place for these pupils. There is currently a recruitment process to appoint a TLR position to lead on functional literacy and numeracy.
- There were 8% of pupils requiring improvement in personal development and behaviour this was due to the impact of staff training which led to staff heightening their expectations and only giving an outstanding judgment where behaviour is exceptional. My previous report to governors on behaviour would support the view that there has been no deterioration in behaviour and the school's approach to behaviour management continues to be outstanding. This is further supported by evidence from case studies.
- Similarly the perceived reduction in progress in PSHCE 55% outstanding compared to 83% last year was due to staff refining the assessment tool particularly around personal autonomy. The revised tool has resulted in a lower base line and the identification of gaps in learning. This will be carefully monitored over the coming year.

- The parent judgement was based on 85% of parents attending annual reviews. Views were also sought from those parents that did not attend. The school provides advice to parents on making judgements around progress and this helps to ensure a more consistent response however this data is less compelling than the school based data as it can be quite subjective.
- The attendance rate for pupils was 89% which was up 1% from the previous year. This is below the national average of 92.3% but there are compelling reasons as to why attendance is lower. These are mainly around the complex health needs of pupils. Although local special school data is higher, the rate is exactly the same percentage as found in my own school where there are pupils with similarly complex needs not found in the other local special schools. The school works hard to improve attendance through offering medical clinics on site such as paediatrician, posture, dietician and wheelchair clinics. The school is committed to providing work for pupils on long term absence and liaison with the hospital tuition service or home tutors. For pupils whose persistent absence is not linked to complex medical needs, the school works with parents to improve attendance.
- The school feels that the pupil outcomes data for this year is the most robust to date as they have put in various initiatives to add clarity to the judgements of good and outstanding learning, along with additional moderation processes.
- In the post sixteen faculty there was an impressive 100% outstanding observations, two of which were jointly observed by myself. The curriculum is highly personalised at this level which enables pupils to make outstanding progress.
- This was the same for the early years department where there are two master practitioners out of three teachers. The rate of progress in the early years department was also accelerated due to the learning context with pupils transferring from a medical model or home environment to a more structured early years learning environment.
- The CLA data is deceptive this small cohort is entirely made up of pupils on long term foster placements due to their complexity of need. This complexity is the main reason for a slower rate of progress and not the fact that they are CLA.
- Similarly there is little impact on the rate of progress for pupils on free school meals.
- I questioned the comparatively different rates of outstanding progress in Key Stage 3 and 4, compared with Key Stage 1 and 2. The school acknowledged that there were some contextual factors: one pupil had significant behavioural needs which meant that she needed a reduced timetable and very high staff ratio (2:1). This pupil is now in a more appropriate setting for her needs, but staffing around her did impact on learning for other pupils in that Key Stage, particularly as a result of staff absence due to injuries sustained. Another pupil had an extended absence from school due to therapeutic input (spider therapy).
- In addition, the school are working to ensure assessment measures are in place to credit the learning that has been made in functional literacy and numeracy. Learning in this area will be led by a TLR holder with responsibility for functional literacy and numeracy.
- The school is also developing an employability pathway to ensure learning for these pupils is relevant and prepares them for their future lives.
- The scaffolding in place for hard to reach pupils primarily impacts on parental involvement and lifelong learning, rather than current pupil learning. The school therefore questions whether this is an appropriate data set to analyse or whether they should in fact be looking at the impact of the scaffolding on judgements for pupils' Full Participation and Personal Wealth. **This could be a possible action point for the school.**
- In terms of destination data there are no pupils that leave school and become NEET (not in education, employment or training). All students are well prepared for the next stage of life and all made successful transfers to adult provision. The school recognises that whilst students are unlikely to be NEET they strive to ensure that students lead happy and

fulfilling lives once they leave school and there has been some excellent developmental work around fulfilling lifestyles that is an example of excellent practice.

- The school is clear about its moral duty to raise aspirations around employability and this has taken a high priority in the school development plan. In addition to the newly introduced employability pathway the school is investigated supported internships.

My overall finding is that the series of tools used in assessing pupil outcomes provides a high level of synergy that ensures an accurate judgement. The assessment process is further supported by robust multi-disciplinary moderation particularly at the pupil progress meetings which produce a clear evidence sheet per pupil summarising the agreed judgement. It was noted that an additional moderation process introduced this year led to an adjustment of judgements for five pupils. Case studies were also well used to provide evidence of and greater clarity around pupil progress for those pupils that appeared to be under achieving when examining progress in CASPA which can for some pupils be misleading due to the large steps required to move from one P-level to the next.

Judgement - The evidence outlined in this report matches the evidence I have gathered over the year in my visits to school and the evidence outlined in the special school standards report by Sylvia Lamb in October 2017 that the overall progress of pupils is outstanding.

As always I would like to add my thanks to the headteacher, staff and governors and I particularly value their open and honest discussions, commitment and desire to continually strive to move this outstanding school forward.