



**Glyne Gap School**  
**Professional Governor Report to the Governing Body**  
**Visit to School Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018**  
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## **Introduction**

The purpose of the spring term visit was to focus on leadership and management. This included an interrogation of the school's evaluation framework triangulated with pupil outcomes and the school development plan.

The governors sought my view on:

- The rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and how well it leads to planning that secures continual improvement
- Whether leaders and governors have created a culture of high expectations
- Leaders' ambition for the school.

## **The School's Self Evaluation Framework and Development Plan**

The school's self-evaluation document gives a clear outline of how well the school is achieving and what it needs to do to improve further. The document is based on a secure knowledge of pupil outcomes using the seven key indicators explored in my autumn term report. Using these indicators the school has consistently demonstrated that all pupils are making substantial and sustained progress. Staff use the data from pupil outcomes to inform school improvement and the self-evaluation framework identifies key areas for improvement that are further explored in the school development plan. **My overall judgment is that the school is very clearly demonstrating that it is outstanding in all areas.** This is based on the evidence set out below.

## **Outcomes for Pupils**

My discussion with the Headteacher and senior staff was based around their ambition for the school and how they create a culture of high expectation. To evidence this, my key lines of enquiry were to establish how the school raises pupil outcomes so that those making good progress may go on to make outstanding progress and how the senior management team ensure high expectations and ambition.

The bespoke *Glyne Gap* curriculum is a vital tool that is designed to support each cohort of pupils. Staff are continuing to refine this based on an analysis of the outcome data, for example, sharpening functional literacy and numeracy for Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 pupils. This is a key priority in the school development plan and the school have recently appointed a TLR post to lead on this.

Staff are also refining the school's assessment tool to better suit the needs of individual pupils and demonstrate progress, with a particular emphasis on functional literacy and numeracy. As part of this development they are involved in the Pre-Key Stage Indicator pilot and are well placed to establish an assessment tool that accurately informs achievement and supports staff in setting ambitious learning outcomes for their pupils.

The senior leadership team also make excellent use of school leavers' destination data to explore how they can challenge pupils further and set aspirational goals. In response to this data and the pupil voice, the school has identified a need to develop a systematic pathway and an aspiration for some pupils to gain employment and this is clearly articulated in the school development plan. There are also plans to follow up on school leavers after 2, 5 and 10 years to see how this informs future school development.

The recent introduction of 'Supergoals' clearly demonstrates the school's desire to focus on what will make a real difference to each pupil, for example, how to challenge older more compliant ASC pupils to prevent them from opting out, or giving a pupil the skills to walk independently for a particular purpose such as shopping or walking down the church isle at a wedding. The fact that the Supergoals are functional and linked to ambition in terms of ensuring a meaningful and fulfilled lifestyle means that they are supported and celebrated by the whole school community. This makes them a powerful tool for school improvement and they are already having an impact improving teaching and learning across the school. The Supergoals have also ensured greater engagement from parents who can see how the skills learnt are transformational in terms of increased independence outside of school. This in turn has led to the identification of the need for more support for parents which is built into the school development plan.

The senior leadership team have a key role in ensuring ambition through their rigorous monitoring and evaluation framework. Central to this are the pupil progress and liaison meetings that take place each term. The meetings provide senior staff with the opportunity to track individual pupil progress and challenge teachers to aim for substantial and sustained progress for all pupils. This is supported by a rigorous programme of lesson observations and learning walks. Governors are provided with pupil outcome data on a termly basis and the process is externally moderated to ensure that judgments are consistent and accurate.

The senior leadership team have recognised the importance and value of ensuring a consistent class team approach. To encourage this they have introduced a new initiative which ensures each class team has a three hour protected meeting each term where they can look at how they might enhance learning opportunities for pupils and overcome any barriers to learning. This also provides the opportunity for the whole class team to understand what outstanding learning looks like and what needs to be done to achieve it for all pupils.

### **Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

The school places a high emphasis on judging the quality of teaching and learning through the evaluation of pupil outcomes. This is particularly apparent in the lesson observations carried out by senior staff who have developed highly effective skills to identify individual progress based on their secure and detailed knowledge of each pupil. To further strengthen the consistency of classroom observation the school is working with the SLD branch of the Special Schools Alliance to develop lesson observation moderation between schools. The senior leadership team are also looking to give observation feedback to the whole class team and initial trials have proved beneficial for all staff members in the primary department. This approach will add value to the work on developing stronger class teams and dedicated team meetings.

The culture of high expectations is apparent in every aspect of school life and my shared observations and learning walks over the past year would support the school's outstanding judgment in this aspect of school life.

The school's core curriculum identifies priority learning areas for pupils that include, communication, functional literacy and numeracy and PSHE. The foundation subjects are used as vehicles to support the core curriculum. The school's communication strand is exceptional and the importance placed on this can be seen in every area of the school. To further strengthen this, the communication team are developing a core vocabulary to support teaching and learning.

As mentioned previously the importance of the class team is highly valued by all stakeholders. In addition to the protected meeting opportunities, the senior leadership team are developing a training programme to refine and improve the ability of all staff to analyse and impact on learning.

My discussion with the headteacher identified two possible areas for development:

1. To further strengthen the PSHE strand of the core curriculum to ensure a depth of expertise in this area. This could be achieved through providing the opportunity for master practitioners to take a lead and explore how the total communication environment in the classroom can support PSHE.
2. To consider the role of middle leaders in supporting teaching and learning through curriculum development.

### **Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare of Pupils**

My professional visit in January 2017 supported the school's judgement that behaviour across the school is outstanding and my general observations and learning walks around school would continue to support this, as does the data presented at governor meetings. Following my report the school has continued to strengthen this aspect of school life by ensuring that all class teams have attended Team Teach training to ensure the consistent and positive management of behaviour across the whole school. Also the physical activities provided first thing in the morning now have more of a focus on sensory circuits to further improve pupil's readiness to learn when they arrive at school in the morning.

Staff are continuing to improve behaviour plans to overcome barriers to learning and they have made excellent use of case studies to evidence pupil progress, particularly for those pupils identified, through the data sets, as not reaching their full potential due to behavioural issues.

The senior leadership team have made excellent use of the data available to them to identify a group of pupils with ASC who they believe have the capacity to identify their feelings. The senior leadership team are developing a toolkit to support these pupils with self-regulating their behaviour to enable them to get the most out of life. Having observed such pupils using the skills taught to them I found this work to be quite inspirational and very clearly providing a high level of challenge for these pupils to lead a fulfilling and positive lifestyle. It is also an excellent example of how all staff promote a positive ethos of high expectations for all.

### **Leadership and Management**

The outstanding pupil outcomes and teaching and learning at Glyne Gap support the school's view that leadership and management is outstanding. The SEF describes the school culture as "relentless in its drive to improve the learning of its pupils". This culture of ambition is apparent as soon as you enter the school and is upheld by every staff member and governor at all times. Getting to spend time at Glyne Gap and understand the culture has been a privilege and I have never seen that culture waver. This can only be achieved through a strong and consistent leadership team that leads by example and ensures that every member of staff is valued and has the skills and confidence to uphold the aims and values of the school.

The governors and senior leadership team have established a very clear vision for the school that ensures that all pupils are given the skills and opportunities to lead happy and fulfilled lives. The staff team are relentless in continually reviewing and evaluating their practice to ensure that they are always seeking ways to maximise the potential of every pupil. This is demonstrated through the analysis of the significant amount of data that is available to support school improvement and inform the school development plan.

The school regularly reviews its vision at a whole school inset day where staff explore how well they are doing and what are the next steps for development. Each autumn a series of twilight sessions are planned which focus on the school culture and climate for learning. To further improve this there are plans to review and refine the induction processes which would include an element on school culture, beliefs and values. There are also plans to introduce an employee support programme to ensure the well-being of all staff and that they are happy and fulfilled in the work place. Staff continued professional development and performance management sit firmly within the climate for learning and staff targets are linked to whole school development through a process of self-evaluation and support from line managers.

A possible development point might be to compose a short vision statement to further strengthen and promote the excellent culture that exists and provide a seamless link to school evaluation and development.

The senior leadership team and governors are committed to ensuring sustainability and succession planning. They are currently reviewing systems and structures to support the autonomy, accountability and sustainability of senior / middle leaders. The governors have recently appointed a new head of faculty. The careful planning of her induction including time spent working with the outgoing head of faculty has ensured that she has the skills and confidence to carry out her role effectively and this has resulted in a smooth transition that has enabled the faculty to continue to move forward.

My discussion with the headteacher around succession planning prompted a suggested review of how middle leaders might be developed across the school, with particular emphasis on supporting teaching and learning and curriculum developments.

The senior leadership team are committed to ensuring a fulfilling career pathway for all staff and are currently exploring a progression route for teaching assistants and the use of teaching assistants in specialist areas. This will also explore how assistant teachers and unqualified teachers are used within the school staffing structure. There is also recognition that there are limited opportunities for initial teacher training for PMLD specialists in particular and the senior leadership team are exploring the possibility of apprenticeship route into teaching.

### **Enhanced Opportunities and SMSC**

The school provides a wide range of enhanced opportunities for all pupils to support their learning and well-being, such as, The Boathouse Project, clubs, family days and holiday play schemes.

The senior team also closely monitors each minority cohort to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities and challenges. Each group has a special advocate to ensure that they are well supported. Pupil outcome data for each group is explored at the governor teaching and learning committee meetings. Staff also go to great lengths to follow up on school attendance and offer creative packages to pupils with low attendance, such as, overcoming transport and health issues.

The school also holds multi-disciplinary forums to discuss how pupils might be encouraged to progress if they are 'stuck' in a particular area or have a significant health need that is impacting on their progress for example looking at switch access in a multi-disciplinary team having a significant impact on pupil outcomes.

SMSC is very much at the heart of the school and this is evident in the schools aims which promote pupil well-being and fulfilling lifestyles for all. During my learning walks and lesson observations I have always enjoyed witnessing the clear enjoyment and achievement of all pupils and the excellent role models set by staff.

### **School to School Support**

As an outstanding school Glyne Gap provides a range of school to school support both within the local community, the Special School Alliance and more widely. The school has a particular expertise in PMLD and communication. Visits to view good practice and the wealth of documentation available online are widely used and inform the practice of many other schools. Staff from Glyne Gap are available to support local mainstream and special schools using their master practitioners. The school is currently working with the Special School Alliance to develop a master practitioner specification and a protocol for lesson observation moderation.

The school is also involved in peer monitoring with two outstanding special schools. In terms of National Initiatives the school is involved in the Rochford Pre-Key Stage Indicator Pilot and is developing an assessment tool that will particularly helpful to other special schools in the light of the Rochford Report outcomes.

The senior leadership team continue to explore ways of expanding the school to school support that they offer and this is evident in both the SEF and the school development plan.

On examining the evidence around school to school support I would support an outstanding judgement in this area.

### **Conclusion**

In summary it is very clear from my evaluation of supporting documentation, observations, learning walks and discussion with the headteacher and her senior leadership team that school's outstanding judgments in the school evaluation framework are accurate. The schools evaluation framework, the school development plan and pupil outcome data are very clearly linked and accurately pinpoint areas for school development.

The headteacher and senior leaders demonstrate highly detailed knowledge of all aspects of school life and in particular the progress and development of every pupil and this sits at the heart of the school improvement framework.

All staff uphold the school ethos and culture of high expectations and are well supported in developing the skills to provide an appropriate level of challenge for each pupil. This ensures that they reach their potential and leave school with the skills to lead a rich and fulfilling lifestyle. The determination of all staff to continually improve on these outcomes for each individual is evident in the ambitious targets identified in the school development plan. I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the school to witness the fruition of these targets and the impact this will undoubtedly have on pupils.

Once again 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.