

## Visit to support Annual School Evaluation 2022/23

**Name of School: Glyne Gap School**

**Name of Adviser: Bob Wall**

**Date of Report: Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022**

### **1. Self-evaluation**

#### **School's self-evaluation judgement for overall effectiveness:**

(Please note – The phrase 'termly' is used within this report on a number of occasions to indicate the occurrence of an event, process, or meeting. In common with schools across East Sussex, Glyne Gap operates a six-term year. However, unless indicated otherwise, the phrase 'termly' in this report indicates an event / process / meeting that occurs **three** times a year)

The school benefits from having a long-standing headteacher, who is now in her tenth year of headship, and who has successfully led the school through two outstanding Ofsted inspections in 2015 and 2019. The headteacher is supported by a very experienced and highly effective senior leadership team comprising three assistant headteachers responsible for the lower school and senior school, the Faculty (the school's sixth form) and safeguarding. The school has strived, over many years, to ensure high quality educational provision and outstanding outcomes for pupils. The school is driven by a very strong moral purpose, supported by a clear ethos of constant reflection and improvement. The ongoing development of the school's curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of the school population continues. The admission of a group of higher attaining pupils to the school's Faculty in September 2020 resulted in the school developing work placements, ensuring the school met the Gatsby Benchmarks and to the provision of supported internships during the current (and the pupils' last) school year. This example, linking critical professional reflection and creative curriculum development, is a typical example of the school's constant drive for improvement.

The school's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are supported by a very effective governing body and an extended leadership team. The governing body is a well-established, very active in their leadership and support responsibilities, and contribute positively to the school's drive for continuous improvement. Similarly the school's middle leaders, all of whom have an allocated responsibility for areas of curriculum and other school provision (see below), provide very effective leadership and management support to the school's SLT.

The school's governing body contains members with a wide range of experience, skills and abilities who are clearly able to provide very effective scrutiny and challenge to the school's headteacher and leadership team. In addition, the governing body has identified that, although they have considerable skills and knowledge in areas of finance, safeguarding, human resources and premises management, their skills and experience and available time is more limited in the areas of educational provision. To ensure that scrutiny, support, and challenge is secured in this key area, governors have employed the services of a professional adviser over a number of years to support them and particularly their teaching and learning committee.

The headteacher meets on a regular termly basis with a governors' strategic group, including the chair of governors, to discuss and oversee the longer-term direction of the school and related strategic issues. The focus of discussion and challenge at these meetings will vary but they are largely focused on ensuring the medium to long-term financial viability of the school, ensuring effective succession planning and (currently) ensuring that the school (as a standalone academy) is positioned to address the challenges faced by the government's recent White Paper, Opportunity for All:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opportunity-for-all-strong-schools-with-great-teachers-for-your-child>

There are highly effective arrangements in place to identify pupils who may need early help, or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming, or exploitation. The school operates a weekly safeguarding meeting where the safeguarding team review pupils at local authority levels 3 and 4. The school also maintains an overview of pupils they judge to be at level 2-plus, and who may well be at risk of more formal safeguarding referral and intervention.

The school uses the online Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) and all staff have been trained to use this platform. Staff are provided with annual safeguarding training refresher each September, related to the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) document.

Governor oversight of safeguarding is provided by a link governor who is employed professionally as the Designated Safeguarding Leader (DSL) at Bexhill College. She undertakes a termly safeguarding visit to meet with relevant staff at the school, monitor the school's SCR (Single Central Register), and scrutinise safeguarding practice. A regular termly report is provided by this lead governor to other governors at regular meetings of the school's full governing body.

The school is due to have a SLES safeguarding review during November 2022.

The school has a very accurate and up-to-date Self-Evaluation Form (SEF). The document is structured in line with the Ofsted framework and contains a very clear summary judgement of the school's overall effectiveness, drawing directly from individual judgements made in the following (separate) sections. Clear reference is made throughout the document to supporting evidence which is available for scrutiny either on the school's website or at the school.

The document has separate sections for each of the Ofsted framework sections – quality of education; behaviour and attitudes, personal development; and leadership and management. Additional sections are provided that analyse the educational provision made for Early Years and for Post-16 provision at the school's Faculty. Each section includes the school's overall judgement for that aspect of the school's provision, along with a reference to the Ofsted criteria to validate the judgement. The document then provides an evaluation of the school's strengths in each area along with details of evidence to support the school's evaluation/s. Each section concludes with details of the school's 'next steps' to further develop and improve provision. A particular strength of the document is the rationale provided to support the school's decision to include the 'next steps'. This provides extremely strong evidence that school leaders, supported by the wider school community, have undertaken considerable reflection and discussion before determining their priorities for school development and improvement.

The document is very well structured, carefully presented and highly evaluative. The analysis of strengths is well-argued and evidence to support the school's analysis is clear and concise. The document was concluded and published in September 2022 and will be presented, discussed, and agreed with governors at a full governing body in November 2022. The structure and content of the document indicate that the headteacher and other senior leaders have an excellent working knowledge of the Ofsted framework and can very accurately apply the Ofsted guidance to an evaluation of the educational provision at the school. It is apparent that the school's SEF is very much a working document, with a first review date of December 2022 clearly indicated.

The school's further improvement (since autumn 2021) of this document with the inclusion of separate sections for Early Years and Post 16 provision, along with the clear rationale for 'next step' developments, provides additional evidence of continual improvement of professional practice at the school, led by the school's headteacher and SLT.

Discussions held during the adviser's visit indicate that the high quality of written evaluation is the result of considerable professional inquiry, reflection, and discussion across all members of the school's leadership team.

### **Last Ofsted judgement: Outstanding (May 2019) (Short Inspection)**

The next steps identified for the school were:

*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 school has continued to work to ensure that their Supergoal approach is robust and meaningful for all pupils. As a result the school has been able to ensure that what is learnt is truly relevant and meaningful in a pupil's (later) life.

The school has worked hard over the past year to ensure that teaching and learning is aspirational, particularly for a higher attaining cohort now attending the school's sixth form/Faculty. Details of the supported internship scheme for these pupils is highlighted below.

The school identified support with monitoring the quality of teaching and learning as a possible focus for further adviser work and support during terms 3 and 4.

## **2. School Improvement Planning**

There is a direct correlation between the priorities or 'next steps' identified in the school's self-evaluation and the priorities in the school's development plan for 2022-23. The plan identifies Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), related to the 'next steps' for each of the six school terms, along with details of who is responsible for leading each activity. The plan includes details of planned reviews to be undertaken at the end of Terms 2, 4 and 6 in the form of RAG rating of the planned KPIs, as well as a space for a supporting commentary/narrative. The ongoing monitoring of the plan by governors appears very clear. Governors will receive details of the planned evaluations at regular governor meetings, scheduled to coincide with the dates of the plan's evaluation.

The KPIs included in the plan are very clear and detail the impact of planned developments. Shared leadership and management responsibility for the planned developments is also clear.

The school continues to maintain a highly structured curriculum and a detailed and comprehensive system for establishing targets for individual pupils. The school's development and ongoing use of a 'Supergoal' approach to ensure that what is learnt is truly relevant and meaningful in an individual pupil's (later) life underlines the focus the school has on preparing pupils for the next stage of their education and later, adult life.

The school's curriculum, individual pupils' IEPs, the Supergoal approach and detailed transition support all ensure that pupils are extremely well prepared to move to the next stage of their education – from the school's nursery to the main school site, between the lower and upper school departments, and from the main site on to the school's sixth form/Faculty. NEET data indicates that 100% of pupils have successfully transitioned to the next stage of their education and/or training.

The school's three AHTs are responsible for termly (class) liaison meetings across the school. These meetings ensure a rigorous, reflective, and challenging examination of individual targets for pupils in each class grouping with the pupil's class teacher. This strategic leadership and management system helps to ensure that targets are robust and consistently challenging.

Discussions with the headteacher, information from the school's SEF and other documentation provides considerable evidence that the school has implemented considerable positive change and improvement in the school over the past year and for an extended period of time. This has been validated (for the headteacher and senior leaders) at two successive outstanding Ofsted inspections and through other external evaluation. School improvements are the result of a detailed, rigorous, and ongoing evaluation, and a committed and continuous drive to improve provision and pupil outcomes. The documentation provided, along with discussions during the adviser visit makes clear that the headteacher (and other senior leaders) have undertaken further detailed evaluation and have plans for improvements across the coming school year supported by clear planning.

Based on the evidence of previous practice, along with details in the current school SEF and SDP, there is compelling evidence that the planned improvements will be implemented effectively.

### **3. Curriculum development and quality of education**

The school has a very well-structured curriculum framework which is differentiated to meet the learning needs of pupils as they progress through the school, at early years, within the main school, and in the school's sixth form/Faculty. The school describes these three curriculums as progressive 'chapters' or 'steps' that pupils build upon as they move through the school. The school has designed each step to be "appropriate to the age, interests and developmental and environmental needs of each child as they progress from infancy to adulthood". Within each of the three broad curriculum 'steps' the school has identified Tier 1 learning, which includes essential skills for learning and life, with a changing focus as pupils become older, mature, and move through the school. Tier 2 learning is also included at each of the three curriculum steps and provides pupils with a breadth of experience. The school has given considerable thought to their curriculum framework and the resulting structure provides an extremely well-considered and detailed matrix of skill development and experiences for pupils to access as they move through the school. The school has developed a comprehensive assessment framework which complements their curriculum framework.

The school has published a short overview of their curriculum intent which outlines the school's over-riding principles in terms of a moral purpose which underpins everything the school undertakes:

<https://www.glynegap.org/shopimages/Curriculum%20intent.pdf>

A detailed curriculum policy is also published on the school's website which provides a very clear, comprehensive, and detailed description of the content and structure of the school's curriculum offer and how it relates to the curriculum intent statement:

<https://www.glynegap.org/shopimages/updated%20CG1%20Curriculum%20at%20Glyne%20Gap%20Policy%20Master%20-%20July%202019.pdf>

The school's curriculum is a national exemplar and widely considered by practitioners in the special educational field as an outstanding model of curriculum development.

Glyne Gap School is a special school, and all pupils have Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) and are considered to have SEN. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils and ensure the core values and aspirations of the school are embedded in the school's ethos and practice. Pupils requiring additional interventions are quickly identified and tailored individual support is provided.

The school's main curriculum areas of focus are communication and personal development. The development of pupils' communication skills are led and managed by a long-established and

highly skilled communication team who have in-depth knowledge of the curriculum area and strive to improve curriculum provision and outcomes for all pupils. Personal development is equally well led and managed by a member of the extended leadership team. Other members of the extended leadership team lead on:

- Early Readers
- Pupils' health and care needs
- Post 16 Provision / Employability
- Early Years

Responsibility for leading and managing the wider curriculum is shared across this extended leadership team and particularly the school's SLT where the three AHTs have responsibility for each of the three curriculum 'steps', described in more detail above. This distributed leadership and management structure ensures a detailed knowledge of the curriculum across the school.

The school has made a very positive response to the limited need to have a comprehensive reading strategy and approach to phonics in place. A member of the school's extended leadership team has responsibility for early readers and the very limited number of pupils who are able to access phonics.

The school has adopted the Read Write Inc Phonics programme:

<https://global.oup.com/education/content/primary/series/rwi/?region=uk>

Training for key staff has been undertaken and a comprehensive range of phonics resources are available for staff to deploy to support their teaching.

The school has a comprehensive curriculum and assessment structure which is very well understood by all staff. Effective induction ensures that teaching staff understand the curriculum structure and can plan and deliver lessons in line with this structure. The three AHTs closely monitor teachers planning and pupils' IEPs to ensure that planning at class and individual pupil level is aligned to the school's curriculum policies and plans and is relevant to individual pupils' needs. Termly liaison meetings, focussed weekly on a different class, allow the AHTs to monitor discrete elements of teachers planning and (individual) pupil progress and the impact of the curriculum. The focus of these liaison meetings is different in each term to ensure that all areas of curriculum provision are closely monitored:

Autumn – Curriculum intent and implementation; gaps; maintenance of skills and knowledge over summer break; review of communication systems, equipment, sensory diets, risk assessments, health care plans; identification of any further barriers to learning.

Spring – Behaviour and attitudes – mental health and wellbeing.

Summer – Review of core skills – literacy, numeracy, and ICT; communication and language.

In addition to the detailed and extremely comprehensive liaison meetings, the school's SLT undertake formal lesson observations of each teacher on a termly basis. Judgements of teaching and learning are validated by the SLT by undertaking paired observations on a regular basis. Formal lesson observations are supplemented by regular learning walks.

The rigour with which the senior leadership team monitor and ensure the very high quality of education at the school is outstanding.

#### **4.Outcomes**

The school has traditionally used seven 'instruments' (Pupil Progress Indicators or PPIs) to measure pupil progress ranging from termly judgements of progress made at liaison meetings (see above) to judgements of learning in formal lesson observations. The information from these seven instruments are combined to create an overall judgement of progress for pupils at the school.

In common with many other schools, detailed judgements of pupil progress and outcomes was significantly disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The last detailed analysis using the entirety of school's seven measures of progress was reported in autumn 2019, based on the 2018-19 school year, at which point 62% of pupils had made outstanding progress and 22 pupils had made transformational progress by achieving their Supergoals. In September 2020 the school reported on outcomes for pupils in the 2019/2020 school year prior to the Pandemic by considering outcomes for pupils over the September 2018 to February 2020 period using data from the same seven measures. This confirmed that pupils progress and outcomes remained outstanding

In September 2021, the school leaders' review of pupil outcomes involved an analysis of individual pupils' PPIs with all available data. These indicators drew together a broad range of progress judgements from liaison meetings and elsewhere to provide an overview of progress for each individual pupil. School leaders noted that the information provided was useful in analysing the progress made by individual pupils through the Covid-19 Pandemic but did not provide sufficiently reliable whole school data. The impact of two lockdowns and a high variability in pupil attendance had significantly affected pupil progress and outcomes.

The school experienced further disruption through the 2021/22 school year due to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The school celebrated the fact that 21 pupils achieved their Supergoal in the 2021/22 school year, which they note is a level returning to pre-pandemic levels and expectations. Other assessment measures that contribute to pupils PPIs are (due to the impact of the Pandemic) are not as comprehensive or as complete. The headteacher rightly argues that the quality of the school's inputs – curriculum intent and implementation – remains of very high quality. This, and the outcome evidence that is available, suggests that the progress of pupils remains at least good for all pupils. The school continue to hold (pictorial) Zig Zag books for each pupil that are compelling in recording the very high quality of pupils' learning.

Pupils develop independence, communication, and advocacy skills, build friendships, and develop their own social, moral, spiritual, and cultural understanding that achieves the school's moral purpose. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of life whether that be education, employment, or vocational training. NEET data indicates that 100% of pupils have successfully transitioned to the next stage of their education and/or training.

The school very carefully focussed one of their regular liaison meetings (see above) after each (Covid-19 Pandemic) lockdown to determine details of gaps in learning due to absence. This was supplemented by the autumn liaison meeting which has traditionally always included a focus on skills or knowledge 'lost' due to the school summer holiday. The school's analysis of these reviews is that there were three broad groups of pupils who have been impacted by the partial closure of schools – younger aged pupils who have had an unsettled introduction to school; pupils with significant autistic spectrum condition needs whose routines were seriously disrupted by the Covid-19 Pandemic and repeated school absence; pupils with communication difficulties and related behavioural needs.

The school has responded very positively to these challenges ensuring that interventions were targeted to support individual pupils and their families. In addition, ongoing staff training has focussed on the development of communication skills during the 2021/22 school year and will move to focus on supporting pupils' behaviour during the 2022/23 school year.

The school is using School led tutoring grant to employ a Functional Skills leader to ensure skills learnt in school have a real-life outcome for pupils.

The school has a very robust and rigorous system for tracking pupil progress, which is detailed in the school's Assessment, Recording and Reporting policy which is available on the school's website.

[https://www.glynegap.org/article.php/177/assessment\\_policy/97352ea2156a6419333954af01527b76](https://www.glynegap.org/article.php/177/assessment_policy/97352ea2156a6419333954af01527b76)

The measures used for tracking pupil progress include:

- Evaluated Supergoals
- Evaluated termly goals
- Evaluated IEPs
- Pupils' zigzag books (A cumulative record of a pupil's most significant progress and achievements)
- Pupils' individual Glyne Gap assessment files, including:
  - Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)
  - Communication and Language
  - Speaking and Listening
  - Functional Literacy
  - Functional Numeracy
  - Functional ICT
  - Science
  - Essential Physical Skills for Learning and Life
  - Employability
- Annual Review reports
- Progress judgements at (termly) communication meetings
- Progress judgements at (termly) liaison meeting

This matrix of assessment is very skilfully used by class teachers to target, assess, and track pupils progress, and also provides senior leaders with a very clear structure to monitor and challenge the work of classroom staff. This system, devised and continually refined by the school over many years, is an example of outstanding practice. The oversight provided by senior leaders at termly liaison meetings further strengthens this practice.

## **5. Key strengths in the school and support the school could offer to other schools**

### **Curriculum Intent**

The school has developed, over an extended period of time, a very clear and detailed appreciation of an appropriate curriculum intent for pupils with very significant disabilities who make the smallest steps of progress. This intent, very clearly articulated in the school's detailed curriculum policies, is highly structured and very relevant to pupils' needs. The school's implementation of this curriculum intent is similarly very well structured and coherent.

### **Curriculum Impact/Pupil Progress**

The school has very detailed instruments for assessment and measuring impact / pupil progress. These measures are very refined and enable staff, at all levels, to record and acknowledge the (sometimes) very small steps of progress that pupils achieve.

### **Communication**

The school maintains a communication team who work in tandem with senior leaders and classroom staff to support and implement communication programmes for all pupils. The school community's understanding of the importance of communication as a bridge to oracy and literacy is excellent. The development of effective communication skills, tailored to the individual pupil, is a core aim of the school. Staff continue to work tirelessly to implement a communication curriculum for pupils with a severe learning disability.

### **Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC)**

The school has an extensive working knowledge of a range of low and high-tech AAC and how to use this equipment and related approaches for a range of pupils with a severe or profound learning disability. These interventions range from universal support for signing, through the use of personalised interventions such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) to the use of individual tailored speech output devices.

### **Supported Internship**

The school is developing considerable experience in the area of supported internships. In response to the admission of a number of higher ability pupils to the Faculty (the school's sixth form), the school has developed a differentiated curriculum to support work placements and promote pupils' employability. These pupils are now in their final year at the school and are accessing a split placement between the Faculty (2 days per week) and a supported employment placement (3 days each week). The school is working closely with Little Gate Farm to deliver this programme:

<https://www.littlegate.org.uk/>

A member of school staff (from the Faculty) works with Little Gate Farm staff to support the pupils' work placements, whilst a member of staff from Little Gate Farm joins pupils when they are being taught at the Faculty. This very close and supportive working relationship has proved extremely successful. This developmental project is being used by BASE (British Association for Supported Employment) as a pilot for an accreditation scheme.

<https://www.base-uk.org/home>

This highly reflective, responsive, and developmental approach to meeting the needs of a particular group of pupils is a prime example of the innovative curriculum thinking typical of the school's leadership.

### **Pupils' health and care needs**

The school has considerable experience and expertise in meeting the needs of a wide range of pupils with medical, health and care needs. The successful support for these pupils' needs in order that they can access learning opportunities is a key strength of the implementation of the school's curriculum and an approach which is worthy of wider dissemination.

## **6. Key challenges that the school faces**

### **Staff Recruitment / Previous Experience**

The recruitment of staff with relevant background experience, qualifications and training has become increasingly more difficult and is now a significant issue for the school, particularly in relation to teaching assistant staff. This group of staff represent the largest cohort of staff employed at the school and therefore the impact of this pressure is even more significant. The training needs of newly recruited staff are greater, and this places increased demands on senior staff to provide effective induction, professional development, and supervision.

### **Ongoing impact of Covid-19 Pandemic**

The school has continued to be affected by relatively high levels of staff absence related to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Absence of a member of staff is often for their health needs but has also in some cases been related to caring and/or isolation needs caused by close relatives. The impact on the school where in-depth knowledge of pupils' medical, health and care needs is significant. There are occasions when it unsafe for pupils to attend if (large numbers of) key staff are absent.

### **Financial Forecasting**

The headteacher continues to have significant concerns related to the school's financial viability in the medium to long term. A detailed financial comparison was undertaken earlier in the year with two comparator schools in Brighton and Hove and West Sussex. The headteacher and



School Business Manager are continuing to investigate and discuss the outcomes of these comparisons with the other schools, specifically in relation to administrative and leadership costs as well as class sizes.

### **School Development**

Securing the success of the school in the medium to long term is both a financial issue (see above) but also an organisational/structural issue, particularly in relation to the recent government white paper and planned policies regarding standalone academies and multi-academy trusts (see above). The headteacher and governors are aware of the challenges this may create for the school and at the same time, want to continue to grow opportunities for the children and families it serves.

### **7. Summary of school evaluation and priorities**

The leadership and management of Glyne Gap School is strong and robust. School leaders have a very realistic and clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school's development plan is very clear, well-structured and realistic.

The headteacher, key members of the school's senior leadership team and governors have led the school successfully through two Ofsted inspections where the school was judged to be outstanding. They have a proven track record of very effective evaluation linked to highly successful school development and improvement. Their professionalism, reflective attitudes, insight, and determination to improve the quality of education at the school provides considerable confidence that further developments will be successfully implemented.

Leaders have very accurately identified the challenges that they face and are well prepared to address them.

### **8. Next steps**

#### **Agreed actions**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Who (school/other)</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Success Criteria</b>
<b>Website Update</b> Update school website to ensure that information on pupil learning is up to date.	Headteacher	December 2022	School website contains information that is up to date.

#### **Sign-off**



Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022