

Link Governor Visit

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SEN link governor

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Links to Post-Ofsted Plan

LM4 To ensure that the progress of pupils who have SEND and/or other disabilities is captured with better precision.

Focus of Visit

I visited Miss Limer (SENCO) and Mr O'Brien (Headteacher) to monitor the progress of pupils with SEND. I had specific questions taken from the High Needs Review for SEND 2017/18.

Summary of activities

I visited Miss Limer and Mr O'Brien for my termly monitoring visit. I used some questions from the High Needs Review for SEND 2017/18 and some questions that I was advised to ask by Ian Dawson, Head of School Effectiveness, Newcastle LA.

I was told by Miss Limer that the current number of children on the Special Needs Register is 33. The register has been refined to ensure all children have a specific need. Mr O'Brien reported a rise in children who are on the autistic spectrum and an increase in the number of children starting nursery and reception with limited speech and language and social communication skills.

Does the school have a strategic approach to SEND, with sufficient capacity at senior level dedicated to this area to ensure improved outcomes for pupils with SEND?

The SENCO is given extra release time to fulfil her role and support special needs in school. The new assessment system has led to a more rapid detection and response to issues when they arise. The teachers regularly update her on the progress of the children in their class. The SLT and SENCO have meetings frequently to monitor children on the SEND register.

Is the school doing enough to provide an inclusive education for pupils with SEND who are entitled to it? Is the culture in school one of providing for all, or is there a belief that children with SEND are better placed in a special school?

The school is very inclusive of pupils with SEND. There have been a number of children who have raised concerns. These children are assessed when required and staff monitor them closely. The parents of children are invited into school to discuss how their child is

progressing in mainstream school. If it is thought a child may be better placed in a special school, this is discussed with their parents. Children are usually only moved if their behaviour is a danger to themselves or others. There are a number of children on the autistic spectrum who are managing comfortably in the school currently. The school puts interventions in place for children as they sometimes have to wait a long time for assessment from external sources. The SENCO applies for EHCP plans for children and top up funding. The headteacher feels special schools should create a pathway for children to attend mainstream schools if possible. In the past children have attended nursery who had significant needs, so an assessment for a EHCP plan could take place. The school was commended for doing this.

Do governors know how the funding provided for SEND is used and how effective it is in enabling pupils with SEND to achieve appropriate levels of progress?

In previous years SEND funding has appeared on the budget in a separate category. However, now SEND funding is paid in a lump sum with no way of knowing the exact figure which is exclusively for SEND. This is a notional amount which encompasses underattainment figures, SEN and children who are working towards targets. The figure for each SEND child is £6000. The school allocates money from the main budget to the SENCO, Special needs teaching assistants, SENTASS, Educational Psychologists, resources, training and courses.

Are all teachers equipped to be teachers of children with SEND, as expected in the statutory SEND Code? Is practice in assessing need and planning interventions and approaches of sufficient rigour and quality?

All teachers are trained about SEN during their teacher training. The school sends teachers on training courses and had training on Newcastle Mainstream Guidance in the autumn term, which I also attended. During a recent AP visit it was noted that there was little difference in the books of children with SEN and other children in the class. The children showed pride in their work. The SENCO has meetings with teachers termly to discuss progress of the children.

What are your current priorities regarding SEN?

The current priorities are to look at the new September intake of children and identify any needing extra support around speech, language and communication. A service level agreement is to be purchased to support children and teachers.

When will you know you have achieved your priorities?

Support around speech and language is ongoing as children start school. Speech and language support will help with this. The school pays for this service and has had very good

feedback about the strategies used by the service. The school will be working with the other Catholic schools to compare best practice.

How do you know students will receive support on their journey through school into high school?

The school has good links with all the high schools in the local area. Information is passed on to the schools about the children. The high schools send out SENTASS to meet with the children.

Have you got evidence of progress over time for the SEN cohort?

The spring governor data shows progress over time for the SEN cohort as does the new assessment system. Pupils progress is shown from the end of EYFS and key stage 1 to the children's current year. During pupil progress meetings, this is shown in books.

Are you happy with the teaching progress for SEN?

Mr O'Brien advised me the SLT scrutinise the children's books with the SENCO and have learning walks. The children are given one to one support if needed but are given the space to take control of their own independent learning. The children have very tailored individual targets to develop their self esteem and confidence as learners. If a child is assessed at a lower level than their peers, work is set at this level and children move on from this to work at a higher level.

Positive comments about the visit

I found the questions provided by Ian Dawson very useful in this meeting. It was good to meet with Mr O'Brien as well as Miss Limer to gain his perspective on SEN provision in school. I would like to thank them both for their time and answers to my questions.

Ideas for future visits

I have asked to see some examples of pupils books to see their progress at the forthcoming Governing Body Meeting.