

ST MICHAEL'S RCVA PRIMARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ADVISER VISIT SUMMER TERM 2017

School Improvement Adviser:
Margaret Armstrong

Date of Visit:
April 25 2017

Timings:
8.00 am – 11.00 am

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Margaret Armstrong visited the school on April 26 to complete a school improvement visit. The purpose of the visit was to work with the executive headteacher, senior leadership team and chair of governors to evaluate the impact of action taken since the school was placed in special measures in October 2016. This visit built on the findings of the supported review which was completed last January.

The visit was organised to give senior leaders opportunities to update the school improvement adviser on the actions they have taken to address issues in their areas of responsibility. All senior leaders demonstrated increased confidence in their leadership roles. They are setting a very clear direction for the future work of the school and are working very closely together as a cohesive team.

School Issues

- Sine the supported review, the head teacher retired due to ill health. The head teacher of St Aloysius Federation is now acting as executive head teacher across St Michael's and the federation.
- The deputy head teacher has been appointed to the role of head of school. She has responsibility for inclusion which includes acting as SENDCO as well as overseeing attendance and tracking the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium.

- A new staffing structure has been implemented which consists of the executive head teacher, head of school, associate deputy head teacher and senior leaders for the Early Years and teaching and learning.
- There are two NQTs in post; one in Year 2 and the other in Year 5. They are receiving very focused support to improve their practice and school evidence shows they are rapidly improving.
- The school is in the process of converting to an academy under the sponsorship of Sacred Heart Catholic High School. Shared policies and procedures are being developed, including those which relate to SEN. IT leaders from Sacred Heart are supporting the school in overhauling the whole IT infrastructure which is no longer fit for purpose.
- The governing body, which was judged to be inadequate in the last inspection, has been disbanded. An interim executive board (IEB) has been established. The board includes six governors with some external expertise provided by Diocese and the main school in the multi-academy trust.
- Staff from St Aloysius Federation continue to provide a high level of support, particularly in supporting teaching and learning. The school business manager from St Aloysius is also providing highly effective administrative support.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT VISIT

The school has focused very well on addressing the issues from the last inspection. There is clear evidence of improvement across all aspects of the school's work.

- The executive head teacher's clear vision, high expectations and ability to motivate and inspire senior leaders and staff has made sure the school has got off to a fast start in addressing the areas for improvement from the last inspection. There is a clear determination, from senior leaders and governors, to ensure all pupils achieve their potential. There is a relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning which has already ensured increased consistency of purpose and practice. All staff are working well as members of a cohesive team who share the commitment of senior leaders.
- New monitoring systems are highly effective. As a result, the quality of teaching does show signs of significant improvement. The improvements are ongoing and are planned to accelerate at a quicker rate in the summer term to ensure progress is consistently good across the school.
- The work of the chair of governors is a strength of the school. He is actively involved in the school and regularly spends significant time gaining feedback from pupils, parents and staff. He uses this information to keep the school improving by focusing on the impact of the school's recent actions in key areas of school improvement. He provides a good level of challenge because he knows the school very well. The chair demonstrates a high level of ambition for the future development of the school.

- Outcomes are improving steadily at the end of each key stage. This is due to high expectations, a focus on the progress of key groups and more effective and consistent teaching.
- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are happy and enjoy school. This is reflected in their improving attendance and punctuality. Strong relationships have been established. These are making a good contribution to learning.

PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING ISSUES FROM THE LAST INSPECTION

Inspection History

Date of last inspection: October 2016

Overall Effectiveness: Inadequate

Issue 1

Improve the quality of teaching so that all groups of pupils make at least good progress, especially in mathematics, by:

- planning and delivering activities that are well matched to pupils' needs and that ensure that gaps in learning are promptly addressed
- having higher expectations for pupils' outcomes based around the school's recently established pupil progress tracking information, linked to the national curriculum
- consistently implementing the school's marking policy

Summary of Action Taken and Evidence of Impact

- **The executive head teacher has established a highly effective system for reporting to governors on progress in addressing the areas for improvement from the last inspection and in setting a very clear direction for the future development of St Michael's.**

Impact

The chair of governors and members of the IEB are much better informed about the school's work. They are making very effective use of the executive head teacher's reports, updates from senior leaders and external reports to provide a good level of challenge and support and to target their monitoring activities.

- The mid-year school development plan and pupil premium statement have been prepared and implemented.

Impact

The mid-year improvement plan is a very focused and detailed document which sets the scene for the future development of the school. Targets are sharp and timescales are clear. There are in-built procedures for checking progress towards the main targets and to evaluate

the impact of action taken. The roles and responsibilities of leaders are clearly outlined. As a result of accurate self-evaluation, leaders and governors know the school well and know precisely what they need to do to quickly improve the overall effectiveness of the school.

- **Procedures for checking the effectiveness of teaching have been reviewed and updated. Each member of staff has had two lesson observations and has received detailed written and oral feedback. The performance management process has also been revised and all teachers are now part of a more formal appraisal system.**

Impact

Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are robust. Regular checks on the quality of teaching are making sure teaching is very quickly becoming much more consistent across year groups. Strengths in current teaching are in Years R, 4, 6 and in the intervention groups which are managed by senior leaders. The implementation of an effective appraisal system has ensured all teachers are held fully to account for their teaching practice and the impact on pupil outcomes. It also means teachers' achievements can be valued and recognised.

- **Extensive work has been done to improve the whole school learning environment and the classroom environments in Year 1, 2, 5 and 6. Many areas of the school, including the main hall, have been painted and decluttered.**

Impact

The executive head teacher and senior leadership team have been very successful in rapidly improving the learning environment to ensure a whole-school culture of learning is established. It is clear all staff are now sharing a common commitment to improve the school.

- **A very strong focus has been placed on reviewing and updating key policies in consultation with staff.**

Impact

All staff are clear about the school's expectations in a number of key areas including behaviour for learning, marking and feedback, the teaching of skills in English and mathematics, the SEN Code of Practice as well as developing an increased understanding of the Ofsted Framework. Staff's increased knowledge and understanding is already having a positive impact on learning.

- **Where teaching is not quite as strong, support has been quickly organised. This has included one-to-one support to improve planning and weekly support..**

Impact

School monitoring evidence and evidence from the school tour show learning tasks are more focused to the needs of all ability groups. Pupils' workbooks also evidence better progress and teachers' higher expectations are impacting positively on handwriting and presentation.

- The school has improved the quality and range of information given to parents about their child's progress and the overall work of the school. This has included the organisation of half-termly curriculum updates and special events such as the 'Mothers' Day Assembly' and the 'Comic Relief Cake Sale'.

Impact

The school is working more effectively with parents. Stronger partnership working is evolving and parents are accessing more opportunities to increase their confidence when supporting their child's learning at home.

Issue 2

- Further improve attendance levels and reduce persistent absence.

Summary of Action Taken and Evidence of Impact

- The school's systems for promoting good attendance and reducing persistent absenteeism and lateness have been reviewed and new incentives have been implemented. More emphasis has been placed on monitoring attendance and trends over time.

Impact

It will be easier to judge overall impact by the end of July although early indications are that attendance is rising. Parents of children who are frequently late and those at risk of persistent absenteeism are invited to meet with the executive head teacher. The school is in the process of employing a part-time attendance officer who will promote the revised system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils are already developing a pride in their school and a keenness to get to school on time and focus on their learning.

Issue 3

- Improve systems for recording pupils' behaviour, including ensuring that the school's documentation for exclusions is in line with national guidance.

Summary of Action Taken and Evidence of Impact

- A new system for managing pupil behaviour has been implemented and the school's documentation for exclusions now meets requirements. The school's system for tracking behaviour has also been revised. The executive head teacher and senior leaders are setting very high expectations for behaviour and attitudes to learning.

Impact

Following the reviews of policies for behaviour, low-level disruption in lessons has been significantly reduced. Attitudes to learning are moving to good in all year groups. From the tour of the school, it was evident pupils feel that they are part of a school community where relationships are supportive and there are high levels of respect between pupils and with adults. Pupils are much clearer about the school's expectations and the use of rewards and sanctions. Pupils are courteous, polite and friendly. Their behaviour in lessons, in the playground and in the dining hall has improved noticeably.

Issue 4

- **Improve outcomes for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, by:**
 - ensuring that subject leaders for English and mathematics take prompt action to rapidly improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that senior and subject leaders regularly and rigorously check that planned actions are improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for pupils
 - further improving the quality of the curriculum so that it better meets the needs of pupils, particularly in mathematics and science
 - improving the strategic challenge provided by governors, building on the work of the recently established local authority monitoring and support group
 - improving the planning, monitoring and evaluation of pupil premium spending, ensuring that all eligible pupils across the school benefit and make good progress.

Summary of Action Taken and Evidence of Impact

- **Leaders of the Early Years, English, mathematics and SEN have made good progress in developing their skills in monitoring and evaluation since the last inspection. They have reviewed the long-term plans for their areas of responsibility and this has impacted on whole school developments. Leaders have attended pupil progress meetings and have ensured the profile of the disadvantaged pupils has been raised.**

Impact

Leaders have a much sharper focus on improving outcomes for pupils. Through their long-term plans, they are setting a much clearer direction in their areas of responsibility. The leadership of teaching and the use of additional funding to support learning are the main areas where senior leaders have demonstrated impact.

Additional Issues

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

A Pupil Premium Strategy has been prepared and the actions are now being followed through. Projections for 2017 show the gaps in attainment between the disadvantaged pupils and others in the school are expected to narrow.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The external review of governance has been postponed due to significant change in the organisation of the Governing Body. It will be reorganised to ensure the IEB fulfils its statutory duties.

ASPECTS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The effectiveness of leadership and management is improving rapidly and is moving towards good.

Key Points:

- The executive headteacher has quickly focused on improving the effectiveness of leadership. This has resulted in clear evidence that the quality of teaching is more effective and pupil outcomes are improving.
- The newly structured senior leadership team has embraced the significant changes which have been made over a short period of time. They fully support the strategy for taking urgent action. The executive head teacher has made his vision for the future development of St Michael's very clear and he ensured senior leaders have had opportunities to develop the skills to support fast school improvement.
- New systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, are embedding well and this is ensuring improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Following very focused professional development, teachers are setting learning tasks that are matched well to pupils' needs and this is speeding up progress in lessons. Inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching over time are being addressed.

Leadership Reports

Members of the senior leadership confidently presented detailed reports of the work they have done in their areas of responsibility and outlined additional evidence of impact.

Safeguarding Children

The executive head teacher, working closely with the head of school and governors, has taken immediate steps to extend the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils. An external safeguarding audit has been carried out and an action plan put in place to tackle identified issues.

The CPOMS system is embedding well and this has strengthened the school's identification procedures.

Early Years

Although the effectiveness of the Early Years was judged to be good in the last inspection, the leader is determined to secure the best possible provision to improve outcomes.

- The indoor environment has been reviewed and reorganised. Resources are more readily available and this is encouraging independent learning. Plans are in place to extend learning opportunities in the outside area.

- Alongside whole school developments, the behaviour policy has been reviewed. This has had a marked impact on the proportion of pupils who are expected to achieve the expected standard in the managing feelings strand.
- The school has been very successful in cementing strong working relationships with parents. Parental views were taken during the Spring Term Parents' Evening and these have been acted upon. A 'Parental Involvement Portfolio' has been established to exemplify the impact of the school's work.

Teaching and Learning

- A culture of high expectations has been established. The impact can be seen in improvements to handwriting and presentation. For example, in Key Stage 2, the use of 'Handwriting Heroes' encourages children to use their best handwriting and take a pride in their work. The 'Achievement Walls' exemplify how staff value children's work and achievements across the curriculum.
- Literacy lessons are planned around carefully chosen texts which are motivating children to write. The new of a clearer assessment approach is ensuring teachers can make accurate judgements about progress. Teachers are planning more opportunities for pupils to write across the curriculum. Much higher aspirations are being set for pupils' achievements across the English curriculum. This can be seen in the school's involvement as a lead school within the 'Shakespeare Cluster Group'.
- The mathematics curriculum has been revised to ensure pupils consolidate their mathematical skills before applying them in problem-solving and reasoning tasks. Younger children have more opportunities to work on practical tasks to secure understanding. The review of the calculation policy has ensured consistency in the teaching of basic skills.

SEN and Inclusion

- Developing the effectiveness of the leadership of SEN is a main priority. An SEN action plan is in place which demonstrates the school's expectations for this group of pupils. Professional development has been given to staff so they can take responsibility for action planning for individual pupils in their classes. Links with external agencies, particularly with the Educational Psychologist, have been extended to support the audit of strengths and weaknesses. Impact measures in the SEN action plan are challenging and measurable.
- The 'SEND Report to Governors' provided governors with an up-to-date view of the number of children with SEN in each class and their areas of need. It summarises developments in this area of the school's work. The 'Intervention Overview' evidence the wide range of intervention work which is underway for pupils who have SEN and those who have SEN but are also eligible for the pupil premium.
- The head of school has also prepared a very useful 'Inclusion Report' which identifies what has been done this term, the strengths in provision and the current priorities.

- A very useful summary of planned intervention work to improve outcomes for the disadvantaged pupils in Years 2 and 6 has also been prepared. This summarises what is being done to narrow the gaps and the desired outcomes. Improved teaching is impacting positively on outcomes for the disadvantaged. The impact of actions taken in respect of the disadvantaged will be reviewed in more depth as part of the summer term monitoring visit.

Personal Development and Welfare

Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare were judged to require improvement in the last inspection. This aspect of the school's work is very quickly moving to good.

- As stated earlier in the report, key policies and procedures have been reviewed and agreed. The new policy is being implemented consistently. Teachers are maintaining 'Behaviour Logs' which support new monitoring procedures. Rewards and sanctions are clearly visible in all classrooms.
- A new, external attendance officer has been appointed and procedures for managing persistent absenteeism are much more robust.
- The attendance of key groups is being monitored very closely, particularly for SEN children and those eligible for the pupil premium.

2017 PREDICTIONS AND TARGETS

PROPORTIONS OF PUPILS EXPECTED TO MEET AND EXCEED NATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

Outcomes are improving at the end of each key stage; this can be directly linked to the increased effectiveness of leadership.

End of Year R

The proportion of children achieving a good level of development continue to show a steady rise with 65%+ of children predicted to achieve this measure in 2017.

Year 1 Phonics Screen

Again, steady improvement is predicted with 79% predicted to achieve the expected standard; an increase of 6%.

End of Year 2

| | Prediction % to meet national expectations | Target % to meet national expectations | Prediction % to achieve greater depth | Target % to achieve greater depth |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Reading | 62 | 65 | 24 | 27 |
| Writing | 69 | 72 | 15 | 18 |
| Mathematics | 75 | 78 | 19 | 22 |
| Combined | 62 | 65 | 12 | 15 |

- The proportions of pupils predicted to achieve the expected standard are predicted to be broadly average by the end of Year 2 in 2017, although slightly below in reading. Good improvement is predicted in terms of the proportions predicted to achieve greater depth, especially in reading and writing. 0% of children achieved greater depth in writing in 2016.

End of Year 6

| | Prediction % predicted to meet national expectations | Target % to meet national expectations | Prediction % predicted to achieve the higher standard | Target % to achieve the higher standard |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Reading | 77 | 80 | 20 | 23 |
| Writing | 80 | 83 | 24 | 27 |
| Mathematics | 80 | 83 | 24 | 27 |
| EGPS | 80 | 83 | 26 | 29 |
| % achieving the national standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined. | 77 | 80 | 13 | 17 |

- Good progress is predicted to be made in increasing the proportions of pupils who achieve the expected and higher standards in all areas in 2017. As in Key Stage 1, the proportion who achieve the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined is predicted to be above average.

SCHOOL TO SCHOOL SUPPORT

St Michaels' is accessing high-quality support from St Aloysius Federation. This support is having a very clear impact on the overall effectiveness of St Michael's and especially on the quality of leadership.

The impact is evident in a number of areas including:

- The creation of engaging and stimulating learning environments in classrooms, around corridors and in the main hall
- The refurbishment of the outdated school library and the refurbishment of administrative areas
- Support to improve the performance of the NQTs
- Higher expectations across the school
- The establishment of the 'St Michael's pupils can....' Initiative

Priorities to move the school forward through school-to-school support have been identified and include:

- Further support to improve consistency in teaching particularly in the match of tasks and the pace of learning
- Support to extend leadership at all levels in implementing a 'Challenge Curriculum'
- Review and design of the topic-based curriculum and ensuring full curriculum coverage
- Sacred Heart will provide support in developing and launching a new website to extend communications with parents

RECOMMENDATIONS

The next external monitoring visit is planned for June 21. There will be a focus on the impact of action taken to address the points detailed below as well as in-depth discussion with governors. Senior leaders will present updates with respect to their areas of responsibility. The monitoring report will be written to take into account 2017 performance. The report will be prepared in preparation for the next MSG on July 10.

1. Improve the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics, by ensuring that teachers:

- use information about what pupils already know, understand and can do to plan activities that are well matched to pupils' ability
- have high expectations of the quality and quantity of work that pupils produce in lessons
- develop and deepen pupils' mathematical understanding, especially the most-able, through activities which allow them to apply their skills, problem-solve in a range of contexts, reason and justify their actions
- set high standards of listening during teacher-led parts of lessons and secure effective engagement in independent work
- give pupils feedback that helps them to know how to improve their work

2. Make leadership and management more effective by ensuring that:

- all senior leaders have clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities which are understood by staff, pupils, parents and other key stakeholders
- increasing the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation and implementing a sharply focused, strategic improvement plan which includes measurable steps to success and well defined timescales
- subject leaders play a full part in monitoring all aspects of the subjects for which they have responsibility
- the mathematics curriculum is further developed so that it fully meets the needs of all pupils but particularly the most-able and those who are disadvantaged
- ensuring the external review of the use of the pupil premium is completed as a matter of urgency and a sharply focused pupil premium strategy is put in place
- plans are implemented to ensure that governors challenge school leaders and hold them to account to rapidly increase the rate of improvement.