

Highfield Primary School



Date of Review 10/11/2016

Review leader: *Mike Smit,*

Red Kite Alliance Review

School Name Highfield Primary School

Date 10/11/2016

Review team: *Mike Smit, Elaine McLellan*

Context:

School Identified Focus Areas

- Examine school strategy and provision for closing identified cohort specific academic gaps (SIP priority 1)*
- Examine greater depth teaching and learning in maths and English across the school (SIP priority 2)*
- Examine children's involvement in their own assessment for learning (Ofsted Action point 2011 SIP priority 4)*

- The school was inspected in November 2011 and judged as an **outstanding** school. **School self-evaluation** continues to judge the school as such. Whilst outstanding schools are largely exempt from re-inspection, Ofsted retain the right to re-inspect such schools and have done so in a number of outstanding schools nationally and in North Yorkshire.
- The current protocol is that should an outstanding school be re-inspected that this will be through a section 8 inspection.¹ This will be conducted by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. This inspection will not make individual inspection judgements or change the overall effectiveness grade. This can only happen if the inspection is converted to a section 5.

Evidence used

- School summary of self-evaluation
- School Improvement Plan
- Previous Inspection Report
- Lesson observations of fifteen classes
- Discussions with pupils
- Brief work scrutinies
- Meetings with school leaders
- Discussions on closing the gap, Pupil Premium Strategy and RAISEonline

The following report covers the key areas identified by the School and general points relating to the Ofsted Key areas.

1. Overall Effectiveness

This visit was not to evaluate or judge whether the school continues to be outstanding as the evidence was insufficient and incomplete. It was, however, clear that provision and practice are rooted in a culture of high expectations and a focus on improving outcomes.

¹ Education Act 2005, section 8. www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/section/8

Senior leaders have a detailed knowledge of the school's effectiveness and as a result have identified necessary improvement points. The range and depth of evidence used includes an intelligent and contextualised analysis of data. This year's Inspection Dashboard identifies some weaknesses. The 2016 data was untypical and there is sufficient historic and current evidence of pupils' performance to confirm this.

The focus of this review reflected school leaders' determination that weaknesses are identified and rooted out. Action planning is sophisticated and relates to staff training, professional development and performance management. The curriculum is broad and balanced, explores and exploits links across subjects and allows pupils to develop a range of skills, knowledge and understanding.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is embedded in the ethos and work of the school with high ambitions for all expressed academically, socially and emotionally. Behaviour is excellent and pupils' attitudes to work are an important factor in their good progress.

The inspirational and principled leadership of the headteacher is well supported by the leadership team including the newly appointed Deputy Headteacher. His understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school reflect his personal commitment, the effectiveness of his induction and mentoring and his partnership with the headteacher and other leaders.

Highfield Primary is a school where leaders and governors reflect on and debate its effectiveness in moral as well as academic terms. Collectively, staff want to retain the school's outstanding status and express this through a creative curriculum; the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment and a determination that all pupils excel.

Areas to Consider:

- See recommendations.

2. Quality of Leadership

Strengths:

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have a strong vision and ethos that shapes an ambitious, collective determination to continue improvements. There is a clear sense of direction framed within an effective strategic plan.
- Leaders are uncompromising in wanting the best for all pupils including the disadvantaged. This is shown in the use of 'Closing the Gap – Cohort Action Plans' and the decision to have this the focus for the peer review.
- School self-evaluation is accurate as a result of regular and vigilant monitoring. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of individual members of staff. This knowledge informs staff training and performance management and ensures that school improvement priorities are appropriate and meaningful.
- The inspirational and highly effective leadership of the headteacher is strengthened by her partnership with the leadership team including the new deputy. The delegation of leadership and management responsibilities aligns specialist knowledge to discrete areas of school improvement.

- Ethical leadership is shown in the determination to maintain and develop a broad and balanced curriculum that gives pupils a rich range of experiences that enhance their knowledge and skills. The pursuit of academic excellence is not achieved through narrowing the curriculum.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is embedded within the life and work of the school and is seen through the promotion of fundamental British values, equality of opportunity and the promotion of diversity.

3. Behaviour & Safety

Strengths:

- The school prides itself in developing the confidence, self-esteem and self-assurance of pupils including the disadvantaged and those with special educational needs. In turn, pupils are proud of their school. They want to please themselves and their teachers. The Early Years Foundation Stage sets the tone for this.
- Pupils are encouraged to talk and debate about their learning and about topics that test their respect for different views and opinions. They learn about a range of faiths and cultures. One Year 5 girl said: "I have a friend who is a Muslim and a friend who is a Christian. We all play together."
- Pupils' social behaviours are outstanding. They are self-disciplined, courteous and polite. They reflect positive attitudes overtly modelled by adults.
- Pupils are safe and they say that they feel safe. They are well supervised but are confident to keep themselves and their friends safe including on-line.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves fit and healthy. They understand how choices about eating, drinking and exercising impacts on their health and well-being.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying but know how to respond should it occur as 'first responders'. School leaders say that it happens rarely but have clear strategies. Bullying is not tolerated.
- The school's focus on fairness, equality and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils allows them to be thoughtful and caring, and prepares them well for the next steps in their education.

Areas to Consider:

- N/A

4. Quality of Teaching

Strengths:

- Quality learning environments in corridors and classrooms share and celebrate examples of pupils' work in a range of subjects and topics. The high expectations they evidence are reflected in the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment across the school.

- Observations show that teaching staff have deep subject knowledge that gives confidence to their teaching that is informed by clear and straightforward learning objectives, instructions and explanations. Pupils know what they have to learn and what they have to do.
- Joint planning is derived from accurate assessments meaning that there is equity in provision but that different classes within each year group are proud to develop and share their own identities and to bespoke activities to meet the particular needs of their pupils including the most able and the disadvantaged.
- Pupils enjoy working and work hard. They are very productive. Examples of extended texts were seen in Key Stages 1 and 2 building on the strong foundations established in Early Years. Basic skills and knowledge are learnt and consolidated effectively because a strong work ethic is established from an early age. This is supported by excellent classroom organisation and routine. No time is wasted.
- Teaching staff maintain close oversight of pupils at their work, checking understanding and intervening with high quality questions and prompts.
- Marking and feedback are at the heart of the school's assessment policy allowing staff to give close attention to pupils' learning and progress. Again, from the earliest age, staff give critical feedback that celebrates success but gives improvement points that pupils are expected to respond to. Pupils are insightful in their self-assessments. 'Deal Breakers' are used to identify individual priorities for learning in some classes. This is excellent practice and could be more overtly shared more widely.
- Pupils say that they love the school and enjoy challenges. A few pupils have to earn the right to move to more challenging activities by completing activities that they find easy.

Areas to Consider:

- See recommendations.

5. Outcomes

Strengths:

- Over time pupils make good, often substantial, progress.
- As a result of a rich and relevant curriculum and quality teaching pupils of all abilities including the most able and the disadvantaged develop excellent learning attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding in a range of subjects including English and mathematics.
- Published outcomes for 2016 are untypical in that standards and progress have some weaknesses most of which were cohort related and anticipated as a result of accurate tracking. Floor targets were met.
- Wider evidence evaluated by the review team confirmed that outcomes for the year were unusual.

Areas to Consider:

- See recommendations.

Strengths which could be of help to other Alliance Schools

- The excellent organisation and structure of the day and its clear link to current school improvement priorities demonstrating the confidence of school leaders to manage external accountability.
- Outstanding learning environments.
- Pupil voice.
- The individuality of classrooms even when using joint planning.
- The highly effective headteacher.

General Points/Recommendations

- Further develop current strategies that identify individual pupil barriers to learning as personalised and targeted 'deal breakers.'
- Continue to share best practice in the use of pupils' additional challenges / extension work in order that more are working more often at greater depth.
- In order to evidence outstanding outcomes, incorporate the effective analysis of published data within a broader analysis that draws on evidence from lesson observations, feedback from pupils, scrutinies of pupils' work and the school's own performance information.

Appendix 2

PEER REVIEW EVALUATION FORM

School Reviewed: Highfield Primary

Date: 10/11/16

Lead Reviewer: Mike Smit

What went well:-

- The Focus was driven by the school. The day was effective in evaluation a key aspect of our School Improvement Plan, "Closing the in school, cohort specific, achievement gap"
- The data gathering process during the day, which enabled verification of our own school evaluation. (strategic plans, work scrutiny, lesson observation, pupil voice and school assessment information)
- Staff felt the observations were rightly of the children, their work, progress and learning and not of the teachers themselves. Mike had said this to everyone in the briefing and it was great that this was what transpired.

Even Better if:-

More of the leadership and middle management team could have been involved in the afternoon dialogue. However we will be discussing the report and acting on its recommendations with governors and staff this week.

What, if anything, did (will) you change as a result of the last review?

We will be adding a combined reading, writing and maths target to our assessment data for each year group not just year 6.

Completed by: Julie Colley

Completed Evaluation Form to be submitted to the Director of the RKA – res@harrogategrammar.co.uk