

TITLE	School Performance Indicators and Ofsted reports
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 June 2019
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Director of Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Clear understanding of schools' performance in order to recognise and promote success and ensure robust challenge and support continues to deliver improvement

RECOMMENDATION

Note the outcomes of relevant Ofsted reports

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Bearwood Primary School

March 2019

S5 GOOD previously RI

<https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50065413>

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders and governors have taken a wide range of decisive and sustained actions to tackle weaknesses. Consequently, Bearwood Primary School is now a good school.
- Senior and middle leaders ensure that the quality of learning in mathematics and English is consistently strong across year groups and classes.
- Due to improvements, pupils now achieve outcomes in line with other pupils nationally in key stages 1 and 2 national tests.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive targeted support. Consequently, they make progress in line with other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Effective teaching enables pupils to deepen their thinking and explain it clearly, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils collaborate effectively, using discussion to share and develop their ideas. They take pride in their work. Presentation in books is almost always of a high standard.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and engages pupils well. The curriculum in art is particularly strong.
- All members of staff prioritise pupils' safety. As a result, pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe outside school.

- Behaviour throughout the school is typically of a high standard. It is particularly impressive at breaktimes, when pupils of all ages play happily together.
- Relationships are strong and nurturing. Older pupils act as helpful learning mentors for their younger classmates.
- Provision in early years is consistently strong. Children learn and develop their social skills well.
- Subject leaders have improved the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum in English and mathematics well.
- Despite some improvements, pupils do not develop skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects in the wider curriculum consistently well.
- Leaders and governors have established effective systems to monitor and review the quality of teaching and learning. However, their analysis of information from checks on teaching does not focus sharply enough on the progress made by different groups across all subjects.
- Although leaders have successfully improved pupils' attendance, it remains below the national average. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is also below the national average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the impact of subject leadership in the wider curriculum so that curriculum improvements are consistently embedded and pupils acquire secure knowledge, skills and understanding in a range of subjects
 - sharpening the analysis of information gathered from the school's checks on teaching, so that it is more focused on the progress made across all subjects by disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Improve attendance so that it is at least in line with national averages and reduce absence rates for disadvantaged pupils.

St Nicholas Hurst CE Primary School

April 2019

S8 GOOD

<https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50077582>

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Staff morale is high. All staff who responded to the confidential staff questionnaire agreed that the school is well led and managed. The determined leadership that you, your senior leaders and governors provide ensures that the school continues to strengthen. You lead by example and are very proud and committed to the school. The school is a positive and welcoming place. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and show respect for each other and for adults. Pupils work well together in lessons. I witnessed many examples of collaborative work. For example, in one mathematics lesson, pupils were developing their understanding of positive and negative numbers while solving problems. This enabled them to identify where they had made mistakes and learn from each other.

Pupils are happy to come to school and their attendance is higher than the national averages. They describe their school as 'amazing', 'great' and 'caring'. They are clearly proud of their school and enjoy the range of experiences that staff provide.

Staff, parents and carers are extremely enthusiastic about all aspects of the school's work. One parent said, 'The school is so nurturing, has a lovely community feel and has a wonderful ethos. The teachers really care about the children and always put in 110%.' You have built on the strengths of the school and tackled the areas that needed to improve. At the last inspection, the school was asked to improve pupils' achievement at the end of Reception and in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

School records and 2018 outcomes indicate that your work in these areas has had an impact with the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard being well above the national averages.

You and your leaders are good at identifying how to improve pupils' progress. Pupils make better progress in reading and writing than they do in mathematics. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of the teaching of mathematics in some classes.

You have identified this as a priority in your development plans and recognise that mathematics needs to be more challenging, particularly for the girls, to enable them to make greater progress.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that records are detailed and of high quality. Your checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are thorough. Training for staff is up to date and in line with the latest statutory guidance. There is a strong culture of promoting pupils' well-being and safety in the school. One pupil said, 'It is a great community and everyone helps each other.'

You and your team have created a strong sense of community, based on Christian values. Pupils say they feel safe and enjoy their learning. Pupils I spoke with confidently described the range of strategies they used to stay safe. For example, they knew how to stay safe when using the internet. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. The vast majority of parents who completed the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, stated that pupils are safe and well looked after at this school. One parent commented, 'St Nicholas is a lovely, warm and caring school.'

Inspection findings

At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at the effectiveness of safeguarding, how effectively you have improved the teaching of writing, the progress of pupils, including girls, in mathematics and the progress of the most able pupils at key stage 1 in writing. In 2018, the proportion of girls that made good progress in mathematics was lower than that of other girls nationally with similar starting points. You and your team identified weaknesses in pupils' understanding in mathematics and, as a result, you have revised the curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils, particularly the girls. Regular problem-solving activities now form a part of the mathematics work to help pupils apply their understanding to real-life contexts.

You and your team have identified that further work is needed to challenge girls in mathematics and to enable them to develop a deep understanding and reach the higher standards.

The previous inspection report asked that you stretch pupils further in lessons, including the most able, so that they make better progress. In 2018 at key stage 2, more pupils reached the higher standard in writing than previously. The school's reorganised curriculum enables teachers to focus on improving the range of writing that pupils have to experience.

Pupils told me that they enjoy the writing topics. You introduced a more creative approach to writing using good-quality texts to engage pupils. Work in books and current assessment information show that the topics are having a positive effect on writing

outcomes. Writing in pupils' books confirms that pupils are becoming increasingly skilled at editing and improving their writing. Pupils take pride in their work and present it neatly. The curriculum has been well designed so that pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. Right from the start, pupils are given the chance to explore the world around them. Pupils enjoy a wide range of educational visits and told me how much they enjoy learning in different situations. These experiences help to improve their reading, writing and mathematical skills. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extracurricular activities on offer including judo, science and football. These contribute to pupils' well-rounded and enjoyable education.

Senior leaders work collaboratively as an effective team. They lead by example and keep a careful check on the quality of teaching and pupils' work in books.

There is some variability in the accuracy of teachers' assessments and these do not always reflect the good progress seen in pupils' work. The Headteacher accepts that there are some weaknesses in the school's development plans for improving teaching and learning. For example, they do not include clear measurable milestones or targets to enable leaders and governors to evaluate the impact of their planned actions.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' rates of progress in mathematics continue to improve, particularly for the most able girls
- they refine their development plans to include clear milestones and targets to enable leaders and governors to evaluate the impact of these plans.

St Dominic Savio Primary School

May 2019

S8 GOOD –recommendation for S5 to investigate outstanding

<https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50077985>

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall.

Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You have successfully built a cohesive leadership team which is fully committed to your research-based approach to school improvement. Leaders at all levels hold recognised positions of expertise, including in phonics, religious education, writing and special educational needs. Through this, they share their knowledge and understanding, both within school and across other schools, particularly within the diocese cluster of schools and the local authority.

Middle leaders share senior leaders' passion for improvement. Middle leaders lead strongly through example and a secure knowledge of how to ensure progress in their subject for all pupils. They monitor the progress that pupils are making in all subjects and coach teachers to help ensure that all pupils continue to make strong progress.

The regular checks that senior leaders carry out on pupils' progress have ensured that all groups make very strong progress from their different starting points. This includes the large number of pupils on roll who speak English as an additional language, as well as pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who are disadvantaged.

Your determination to provide the best for every pupil is palpable. Parents and carers are almost unanimous in their view that their children are well taught. One comment, typical of the views of many parents, was: 'The school has a very caring atmosphere: each individual pupil is well known both personally and academically, and in our experience, learning is highly personalised.' Staff who responded to the online survey are unanimously proud to work at the school and feel that leaders 'genuinely care' about their well-being.

Pupils' attainment in phonics is strong over time. The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check and the Year 2 check is consistently above the national average. Pupils' attainment in key stage 1 is also strong. In 2017 and 2018, attainment of pupils at the expected standard and at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics was above that seen nationally.

Pupils continue to make good overall progress across key stage 2, making progress well above the national average in reading and mathematics. Consequently, in 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected and the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 was above the national average.

Work in pupils' books shows that current pupils continue to make strong progress across the school, meeting the very high standards that teachers set. Work in subjects other than English show the same high writing standards in presentation and attention to spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Leaders are in the process of redesigning the curriculum, planning it carefully to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are built progressively over time. Assessment systems have also been developed to enable teachers to identify what pupils know and can do so that they can build on this learning. Some subjects have already changed to this knowledge-based curriculum, particularly science and religious education, with others planned to change at the start of the next academic year. Senior leaders recognise the importance of ensuring that progress in each subject, across time, is carefully monitored while these changes take place.

Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. You have introduced a new feedback policy aimed at helping pupils to make strong progress while conscientiously managing teacher workload. Provision in the Reception classes, both indoors and outdoors, has been improved and now contributes well to children improving their reading, writing and number skills.

Governors are committed to the values and ethos of the school. Governors know the school well and are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide a good level of challenge and support for leaders.

The local authority provides effective support and training, which contribute well to school improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. In your role as designated safeguarding lead, you monitor policy and procedures regularly and ensure that practice meets current requirements. All records are detailed, regularly updated and kept securely. The investment in an online system has increased communication between all key adults and your safeguarding team. It allows the team to look for patterns and identify whether a child is vulnerable and may benefit from time in the nurture facility you have set up. You regularly refresh staff training to ensure that they are knowledgeable about the signs of abuse.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils enjoy opportunities to work in partnership with other pupils. They are considerate of the views of others and listen with interest. Pupils were respectful towards each other and adults, while being

extremely confident and articulate. During a conversation I held with a group of pupils, they were clear about the difference between falling out and bullying, and they were also adamant that there was not any bullying in school. They have confidence in the staff and peer mediators to resolve any issues. Pupils are given good guidance on how to keep themselves safe through a structured curriculum that includes information about cyber safety and knowing how to seek help. The many responses on Parent View confirmed that almost all parents feel that their children are safe in school and would recommend the school to another family.

Inspection findings

The first key line of enquiry that we agreed to look at was the strength of teaching, learning and assessment in all subject areas across the school.

Knowledge, skills and understanding in all curriculum areas are of a very high standard, for example in projects from the science fair, artwork in Year 6 and design work in Year 4. Pupils say they enjoy their learning and that lessons are fun. Learning behaviour in all lessons is exemplary.

Leaders have designed the physical education curriculum to be fully inclusive and pupils enjoy a vast range of sporting activities that include lacrosse, Gaelic football and ballroom dance. As a result of consulting pupils, in particular older girls who disliked physical education, the school introduced cheerleading, and many pupils now continue to enjoy success both in and out of school in this discipline.

Next, we looked at pupil premium funding. In particular, we looked at how governors hold leaders to account for its effective use and the impact it has on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

Leaders, including governors, carefully monitor the use of the pupil premium funding to ensure that it is being effectively used. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make particularly strong progress which is at least in line with that of their peers and stronger than the national average.

Finally, we looked at provision in the early years setting and the impact that improvements have had on children's and pupils' progress.

Children enter the early years provision from many different nurseries. Assessments carried out on entry show that a significant proportion, around one third, have below expected levels in reading and writing. In addition, around one quarter enter below expected levels in mathematics. In 2018, children made strong progress and the number leaving the early years with a good level of development continued to be above the national average.

You have ensured that there has been specific training in phonics teaching for all members of staff. A large number of support staff work alongside teachers from the Reception Year and Year 1 to deliver phonics teaching to 11 different ability groups. This is overseen by the specialist leader of education in phonics, who models exemplary practice to enhance teaching and learning. Consequently, the strong outcomes in the Year 1 and Year 2 phonics screening checks have been sustained and pupils in the early years have a strong understanding of phonics to ensure that they make rapid gains on entry to key stage 1.

Parents have many opportunities to be involved in their child's learning in the early years, for example through contributing to the online learning journal or through weekly reading sessions offered to all parents.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:
the school's new curriculum continues to evolve and become embedded so that rates of strong progress and high standards are maintained across all subjects.

Beechwood Primary School

April 2019

S8 Monitoring visit- appropriate action and satisfactory progress

<https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50078643>

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Beechwood Primary School

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in May 2018. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, interim executive board members, and representatives from the supporting multi-academy trust and the local authority. I observed learning in five lessons and met with teachers and pupils. I considered the views of parents by reviewing Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of meetings held by governors, school assessment information and reports from external agencies, including a review of the use of pupil premium funding. The school's statement of action and improvement plans were evaluated.

Context

Since the previous inspection, many teaching staff have left the school. The acting headteacher left her post and you have been appointed as the new acting headteacher. The school has received formal support from a multi-academy trust. The interim executive board (IEB) has remained in place.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Since the previous inspection, senior leaders, the supporting academy trust, the IEB and local authority have acted in unison to provide pupils with a better quality of education. They have taken time to consider the challenges the school faces and develop focused plans which are followed closely and reviewed regularly. This is an improving school. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching was judged inadequate. Staff are motivated and keen to improve outcomes for pupils. They appreciate, and put to good use, the support they have had to develop their teaching. For example, following a useful pupil premium review, staff received training to improve the support they provide for disadvantaged pupils. As a result of what teachers learned and successfully applied, the progress of these pupils is beginning to strengthen. Teachers receive regular feedback on their work and appreciate the useful guidance on offer to them. For example, staff in Years 4 and 5 worked with a local school to develop the quality of their English teaching. This was typified in a series of lessons where pupils worked collaboratively to gather and use vocabulary to describe a dragon's eyes. Nevertheless, systems for tracking the performance of individual teachers require further refinement to ensure that the quality of teaching strengthens further. Leaders' efforts to address high levels of pupil absence have been hampered in the past by the instability of leadership. Recently, changes to systems and processes have ensured that staff at all levels are charged with supporting and challenging parents to raise their child's attendance. While there is some evidence of improved attendance, the full impact of these changes is yet to be seen. Staff have received useful training to help raise their expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage challenging behaviour successfully in class. Pupils assert that classes are now more peaceful and purposeful environments which allow them to focus and concentrate on their work. As a result, pupils are increasingly productive and enthusiastic about their learning. Progress in mathematics is improving because pupils have developed their understanding of calculation, which they now present in a more refined and logical manner. They practise these skills often and are becoming more fluent as their understanding grows. In most year groups, pupils are tackling challenging problems and can explain

their thinking. Increasing proportions of pupils are attaining at age-related expectations in mathematics. Pupils' writing is improving because they are increasingly able to write for a specific audience or purpose. For example, pupils wrote accounts to share an experience they had during their Easter break. However, standards of punctuation and spelling remain weak, particularly in key stage 2, meaning that these pupils are not writing at the expected standard for their age. Topic books show that pupils learn about religious education, the arts, geography and history. For example, pupils in Year 3 learned about the Ten Commandments and used their learning to produce posters to encourage others to follow these rules. However, these subjects are often taught in isolation and do not allow pupils enough opportunity to build on their prior knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils' progress in these lessons is weak.

In reception, staff have worked with external providers to improve their recording and sharing of assessment information. The effect of this work is twofold. Firstly, staff now have a more accurate understanding of children's progress because the information they hold is of higher quality. Secondly, this information is available for parents to view, which has helped to improve communication between the school and home. Members of the IEB are experienced, knowledgeable and well placed to secure further improvement. They utilise their skills well to challenge leaders to improve outcomes for pupils. For example, having reviewed the systems for collecting and analysing assessment information, they developed new systems which are more efficient and accurate. The new approach offers the board a more accurate picture of pupils' progress, including those who are disadvantaged. Board members work efficiently with leaders and external agencies to gather an accurate and unbiased view of the school. Officers from the multi-academy trust have worked closely with the school, taking time to understand the uniqueness of the setting and supporting staff to improve their teaching. For example, staff have received useful training to help them to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities better. As a result, these pupils now attend class more regularly and make better progress. The local authority has supported the school well. Officers identified the weaknesses in the school prior to the previous inspection and put in place appropriate plans and an IEB to oversee the necessary improvements. They have successfully brokered useful support from a range of schools and a multi-academy trust to help leaders to evaluate the school effectively and drive improvements. Regular monitoring of the school's progress has helped leaders to refine their actions and identify any strategies that are not having the desired impact.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective actions towards the removal of the 'serious weaknesses' designation.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

Northern House Academy

April 2019

S8 Monitoring visit

<https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50066584>

Special measures monitoring inspection of Northern House School (Wokingham)

Special Academy

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

Context

At all levels, there have been some changes to staffing arrangements. In December 2018, three teachers left, one with responsibility for humanities and Year 7, one for design and technology and computing and one for the primary phase. By January 2019, three new teachers joined, one as an English and humanities teacher, one as a Year 7 teacher and one with responsibility for primary-phase pupils. To cover teaching arrangements, some staff are teaching subjects that they have not had specialist training in. This includes computing and design and technology. The headteacher, who joined the school in September 2018, now also teaches Year 11 science.

The senior leadership team has been restructured. From October 2018, two members of staff have become assistant headteachers. An interim deputy headteacher joined in January 2019 to take on responsibility for public examinations, attendance and alternative provision. One of the school's deputy headteachers with responsibility for the secondary provision and teaching and learning has been absent since September 2018. The headteacher has assumed responsibility for teaching and learning, in the absence of this deputy headteacher. The other deputy headteacher now oversees admissions, special educational needs, acts as deputy designated safeguarding lead and is in charge of the primary department. Following the inspection, the school's business manager resigned and left. A new business manager took up post in December 2018.

The teaching assistant team has been restructured. Some teaching assistants have left. A senior member of staff, with responsibility for behaviour, attendance and the school's use of alternative provision, joined in February 2019. A new teacher with responsibility for Year 6 and Year 7 transition has been appointed and will start in April 2019.

The school's governance structure has changed. Following the last inspection, the trust decided to disband the local governing body, at which point most governors resigned. In January 2019, the trust set up an IEB. Alongside the IEB, a tier of associate governors has also been appointed. Two governors, who were previously on the local governing body, have transferred to the IEB.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Senior leaders and trustees accepted the inspection judgement and acknowledge that the school needs to improve. You reviewed the school's provision prior to taking up the post of headteacher. You note that the inspection judgement matched closely your own evaluation of the school's effectiveness. Consequently, you introduced a detailed and thorough improvement plan. This plan also serves as the trust's action plan and sets a strong steer for improvement. The school's plan covers all of the essential areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. However, it would benefit from modification. The plan is too lengthy and, as a result, some of its precision is lost, particularly around the priorities for improvement. Nevertheless, you continue to work effectively to begin to bring about the necessary changes.

At the time of the last inspection, it was reported that pupils were at risk of harm because of their unsafe behaviour. You have worked intelligently, and pupils' behaviour is now managed more effectively. You are beginning to reduce the number of serious incidents. By making changes to the school's timetable, lessons now start and finish across the school at the same time. This means that pupils' transitions from learning tasks to social activities are in unison. This is helpful, as different groups do not come and go at variable times, which previously disrupted learning sessions. In addition, this has enabled you to sensibly increase the level of supervision. More adults are now available to manage pupils more effectively during social times. Furthermore, you have made sure that senior

staff are always on hand during breaktimes. Other physical changes, including the installation and/or adjustment of security fencing in key areas, have made a positive difference. As a result, pupils are not able to easily access rooftop areas, making it more difficult for pupils to become unsafe. At face value, the school is now under better control than it was previously.

You know that other aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures remain ineffective. However, you have already begun to strengthen some of these processes. For instance, the recording of concerns is now much clearer. Staff regularly report concerns using the school's 'pink form' system. However, together, we noted that some records lack the detail needed, such as dates and times. You have also made sure that concerns are at the forefront of everyone's minds by reporting the necessary detail in the morning and afternoon briefing sessions for staff. However, when we sampled a number of concerns together, we noted that some, which met thresholds, had not been referred on in a timely manner to the appropriate agencies, such as children's social care. During the inspection, you were quick to take appropriate action on two such cases, reporting them to the relevant authorities.

Despite governors' regular checks on the school's recruitment processes, the single central record (SCR) is inaccurate. Although the SCR contains the necessary headings, some information, such as that relating to whether staff are prohibited from teaching, is not recorded. In addition, there are some missing entries for some staff as well as some that have been renewed after employment has started. Also, new governors, including those who serve as part of the school's IEB, have not received a sufficient level of check. You are beginning to shape the school's curriculum so that it is more effective for pupils. New ways of working are supporting pupils to extend their engagement in learning and, in turn, their enjoyment. However, you know that some staff are struggling to implement new ways of working consistently. When tasks are extended for too long, pupils' behaviour often deteriorates. Furthermore, leaders' oversight of curriculum material, including in the primary department, needs to intensify. During the inspection, you and I agreed that some video content shown to primary-aged children about weaponry was inappropriate and not sufficiently explained or contextualised.

The quality of governance, including at trust level, is not improving. Despite the structural changes to the school's governance arrangements, members of the IEB do not demonstrate the necessary expertise to offer robust challenge to school leaders. For example, despite regular checks on the school's SCR, governors have not identified the non-compliance issues for themselves. Governors are too accepting of the information they receive from staff and leaders receive too little challenge. This is because governors do not have the depth of understanding needed to ensure effective oversight. A review of governance did not take place in the autumn term. Despite the changes made, it is my strong recommendation that the review of governance is actioned urgently.

Trustees have supported you in improving the physical fabric of the building by ensuring that finances are readily available. New fencing and door locks have contributed well to providing a safer environment for pupils. Pupils are no longer able to access the roof or leave the site so freely. Redecoration has also improved the entrance area, making it more welcoming. Nevertheless, trustees, members of the board and associate governors are not holding leaders to account with a secure understanding of the issues faced. For instance, they have not ensured that statutory policies are in place, such as those relating to special educational needs, exclusion or attendance. This is hampering the effectiveness of adults within the school as there is no clear guidance on what is expected.

Your leadership is starting to effect positive change, but you are very much working in isolation. At this point in time, the school's improvement is overly reliant on one person's

influence. Despite your best efforts to generate a more distributed leadership structure, this is not yet evidenced in practice.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

In some classes, teachers are developing their skills effectively. In such instances, adults are more alert to ensuring that pupils move more quickly from one task to the next so that they retain their interest and focus. However, this is not consistently the case and, consequently, the quality of teaching remains highly variable. During the inspection, in some classes, teachers still struggled to manage the behaviour of some pupils. Where behaviour management strategies are less effective, situations sometimes escalate unchallenged. For instance, during a science lesson, it was necessary for you to intervene to stop two older pupils fighting. Nevertheless, such events are becoming less common.

Some interventions, which are particularly aimed at addressing pupils' individual needs, are increasingly effective. This is because sessions are well planned, and teachers have the skills necessary to manage pupils' social and emotional needs adeptly. For instance, pupils in a personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education session were able to articulate their opinions and debate with one another. In activities such as these, staff skilfully challenge pupils' stereotypical views and deepen their understanding of the associated issues. As a result, pupils listen well and are respectful of each other's views. In some subjects, teachers have high expectations and manage pupils' needs effectively. You know that the quality of teaching in some subjects is less secure. Where you have identified this, you are tackling the issues raised and bolstering the quality of learning personally. This is particularly the case for Year 11 pupils. By taking on the responsibility of teaching science in this year group, you are modelling your own high expectations to staff and pupils. Some other subjects have also begun to improve. For instance, all pupils are now gaining a richer experience of computing, through the purchase of new laptops, although this is at a very early stage. However, you know that because of difficulties recruiting new staff there are still some gaps in the school's curriculum, particularly for secondary-aged pupils.

Some pupils are educated off site and attend a whole host of alternative providers. Some do not attend the school for any of their education. You know that some pupils are in receipt of an alternative offer because the school is unable to meet their social and emotional needs well enough. You and I agree that too many pupils are subject to these arrangements. With the support of key personnel, including the local authority's officers, you rightly plan to review this aspect urgently and ensure that the educational offer for each pupil is linked more strongly to the targets in their education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The school's new behaviour policy has been agreed and introduced to all staff. The policy is fit for purpose. Although you have set out your expectations clearly you concur that success has been mixed. During the inspection, you and I agreed that there were still stark examples where pupils' use of derogatory language went unchallenged.

Nevertheless, you have set out your stall clearly, modelling and expecting higher standards of conduct. For example, in most classes, pupils now greet staff more formally rather than communicating on first name terms. Pupils are still getting to grips with these higher expectations.

It appears that fewer days are now lost due to fixed-term exclusion. Some pupils are placed on reintegration packages and gradually building up their participation in full-time schooling. However, leaders' use of exclusion is inconsistent as key stakeholders have not reviewed the school's policies and procedures against current statutory guidance for some time. The school's approach to managing the most disruptive of behaviours is still unclear. This means that patterns and trends are unreliable. Leaders and governors are

not clear on their legal responsibilities in this aspect. Some pupils are not allowed to attend but have not been formally excluded.

You have wisely ensured that staff's training has strengthened. Staff are now all trained in appropriate de-escalation techniques. However, at the point of crisis, some staff struggle to implement what they have learned. Some are far more effective at defusing situations than others. Some staff use distraction or time out strategies well because they understand pupils' triggers and emotional states. Other staff fail to follow the school's systems and processes, resulting in pupils continuing to readily disengage from the learning in hand.

Parents and carers talk positively about the school's provision. They say that their children's engagement with schooling has improved since joining Northern House. They say that their children are far more interested in school than they used to be. Many join the school after having missed significant periods of schooling in their previous placements. However, for many pupils, attendance remains low and absence is too high. For some pupils, in recent times, their engagement and attendance at school have steadily improved on a month-by-month basis. However, overall attendance figures remain lower than last year.

Outcomes for pupils

The school's use of assessment information is at a very early stage. You are determined to refine and improve on the existing systems so that they become fit for purpose.

Systems to measure pupils' progress against their EHC plan targets are being constructed but are not yet in full use.

The school's assessment information shows that pupils are underachieving significantly in some subjects and some age groups. Leaders' analysis of information is at a very early stage. It is too soon to evaluate if pupils' rates of progress are beginning to strengthen.

You are also just beginning to compare how well particular groups of learners are progressing.

Teachers' subject knowledge is variable. In some subjects, adults scaffold pupils' learning well so that they make good gains in their understanding. However, this is inconsistent across the school.

External support

External support for the school has not been forthcoming. Although the school has made attempts to seek outside support, there is very little in place. Furthermore, although internal support through the trust is an option, there is very little evidence to demonstrate that this has intensified since the last full inspection. Currently, the school is solely reliant on the headteacher's expertise to effect positive change.

Some pupils are not in receipt of an education that meets their needs. Some pupils have not attended for some time. However, despite requests to the placing local authorities, these have not been acted on. Some pupils are still waiting for a suitable placement to be allocated. In the meanwhile, this group of pupils are not receiving their entitlement to a full-time education.

Background

Analysis of Issues

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)			
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

List of Background Papers

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