

Melland High School
Quality Assurance Review
21st June 2018

Principal	Sue Warner
Quality Assurance Consultant	Jim Muncey
Last Ofsted Inspection	Outstanding – January 2018
Date of review	21 st June 2018
Purpose of review	To review key developments within the school including work that has taken place subsequent to the Ofsted inspection.
Summary of sources of evidence	<p>Documentation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bright Futures strategy • School Improvement Plan • Self-evaluation • Self-evaluation summary • Annual school improvement priorities • Evaluation of progress made with priorities • Lesson evaluation proforma • Lesson evaluation summary • Rationale for lesson observations • TaSS team plan • Review of TaSS plan • Draft curriculum overview • Background information on careers and enterprise work • Evaluation of careers and enterprise work • Ofsted report <p>Discussion with students about strategies to improve mental health.</p> <p>Learning walk with Heads of Department of the 3 Key Stages</p> <p>Discussions with SLT and middle managers, and during lessons: teachers, pupils, TAs and TLAs. Discussions with personnel involved in the careers and enterprise development and careers fair</p>

Key Findings

Whole school:

- The School Improvement Plan is based on a rigorous self-evaluation. It is focused on achieving outstanding outcomes for all pupils. The improvement priorities focus on how to secure this continued excellence through effective leadership and management and high quality teaching, learning and assessment. There is also an appropriate focus on personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- A key to continual improvement within the school is that there is no complacency despite the excellent outcomes, and the recent outstanding grade given by Ofsted. The staff are constantly evaluating what they do. They question whether there are better ways of achieving even higher outcomes. They are willing to share successes and challenges. The ethos encourages all to work together as valued members of a team. If there is a particular problem in an area, or with an individual pupil, it is seen as a team responsibility. Staff therefore feel supported in their work. This encourages them to find new ways of working thereby maximising the impact that they have. They are comfortable in generating and testing hypotheses on how best pupils learn. This is a particular benefit in a school like Melland where the pupils' learning needs often require the exploration of new ways of intervening and supporting their learning.
- Not only is the School Improvement Plan evidenced based it is also transparent, so that the rigorous analysis carried out is not at the expense of comprehending what the priorities of the school are. This helps to ensure that all understand what needs to be done to achieve even greater success. In order to make sure that the work remains targeted it is important to keep the number of priorities manageable. Throughout the year new areas for development are recorded. In order to accommodate these, it will be necessary to review current priorities.
- The priorities of the school support the values of community, integrity and passion of the Bright Futures Educational Trust. Melland is certainly a school where teachers love teaching and students love learning, a key measure of excellence stated for all schools in the Trust. The school is also an excellent example within the Trust of a school that has fully embraced the Trust's aims for 2017-2020 – pupil progress is excellent, people are valued, the direction the school is pursuing is clear and well defined and this is all achieved within the context of financial viability.
- The school is working at capacity in terms of numbers. The complexity of need of new admissions continues to increase. Characteristically staff believe that they can rise to the new challenges. The "can do" culture fits them well to find new ways of working and innovative approaches to meeting differing and complex needs. However, the practical constraints of funding and accommodation will inevitably impact on what can be achieved.

Careers and Enterprise Development:

- A school improvement priority is to continue to raise the profile of careers education by working in collaboration with a range of careers and enterprise professionals to monitor and improve provision across the school. This priority is broken down into relevant key actions with appropriate time scales and an indication of the evidence required to judge whether the actions have been satisfactorily completed. A key to achieving the priority is the excellent and effective team that has been assembled. The mixture of committed school staff and highly knowledge professionals from outside the team forms a formidable force.
- Current provision has been audited. Priorities for development have been identified. Importantly these include linking curriculum learning to careers. A survey has been carried out to identify areas within the curriculum that would benefit from input by employers as well as examining the opportunities pupils have to develop a range of skills related to employability. There is now a clear understanding of how to strategically manage the work and use benchmarks to evaluate impact.
- Staff involved in the work have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils. They are able to task analyse the requirements of different employers. This enables bespoke support to be provided where necessary. However, it is recognised that more needs to be done to ensure accessibility for some pupils. It is testimony to the effectiveness of the work that a number of employers have reported that the students from Melland can provide a helpful role model to others. They are focused, reliable, and effective and can boost the morale and productivity of the team in which they are working.

- Families are very supportive of the programme. The work related learning coordinator is proactive in providing support. This is instrumental in ensuring that parents/carers provide appropriate support and have the right level of expectation.
- A feature of the programme is the effectiveness and the motivation of the team involved. Their energy and commitment is infectious. Their aspirations are appropriately high. They want to push at the boundaries to maximise the impact of the programme. Their different skills, background and knowledge make them a formidable team to open further doors and take the work forward. It also augers well for the further integration of the work into the curriculum, making it accessible across abilities and Key Stages. This integration is important in light of the Ofsted recommendation to set out clearly the curriculum pathways available to every pupil and the skills, knowledge and understanding developed as the pupils move through the school.

Mental Health & Wellbeing:

- Melland has a justifiable reputation for the positive work on emotional development and wellbeing. An important development of this is the teaching of mindfulness to a number of pupils.
- Pupils speak very positively about the programme. They are able to cite examples of how it has helped them manage their behaviour and feel better about themselves. It has provided them with a technique that is highly practical and is clearly having a positive impact on mental health. Some students also recognise that it is an approach that places them in control and this is having an impact on their self-esteem.
- Staff have also had the opportunity to engage in the programme. They report favourably on the benefits that have accrued. Such support is important for staff because of the challenges they are having to address. Also because of the positive relationships between staff and pupils, pupils will confide in a trusted member of staff. Pupils have confidence in the staff, believing they can resolve not only educational issues but also issues that go well beyond the remit of the school. Staff cannot be expected to carry this sort of burden alone. This is recognized and where appropriate supervision will be provided.
- The work on mental health is encouraging and well received by staff and pupils. Pupils enjoy excellent relationships with staff. They are willing to confide in them. Staff can therefore be the first adult to learn of significant issues that may be affecting a pupil.

Targeted and Specialist Support Team (TaSS):

- The team's functional plan is now congruent with the School Development Plan and, at a wider level, is focused on improving outcomes for the academies of Brighter Futures Educational Trust Academies. Work of TaSS allows for individual case work, but also importantly facilitates working strategically with schools through training and support. For example, at Melland whole staff training has taken place on managing and teaching pupils with more complex needs. This is timely, and necessary, given the changing population of pupils. A CEP drop-in has also been established to enable teachers to discuss possible solutions to challenges they are experiencing. This approach has been expanded to parents to discuss areas of behaviour management including sleeping problems and obsessional behavior.
- An autism strategy has been developed across the Trust. Each academy has an autism champion. A minimum offer is being developed with general training for all staff, more in-depth training, drop-ins, and work with families.
- A critical incident response procedure has also been developed. This approach is based on psychologically based research. It provides practical advice on what to do immediately after a major critical incident as well as how best to follow up with support.
- From September the two psychologists involved in the team will have a part time input into the training course for psychologists at Manchester University. This will potentially have a positive spin off as it will facilitate trainees working under supervision in the school. It will also facilitate research. This development is timely and exciting.
- The work of the TaSS team is impressive. The preventative work they are undertaking is already having an impact on pupils, families and staff. The involvement of the University offers further benefits. Evaluation of the work is necessarily quite complex and embraces both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Learning walk and the curriculum:

This provided an opportunity to observe lessons and have a brief discussion with staff and pupils.

- Staff are adept at delivering the curriculum in a creative and responsive way that meets the varied needs of their pupils.
- Where classes are organized by ability the individual classes contain pupils with a wide range of needs. The excellent knowledge that staff have about the individual needs of pupils enables them to be responsive to their needs. This is facilitated by effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants.
- Relationships between staff are excellent and this facilitates discussion about how to develop the curriculum in a coherent manner. There has been an opportunity for them to develop a vision for each Key Stage and to start to explore how one Key Stage informs the next.
- Staff also meet to moderate pupils' work. This helps to ensure assessment is accurate which is fundamental to the identification of relevant and challenging targets for all pupils.
- The assessment of individual pupils is systematic; for example, a recording form was being used to record whether proposed outcomes were being achieved, the evidence for making such a judgement and any necessary steps to secure the outcomes.
- There is an appropriate emphasis on developing personal skills and helping all pupils achieve independence.
- The semiformal curriculum being developed by "Equals" is being explored by the school. It may prove particularly useful for teaching practical skills related to areas such as communication, independence and problem-solving.
- A good start has been made on mapping the different pathways followed by pupils from Year 7 to Year 14. The work is facilitated by the excellent working relationships between staff. It is important that it is driven by considerations of what it is important for pupils to achieve so that the curriculum remains relevant to their individual needs. Changes to the curriculum and assessment arrangements, together with the changing profile of pupils being admitted to the school, means that it is necessary to constantly examine what can realistically be offered using both commercial systems and individually tailored programmes developed within the school.

Teaching and Learning:

- The detailed monitoring and analysis of teaching and learning appropriately emphasises making judgments by examining the impact of actions on pupil progress. Within the school assessing pupil outcomes is central to securing effective teaching and learning and underpins the creative and responsive teaching approaches observed in lessons.
- Assessing the quality of teaching needs to continue to be done with a variety of approaches. One of the many strengths of the school is that staff are happy to share and debate ideas on how to be more effective. They are also comfortable with people visiting their classrooms. This allows for much informal support and challenge. This is complemented by more formal learning walks and observations.
- The lesson evaluation form is comprehensive and is helpful in facilitating discussions about effective teaching. However, it is too detailed to be used routinely as a tool for classroom observation. The evaluation summary record is more manageable.
- In judging lessons it is important to continue with the combination of different approaches now used which include work scrutiny, learning walks and formal observations. This rigour should not be lost. The formal schedule for observation can be developed over time to increase its accessibility and manageability. It should also help to focus observations so that they reflect specific school priorities to improve teaching identified at any point. This will also assist with ensuring that the information from observations continues to inform the self-evaluation of the school and the development programme for staff.