



## Quality Assurance Consultant Visit

### Summer Term 2017

**School:** Pioneer House High School      **Telephone Number:** 0161 436 3009      **URN Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Headteacher:** Wendy Godfrey      **Chair of Governors:** Jenny Andrews      **QA Consultant:** Judith Jones

**Personnel**

**Involved:** Wendy Godfrey (HT); Judith Jones (QA Consultant)

**Date:** July 17<sup>th</sup>,2017

**Copies to:**  
The Headteacher  
The Governing Body

## AGREED FOCUS

1. Update on developments
2. Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)
3. Pupil numbers 2017-18
4. Paired Learning Walk
5. Quality of teaching and learning
6. Pupil progress summary
7. Development of a vocational curriculum and student work placements

## OUTCOMES

### 1. Update on developments

- The building will be ready in part in September, with an agreed handover date of 4<sup>th</sup> September, there will be a week of planned closure that will include two training days to enable staff to have a week to prepare before pupils move in. The new site will immediately offer more accommodation with 6 classrooms, a reception area and a training cafe. By 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 there will be 10 classrooms in all, with specialist rooms, a dining room, sports hall and a life skills bungalow
- A PE specialist teacher joined the school after Easter; although he has no previous special school experience he is learning very quickly. He has forged good links with local high schools that will be mutually beneficial. The school is aiming to develop community based sports facilities particularly for the sixth form. As detailed in the QA report, 8<sup>th</sup> March a new teacher who has previously taught at Piper Hill, will join the school in September; she will lead on structured learning. Additionally, an NQT who has trained on the Piper Hill ITT programme will also start in September. Ten new teaching assistants (TA's) have been recruited, five started at Easter and the remainder will join the school in September. The first five have already undertaken Team Teach and Food Hygiene training. The deputy headteachers will no longer be delivering the Trust's ITT programme and will be full time in the school from September that will provide a boost to the school's leadership and management. She will teach for two days a week as the headteacher wisely feels that teaching and learning should be modelled at all levels. A site manager also started after Easter and he has been working closely with the site manager at Piper Hill; they have both visited the new site and are gaining an understanding of the requirements in terms of site management
- The school's initial intention was to appoint a senior IT officer, however, in recent months the Trust has reconsidered its requirements as it expands. It has been agreed that the role of Network Manager will be undertaken by IT Officer at Newall Green High School who will bring considerable experience to the schools in the Trust
- The school had expected a further visit from the Education Adviser from the Free School Team but as yet this has not transpired; in fact there has been a notable lack of communication from the EFA and DfE.

## **2. Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)**

- The headteacher is rightly confident that the self-evaluation form (SEF) provides a sound evaluation of “how well we are doing”, linked to sound evidence to support the statements regarding the quality of provision. The section “how we will develop further” clearly demonstrates the school’s priorities for development in order to improve further. The headteacher has been very pragmatic about where the school is and is confident that the judgement of “good” in each section is based on thorough and rigorous self-evaluation. The QA consultant would concur with the school’s judgements based on the first-hand evidence gained in the course of termly visits over the academic year 2016-2017.

*At almost the end of the school's first year, it is in a secure position to take a step back, reflect and evaluate the year and be clear about priorities to improve further. The SEF highlights this, demonstrating that the school has a good capacity to improve further and to build upon the foundations laid in its first year, with clearly identified areas for improvement.*

## **3. Pupil numbers 2017-18**

- Currently there are 51 pupils identified to be on roll from September, although the headteacher anticipates that numbers will increase over the year. There will be a large sixth form of 18 pupils who will be supported by the current teacher plus an NQT
- At Key Stage 3, pupil groupings have been carefully considered based on the knowledge of existing pupils. There will be a Key Stage 3 structured group and a Key Stage 3 independent group with an additional Key Stage 3 / 4 independent group. In the sixth form, there will be an independent group of Year 12 students and an independent group of Year 13/14 students
- Based on the previous years’ experience, the school is clear of the profile of the pupils who will be joining the school from feeder primaries. Many have made progress but struggle with communication. The challenge facing the school is to improve and develop common communication strategies to meet their needs. Additionally, many have experienced 1:1 TA support for a significant number of years and struggle to control their behaviour in a classroom environment without this level of support.

*Over the last year the school successfully developed a range of strategies to meet the needs of Year 7 pupils. The establishment of a Year 7 structured learning group will be a means of meeting the needs of the pupils with more complex needs.*

#### **4. Paired Learning Walk**

- A lesson of each of the current classes in Year 7 and Sixth Form, were both jointly observed by the headteacher and the QA consultant; both were taught by the NQT who has responsibility for each particular class. The sixth form students were in the computer suite creating memory books for two of their peers who were leaving at the end of term. Following each observation, a developmental discussion took place between the two observers in order to moderate judgements, which in both instances concurred. One lesson was judged to be outstanding whilst the other good with outstanding features.

#### **What Went Well – www**

- Highly purposeful, secure and friendly environment conducive to learning taking place.
- Excellent subject knowledge leading to highly effective teaching.
- Clearly differentiated learning objectives and success criteria, therefore pupils were clear about what they were expected to learn.
- Effective classroom management in which the teacher moved around the groups checking on pupils' progress and understanding.
- Pupils were engaged in learning and worked independently, in some instances supported by the teacher initially modelling the approach to the task
- Teachers and teaching assistants use their subject knowledge and that of individual pupils when questioning, often prompting pupils in order to deepen and assess their knowledge and understanding. Mistakes and misconceptions were used constructively to facilitate learning
- Pupils work well together often supporting each other in their learning. The vast majority of pupils demonstrated high levels of concentration and very positive attitudes to learning
- Excellent relationships between staff and pupils support students' confidence and feeling of security
- Good progress evident in lessons building upon prior learning.

#### **Even Better If – ebi**

- A more structured learning environment is provided for the student with more complex needs
- Teaching assistants are encouraged to move around to support more than one or two students.

## 5. Quality of teaching and learning

- The vast majority of teaching is good and a rapidly increasing proportion is outstanding. Lesson observations conducted by the Executive Headteacher and the Headteacher in the second half of the summer term found that 75% of lessons observed highlighted teaching that was outstanding overall with some good features
- The two newly qualified teachers (NQTs) who joined the school in September are meeting the Teachers' Standards consistently; the experienced teacher who also joined the school in September has developed a good understanding of differentiation and leadership of the class team. The other teacher who joined the school more recently in April, is making good progress towards developing specialist skills in the classroom
- The headteacher has led a comprehensive CPD programme for the whole school team on safeguarding, curriculum and teaching and learning. Recent on-line safeguarding training has ensured that all staff have completed Child Protection in Education Training Level 2
- The two NQTs have established a very effective professional relationship, they are reflective practitioners and regularly share good practice and take a solution focussed approach to any challenges they face
- Scrutiny of teachers planning demonstrates excellent short and medium-term planning providing a focus to enable pupils to progress. Lesson observation records show consistency of practice and any areas for improvement (ebi's) are following up in the next lesson observation. This is very good practice

*The structured programme of CPD, formal and informal coaching and mentoring together with supportive performance management reviews and a relentless focus on improving teaching and outcomes for pupils all have impacted on the high-quality teacher and learning that now prevails in the school.*

## 6. Pupil progress summary

- The school has adopted the Trust wide systems to track pupil progress across all subjects ie Classroom Monitor. Teachers typically use clearly articulated steps to success to support pupils and teaching assistants be clear about learning and next steps
- Structured CPD has helped teachers to confidently gather evidence of pupil progress over time
- Judgements of pupil progress have been moderated against the Piper Hill Learning Trust progress expectations. The school recently secured full approval to accredit pupils for City and Guilds Foundation Skills during a recent Quality Assurance visit. The assessor praised the school for the progress it had made in establishing robust processes within a relative short period of time; he considered this to be remarkable
- The Pupil Progress Summary Report, July 2017, shows that 99% of pupils made good or better progress in English and that 97% made good or better progress in maths. A similar rate of progress is evidenced across citizenship and careers; computing; MFL and PSHE with lesser progress being made in PE (62% good or better) and music (46% good or better). In RE all pupils made good or better progress in Key Stage 3 and 83% of students in Key Stage 5 made good or better progress. The school is confident that pupil progress will increase in the current lower performing subjects
- In discussion with the headteacher, she acknowledged that it would be wise to annotate the report in order to clarify any anomalies. For example:
  - Why has one pupil in key stage 5 made less than good progress in speaking and listening, number and using and applying?
  - Why have pupils made less progress in PE and music than in other subjects?

*Data demonstrates that outcomes across the school are strong. The vast majority of pupils have made increasingly good progress from their starting points as a result of high quality teaching.*

## 7. Development of a vocational curriculum and student work placements

- As was reported in previous visits (8<sup>th</sup> December 2016 and 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017) the school has a clear vision and structure in place upon which to build a vocational curriculum
- The school has gained City and Guilds centre approval for Functional Skills and more recently, Skills for Working Life, as discussed in the previous section of the report, the assessor in his recent visit, spoke very positively about the speed with which the school has progressed to this end
- A key priority over the next academic year is to embed a whole school focus on Enterprise and the school has applied to have a business based Enterprise Adviser to support them to develop enterprise provision
- The school has recognised the considerable amount of work required to underpin work placement and accreditation and therefore appointed a TA4 member of staff with responsibility for managing personalised pathways, supporting work placements and developing the range of work placements available to students. This powerfully illustrates the strategic development which the school is investing in to secure outstanding enterprise and employability education. The school is determined that it provides opportunities for students to develop their skills towards gaining accreditation alongside work experience. It is keen to ensure that skills gained are transferrable in order to provide long term opportunities for employment. As the Trust expands the headteacher is confident that there will be increased opportunities for training and work experience within its partner schools, hopefully providing supported internships
- The school has already established links with the Newall Hall Green High School to secure two award bearing vocational courses for sixth form students in Hair and Beauty and Construction, the two-year courses are offered at OCR Entry Level 3.

*The school is determined and ambitious to ensure that students have every chance of gaining worthwhile qualifications, work experiences and life and social skills to give them the best possible chances in life to prepare them well for adulthood.*

## SUMMARY

Senior leaders have worked extremely hard over the last year to achieve their vision for the school, to secure the school's future sustainability and to retain and build upon the standards reached in its first year. There have been rapid improvements in the short time Pioneer House has been a free school. As it expands, the school has the potential to build a wider leadership team, so that leaders at all levels can support the ongoing journey of school improvement. The headteacher is aware of the challenges that a bigger team presents but staff morale is high and a "can do" attitude pervades the school. All stakeholders should be proud of what has been achieved over the last year.