

Barley Lane School

Hard work, humility, kindness

School Self-evaluation and SIP Summer 2019 (using new draft Ofsted framework)

1. Quality of education: Ofsted descriptors

- Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
- The provider has the same academic, technical or vocational ambitions for almost all learners. Where this is not practical – for example, for some learners with high levels of special educational needs and/or disabilities – their curriculum is designed to be ambitious and to meet their needs

Summary of main improvement activity since last Ofsted (December 2017):

- The school has continuously developed and broadened its curriculum offer to students most markedly from Y9 onwards with strands in accredited academic, vocational and outdoor education supplemented by mentoring and counselling and this underpinned by a relentless investment in both a positive wider school climate and strong and safe relationships.
- “Primary” model classes have been rolled out into KS3/4 to provide the emotional support and stability for complex and sometimes vulnerable young people who are happier and more focussed with that predictable, familiar and secure model

What impact has this had?

- The element of choice and personalisation and variety has maintained engagement and promoted good behaviour and learning. Maintaining and increasing primary models for complex and vulnerable children into KS3 and occasionally 4 has held them securely “emotionally” and meeting that basic need scaffolds their behaviour and learning.

Current self-evaluation: the quality of education is good because...

- The curriculum offer is diverse, flexible and pragmatic and means students remain engaged and complex youngsters can access nurturing classes with familiar adults, routines and expectations and both these promote and support engagement and learning and wellbeing.

Evidence of good practice

“The quality of teaching and learning is good and continues to improve. High expectations prevail. Staff carefully choose curriculum areas that interest pupils. For example, pupils were thoroughly engrossed in learning about aspects of astronomy in science. As a result of this careful planning, pupils thrive in lessons. They apply themselves and work hard”

Ofsted December 2017

“A process of quality assuring teaching and learning has been devised which is based on professional dialogue...Staff are encouraged to share success and good practice.”

SENTIENT/Babcock LDP peer review January 2018

“Best practice sessions utilising the skills of staff... Good practice Mondays and Fridays led by AHT...staff feel invested in Tuesday training.”

SENTIENT/Babcock LDP peer review March 2019

What are the risks and opportunities ahead?

- Delivering or “implementing” the curriculum is where both risk and opportunity lie as the mercurial, complex and challenging nature of our children and young people bottom line creates many nuances and obstacles that test our determination, curiosity, creativity and persistence in overcoming them.
- We must retain and develop our most resilient and creative staff and recruit more then we will be able to bring that energy and creativity to be reliably good and realistically aspire to become outstanding.

What then needs to be done to remain securely good and become outstanding?

- Is our curriculum offer as flexible, person-centred, diverse and engaging as we can make it and does it promote wellbeing throughout?
- Do we understand the children’s needs in all their variety and complexity to make good choices about curriculum content and access?
- Can we sustain the energy, commitment and high morale (wellbeing) to invest relentlessly in our relationships with the children and in doing so earn their trust and respect so we can both challenge and support them to access and make a success of the curriculum?
- How are EHCPs and reviews impacted by and impacting the curriculum?
- Across the piece we must recognise when we are becoming purely reactive and pragmatic in our work albeit often necessarily so and be disciplined in revisiting and privileging the things we want to improve.

1a. Implementation: Ofsted descriptors

- Teachers present subject matter clearly, promoting appropriate discussion about the subject matter being taught. They check learners' understanding systematically, identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback. In doing so, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary, without unnecessarily elaborate /differentiated approaches
- Teachers create an environment that allows the learner to focus on learning.

Summary of main improvement activity since last Ofsted (December 2017)

- There is an emerging cluster of talented, committed and energetic teachers something noted by Ofsted *"They work diligently to support their colleagues. The staff team stands solidly with you."*
- We have continued to reflect on and explore what SEMH best practice looks like and sought to protect and embed what is described by Ofsted above *"The quality of teaching and learning is good and continues to improve. High expectations prevail"*

What impact has this had?

- As set out below by our recent peer review: *"There is a culture of reflection and a sharing of good practice ...Approaches are kept fresh and invigorated"*
- As set out above and Ofsted continued *"As a result of this careful planning, pupils thrive in lessons. They apply themselves and work hard"*.

Current self-evaluation: the quality of education is good because...

- We have and do reflect relentlessly on what best practice looks like across content and methodology and how to better understand the complex and mercurial children and young people in our care.
- Individual staff are committed and ambitious and self-aware and so self-improving in a wider climate of strong and trusting relationships that allow robust challenge and support.

Evidence of good practice

"The quality of teaching and learning is good and continues to improve. High expectations prevail. Staff carefully choose curriculum areas that interest pupils. For example, pupils were thoroughly engrossed in learning about aspects of astronomy in science. As a result of this careful planning, pupils thrive in lessons. They apply themselves and work hard"
Ofsted December 2017

"A well-experienced and committed practitioner. She works hard to find solutions to support students' behaviour. She is respectful of her colleagues; recognising and affirming good practice whilst wanting to address weaker practice."

SENTIENT/Babcock LDP peer review January 2018

"There is a culture of reflection and a sharing of good practice ...Approaches are kept fresh and invigorated"

SENTIENT/Babcock LDP peer review March 2019

What are the risks and opportunities ahead?

- The complexity and challenge the children and young people present in class is relentless and shifting as is the chemistry between them and often intensified as they emerge as young adults and this demands equally relentless reflection, discussion and action and innovation from individuals and the team.
- To meet challenges and overcome the complex and diverse obstacles to learning demands then qualities that are hard to always reliably deliver and again in an SEMH setting the children and young people can "find us out" and expose any frailties in not just our work but those rooted in our professional character.
- Conversely there are huge opportunities as is evidenced by the retention and development of talented staff in a climate where as recent peer review reported middle leaders *"are relishing the opportunities that they are being given and the way in which they are being empowered."*

What then needs to be done to remain securely good and become outstanding?

- Learning for a significant minority of super complex and invariably bright and capable young people remains hindered and blocked by a range of needs and behaviours the team has to wrestle with both to understand and to identify and successfully deliver new ways of working for example understanding and so ameliorating attachment disorder S&L and ASD.
- A theme is emerging: do we understand the children's needs in all their variety and complexity to then develop our practice to meet those needs to scaffold and drive their learning?
- How are EHCPs and reviews impacted by and impacting our understanding and our practice?
- Across the piece we must recognise when we are becoming purely reactive and pragmatic in our work albeit often necessarily so and be disciplined in revisiting and privileging the things we want to improve.

2. Behaviour and attitudes: Ofsted descriptors

- The provider has high expectations for learners' behaviour and conduct and applies these expectations consistently and fairly. This is reflected in learners' behaviour and conduct.
- Learners' attitudes to their education or training are positive. They are committed to their learning, know how to study effectively, are resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements
- Relationships among learners and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture. Learners feel safe and do not experience bullying or discrimination.

Summary of main improvement activity since last Ofsted (December 2017)

- The community is committed to its core values of hard-work, humility and kindness and that modelling and living out daily reason, compassion and kindness create and embed a culture that is civil and healthy and that promotes a positive climate for learning.
- To secure positive attitudes the teaching and support team habitually revisit and describe best practice and the characteristics of the best practitioners in a change us to change them approach.
- Safe, compassionate and respectful relationships are at the core of any success we have achieved and our most recent peer review described *"Modelling of socially acceptable, expected behaviour by staff: consistent and effective."*

What impact has this had?

- Behaviour is in a very large majority good and this hard earned in an SEMH setting as are attitudes to learning and these underpinned by the respectful and warm relationships and the consequent wider positive climate.

Current self-evaluation: behaviour and attitudes are good because...

- We have remained sharply focussed on and committed to continually reflecting together on securing a better insight into and understanding of our complex and mercurial student body and then changing and improving our practice as a result: throughout our fundamental belief in strong and safe relationships rooted in relentlessly positively modelling and living out the behaviours and attitudes we want to inculcate in our children and young people has worked and is working...

Evidence of good practice

"The school has a positive ethos and moral basis...The students know that the staff care for them...They were polite, respectful and responsive at all times. One of the visiting team commented that no smile went unreturned."

SENTIENT/Babcock LDP peer review 2016

"Then, staff skilfully support pupils to come together to discuss the coming day. Each teacher provides a motivating comment, highlighting a positive message. This helps to confirm and reinforce the sense of trust, respect and belonging that permeates the school."

Ofsted December 2017

"Support for the students is increasingly holistic with the school staff working together and with the family"

SENTIENT/Babcock LDP peer review January 2018

"Positive relationships, genuine warmth and affection; - interest; expectations; rewards; praise; positivity and knowledge of needs"

SENTIENT/Babcock LDP peer review March 2019

What are the risks and opportunities ahead?

- The children and young people in all their complexity will and do relentlessly test our ability and determination to sustain this effort to promote in them "Hard work, humility, kindness".
- It is inarguable that at our best (again a theme throughout is keeping our best people and attracting more) and when we bring that sharp focus and commitment and insight we can and do change behaviours and attitudes for the better and promote and make secure that precious culture of calm and respect that underpins anything progressive.

What then needs to be done to remain securely good and become outstanding?

- Amidst the hubbub and risk and challenge that is school and given what our brilliant but complex and challenging youngsters demand of us daily can we bring the curiosity, insight, energy, resilience and resourcefulness to drive positive change in us and so in them? The theme therefore persists: do we understand the children's needs in all complexity to then develop our practice to meet those needs to promote positive behaviours and attitudes?
- How are EHCPs and reviews impacted by and impacting our understanding and our practice?
- Across the piece we must recognise when we are becoming purely reactive and pragmatic in our work albeit often necessarily so and be disciplined in revisiting and privileging the things we want to improve.

3. Personal development: Ofsted descriptors

- The curriculum extends beyond the academic, technical or vocational and provides for learners' broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents
- The curriculum and the provider's wider work support learners to develop their character – including their resilience, confidence and independence – and help them know how to keep physically and mentally healthy
- Prepares learners for life in modern Britain by: equipping them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society...
- Developing their understanding of fundamental British values; developing their understanding and appreciation of diversity; celebrating what we have in common and promoting respect for the different protected characteristics as defined in law.

Summary of main improvement activity since last Ofsted (December 2017)

- The school whilst a "day school" has always adopted the traditions of "residential" provision seeking to offer and to enjoy together a range of social and cultural and "family" experiences from opera and cinema through shopping and eating-out to accredited outdoor education that includes DoE and a range of physical education opportunities beyond and not just the familiar.
- It is I know a cliché but a range of both fun and challenging outdoor education activities do build character but for us too competing and invariably winning sporting tournaments with grace and goodwill again clichéd but no less powerful for that.
- Our community is a "society" in microcosm and our best work is done in the multiplicity of small but influential encounters and interaction every day across school life and these framed and driven by our commitment to live out and model healthy, respectful and compassionate behaviours: any "success" we have secured has been built on the unfussy but relentless steady drip of kindness.
- It has been our position and fundamental to any progress that we learn our values at home and at school and in our communities in our interactions with others: we are too a genuinely diverse community of adults with shared values and this gives humanity to any positive modelling of inclusivity and our predominantly white working class boys and young men are around engaging and influential diverse adults.

What impact has this had?

- The children can have "fun" and build esteem and the variety, enjoyment and challenge enhance their engagement with the conventional albeit also diverse curriculum "academic, technical or vocational" This scaffolds the wider positive climate critical to their wellbeing and learning.
- The combination of challenge and fun and achievement most powerfully evidenced in DoE builds pride and confidence in self and the authentic success of not just winning but participating with grace and generosity builds healthy values.
- SEMH schools have huge potential to fail and in failing can be very difficult and very risky and so unhappy places and we celebrate our "normality" and the therapy of good relationships between all members of the community and their promotion of happiness and wellbeing. I admit to seeing the most powerful and worthwhile successes in the smallest things and sustaining the positive and warm relationships between us all child and adult key and evidenced beautifully by the comment by a visiting headteacher that "*The school has a positive ethos and moral basis...The students know that the staff care for them... They were polite, respectful and responsive at all times. One of the visiting team commented that no smile went unreturned.*" is at the heart of all we are trying to achieve.

Current self-evaluation: personal development is good because...

There is a variety of opportunities to have fun and to build self-confidence and worth. The school community is built on sound core values and these are lived out and modelled by staff and this does tangibly influence and shape the children and young people and this is evidenced over time and perhaps most succinctly and powerfully summed up by Ofsted as "*the sense of trust, respect and belonging that permeates the school.*"

Evidence of good practice

"Conversations are carefully designed to ensure that pupils receive messages that help them to feel more positive than they may have ever felt before about their education. As a result, pupils and their families are hopeful for their futures."

Ofsted December 2017

"The school is committed to providing a range of supportive interventions for students. These include a School Counsellor, ELSA, alternative programmes and one-to-one mentors."

SENTIENT/Babcock LDP peer review January 2018

"Clear positive relationships, genuine warmth and affection; - interest; expectations; rewards; praise; positivity and knowledge of needs...Modelling of socially acceptable, expected behaviour by staff: consistent and effective."

SENTIENT/Babcock LDP peer review March 2019

What are the risks and opportunities ahead?

- The theme that is the children are complex and mercurial and relentless and full of energy and can we match them is a powerful and pertinent one for us as we risk sometimes being overwhelmed and or becoming utilitarian and risk managers and our ability to innovate and engage and enthuse to meet the challenges and address the complexities is ever present that said...
- It is also true as expressed above that it is inarguable that at our best (again a theme throughout is keeping our best people and attracting more) and when we bring that sharp focus and commitment and insight we can and do promote their personal development very positively.

What then needs to be done to remain securely good and become outstanding?

- Amidst the hubbub and risk and challenge that is school and given what our brilliant but complex and challenging youngsters demand of us daily can we bring the curiosity, insight, energy, resilience and resourcefulness (how do we sustain these?) to drive positive change in us and so in them? The theme therefore persists: do we understand the children's needs in all their complexity to then develop our practice to meet those needs and promote healthy personal development?
- Linked to "quality of education" how is the curriculum offer impacting personal development: what about education with character?
- How are EHCPs and reviews impacted by and impacting our understanding and our practice?
- Across the piece we must recognise when we are becoming purely reactive and pragmatic in our work albeit often necessarily so and be disciplined in revisiting and privileging the things we want to improve.

4. Leadership and management: Ofsted descriptors

- Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education and training to all. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies and practice
- Leaders engage effectively with learners and others in their community, including parents, carers, employers and local services
- Leaders engage with their staff and are aware and take account of the main pressures on them. They are realistic and constructive in the way they manage staff including their workload
- Those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. They ensure that the provider has a clear vision and strategy and that resources are managed well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education or training

Summary of main improvement activity since last Ofsted (December 2017)

- We have embedded our core values across the team: in distributing and delegating leadership we have strengthened our shared purpose.
- We continue to work hard to build the positive, trusting and sometimes challenging relationships that with pupils are essential but no less so with parents, carers and all those who can support and promote the wellbeing and learning and life opportunities for our students.
- There is a strong consensus about and a commitment to the notion that wellbeing is symbiotic across our community and that both challenge and support are essential in all our interactions.
- Governance is different and better and developing still post a review that restructured its leadership; redefined how it was organised; changed the nature of reporting and scrutiny including accessing more data and information of all kinds.

What impact has this had?

- The prevailing “calm and respect” Ofsted described and the “relationships” that underpin safety are consequences of those shared values being lived out: we have integrity.
- Feedback from the children, the staff team and parents and carers and colleagues over time evidence we work hard to build the strong relationships that promote wellbeing and so effective working and in turn generate good behaviour and learning.
- The team is both accountable but also supported as well as challenged boosting accountability and morale and so commitment and so positive outcomes result.

Current self-evaluation: leadership and management are good because...

- We have strong shared and healthy values and aspirations that are lived out and real and these generate the wider positive climate and a healthy community that in turn delivers good behaviour, learning and outcomes.
- Relationships are good: these underpin positive outcomes and the prevailing positivity that characterises our community.
- The team is united and committed and effective as a consequence of shared values, good relationships and the authentic and dynamic effort to get the balance of support and challenge right...
- Governors share and live out the school's core values and are incrementally more fluent in both the life of the school and the available measures and indicators of both success and risks and are therefore able to scrutinise and interrogate both the operation of the school and the data. They also contribute to improvement goals and priorities.

Evidence of good practice

“You help emerging leaders to develop their experiences, confidence and skills. They work diligently to support their colleagues. The staff team stands solidly with you. Many expressed thanks for the guidance you provide...They work (emerging leaders) diligently to support their colleagues. The staff team stands solidly with you. Many expressed thanks for the guidance you provide. We agreed that this emerging leadership team, including middle leaders, is now ready to take an even wider role in evaluating aspects of the school's effectiveness.”

Ofsted December 2017

“Middle Leaders presented as an impressive and strong team...they are relishing the opportunities that they are being given and the way in which they are being empowered. It is this energy and dynamism that will increase operational capacity at the school as well as helping to make the shift from Good to Outstanding.”

SENTIENT/Babcock LDP peer review January 2018

“Leaders increasingly confident to lead and enthusiastic about opportunities being given... Distributed leadership stronger than ever before... There has been an empowerment of SLT – partly deliberate, partly coincidental”

SENTIENT/Babcock LDP peer review March 2019

What are the risks and opportunities ahead

- Developing our talented people and so leadership capacity further and securely embedding incrementally more and more staff across the team will be challenging because the children and young people make it: they are bright, complex, challenging and risky and also discerning; only authentic and committed adults can succeed and we need to keep and recruit more people with those qualities.
- The threats of our own passivity and stoicism and frailties as adults and student energy outdoing our own are ever present and building and distributing leadership involves innate risks because of the setting and adversity and necessity needed to drive staff learning; finding a balance of challenge and support will be tough.
- The daily operational risks and challenges can obscure and even obstruct the process of “improvement”.

What then needs to be done to remain securely good and become outstanding?

- Identify and keep and grow and develop leaders who can drive the identified improvements the self-evaluation process above is identifying.
- Give leaders ownership and so accountability to deliver those positive changes identified above.
- Throughout all of this leaders must achieve that balance of challenge and support that brings both accountability but also promotes strong wellbeing, high morale and energy and commitment in and throughout the team.
- Above all others “leaders” must recognise when we are becoming purely reactive and pragmatic in our work albeit often necessarily so and be disciplined in revisiting and privileging the things we want to improve.

Safeguarding (a part of leadership and management): Ofsted descriptors

- The provider has a culture of safeguarding that facilitates effective arrangements to: identify learners who may need early help or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming or exploitation; help learners reduce their risk of harm by securing the support they need, or referring in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help; and manage safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to learners and vulnerable adults.

Ofsted descriptor

Summary of main improvement activity since last Ofsted (December 2017)

- The team has become embedded in the daily reflection and action “what must we do consistently well, better or differently to keep everyone safe?” and this scaffolded by a now wholly embraced culture of everyone’s responsibility for the welfare and safety of everyone in the school community something Ofsted noted, “*Staff also receive good information about a wide range of safeguarding issues and these are kept relevant through frequent reminders. There is a culture of care and vigilance.*” And recently our peer review described, “*The value on relationships is very obvious and permeates through the school*”.

What impact has this had?

- Evidence of multiple and diverse and sometimes the most serious risks to the children and young people’s welfare, safety and happiness made safe; behaviour remains good in a very large majority and the positive relationships and consequent positive climate for learning have been protected and promoted.

Current self-evaluation: safeguarding is effective because...

- A relentless focus on how to build safe and compassionate and trusting relationships; how to build a community and a climate where there is calm and goodwill so children and young people can behave well and learn and build trusting relationships where they can seek and get help and support.
- There is an ongoing commitment to remaining super alert and incrementally learning and considering more about safeguarding risks (and these are multiple, diverse and often very serious in our setting) and strong working with other pertinent professionals most powerfully and pertinently social care.
- There is sensible, compassionate but robust parenting around arguably mundane but no less risky issues for example monitoring of attendance, there is genuinely no smoking (it brings many other risks) and mobile phones and internet ready gadgets are not allowed and we persist doggedly in asserting reasonable and necessary expectations.

Evidence of good practice

The key to the safe environment stems from the strong and trusting relationships that exist between pupils, their families and staff... There is a culture of care and vigilance.

Ofsted December 2017

The members of staff are to be commended for the rigour and professionalism that they showed during this handover. They have a clear commitment to the children and young people at the school and are driven by this student-centred ethos.

SENTIENT/Babcock LDP peer review January 2018

Meaningful staff briefings that are both pupil focussed and operationally solution focussed...Staff felt safe to support/challenge – all opinions valued.

SENTIENT/Babcock LDP peer review March 2019

What are the risks and opportunities ahead?

- Many of the children and young people will and do relentlessly test our ability and determination to sustain this effort to keep them safe and to promote their happiness and wellbeing and to encourage in them “hard work, humility, kindness”.
- Across all our work our character and commitment will be powerfully tested and this challenge will bring opportunities for folk inspired by the innate worth and dignity of the work we do to grow and develop and to...
- Become more skilled and expert in further and better protecting and promoting the safety and happiness of the children and so we can habitually promote their wellbeing from the power of simple human love and compassion to the nuances of being an engaged and “present” listener

What then needs to be done to remain securely good and become outstanding?

- Amidst the hubbub and risk and challenge that is school and given what our brilliant but complex and in this case risky and vulnerable youngsters demand of us daily can we bring the curiosity, insight, energy, resilience and resourcefulness (how do we sustain these?) to drive positive change in us and so in them? The theme therefore persists: do we understand the children’s needs in all their complexity to then develop our practice to meet those needs and in this case to manage those risks?
- The privileging of and active discussion and action around behaviour welfare and safety must be sustained as must our energy and commitment in the face of a combination of risks and challenges that can overwhelm us as individuals and a community.
- Again we must recognise when we are becoming purely reactive and pragmatic in our work albeit often necessarily so and be disciplined in revisiting and privileging the things we want to improve: in this case championing safety and wellbeing.