

# PARENT COPY

## Hertfordshire Improvement Partner (HIP) Visit Report

|                |  |               |     |             |                 |
|----------------|--|---------------|-----|-------------|-----------------|
| <b>School</b>  | Edwinstree CE Middle   | <b>Number</b> | 225 | <b>Date</b> | 31 January 2017 |
| <b>Present</b> | Jo Gant (Interim Headteacher), Sally Allan (Deputy Headteacher).<br><b>Helen Loughran - Head of Freman College</b><br><b>Francis Manning - Head of Hitchin Girls School and a National School Leader</b> |               |     |             |                 |

**Length of visit:**  8 hours plus write up time.

**Purpose of visit:**

- To evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment

HL visited 10 lessons with the Interim Headteacher and the Deputy Head, including 3 English, 5 Maths and 1 Music. The Deputy and Head completed a further scrutiny of 1 MFL, 1 History, and 1 Science. HL met representatives from each year group as KS2 and KS3 groups. PP, SEND and Higher PP were represented within the groups. HL was joined by FM (a national school leader) and the Headteacher to scrutinise pupils' work books across a range of subjects and all year groups. Within the books PP, SEND, Higher PP and Higher students were represented. The interim Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher and HL met at various points during the day to clarify any outstanding issues and to share early feedback. HL, the interim Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher fed back to two governors and the assistant Headteacher at the end of the visit.

Teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the HIP's initial visit. In the majority of lessons seen teaching was good. Pupils behaved well.

In several lessons, more effective use of carefully planned and directed questioning would have enabled teachers to check pupils' understanding and the progress they had made in the lesson. Questioning could also be used more effectively to challenge and stretch pupils, and secure active engagement of all pupils in learning.

**Lesson observed:**

**Maths:** Where teaching was at its most effective, learning questions were clearly shared with pupils and were evident throughout the lesson. There was clear explanation of key concepts, effective use of modelling and appropriate use of pictorial representation and concrete experiences. For example, one teacher made good use of a visualiser to help students understand mixed numbers and improper fractions, and in several classes, pupils worked well with Cuisenaire rods, although on the odd occasions it was not clear that pupils had fully understood how to use them. There was clear evidence that teachers were tailoring work to meet the individual needs of pupils in their group, setting different tasks for different groups, for example in one lesson pupils who had grasped the key concept quickly, consolidated their knowledge by supporting the learning of pupils who had not yet understood it. Marking was used effectively to ensure pupils made progress and misconceptions were addressed. Where teaching was less effective, the teacher exposition and the learning questions were less clear. Behaviour in lessons was largely good, but it is not yet outstanding because pupils do not yet demonstrate an independent and proactive approach to their own learning.

**English:** Where teaching was at its most effective, activities were modelled very effectively. Imaginative planning and engaging resources ensured that pupils were still fully engaged over an hour into a lesson. Expectations were high with poor spoken English gently corrected and high expectations set, for example challenging a pupil's choice of simile rather than settling for it. Use of questioning was very effective with questions directed at pupils which were pitched to challenge the individual because they were based on a good understanding of pupils' ability. Good use was made of think time so pupils could prepare answers in preparation for 'random' questions and therefore, all were ready and able to respond and were fully engaged. Where teaching was less effective, the learning question and purpose of the lesson was less clear. In some cases, the teacher was working harder than the pupils and activities were not engaging all pupils. Questioning was not used to check that all pupils had completed or understood tasks or stretch and extend their understanding and there was a lack of challenge.

**Music:** Pupils worked very effectively in small groups without close supervision. They were able to explain clearly what their learning objectives were and referring to their assessment grids, they could identify what they needed to do to improve their work further. They were enthusiastic and well-motivated. They had well-established learning routines, rapidly moving from practical work, to sitting quietly to listen and assess the performance of others. Pupils performed with confidence in front of their peers and pupils gave thoughtful and supportive feedback, which helped performers make further progress. Excellent use was made of directed questions which ensured that all pupils were ready and able to respond, and the teacher was able to assess the progress of a good cross section of pupils.



the current Year 10s and Year 11s will do fine in the new 9 – 1 GCSEs and they will do even better because of the work they are doing now. They will be fine!)

Key info they feel other people should know about Edwinstree: You have got to do cursive writing, good presentation is important and the school has improved very much because of Mrs Gant.

In addressing the issues raised at the last Review the following progress can be seen:

Based on the direct observations of teaching:

- The teachers do not routinely meet the learning needs of individual pupils because their expectations are either too high or too low. For example, some of the most able pupils across the school told the HIP that they could tackle work which was more difficult; pupils of low prior attainment in a Year 8 mathematics lesson were expected to apply a process of finding fractions of numbers without appropriate modelling by an adult of concrete apparatus or pictorial representation to support them. *Both English and Math lessons show that meeting individual needs is now a routine part of all lessons. This was evidenced in both the books and the lessons. The use of modelling is increasing in these subjects and concrete apparatus, or pictorial representation is growing in use. Further work needs to be done to consolidate these methods so that all students are confident in using them.*
- The pupils are not routinely encouraged to develop their skills of independent learning because the teachers point out their errors too readily for them, rather than requiring them to find them for themselves and correct them. *Where the SPG is used well, students are growing in confidence in their ability to edit and correct their work. However, work needs to take place to support students to become more confident as independent learners in the classroom, so that they are less reliant on teacher intervention. The ratio of teacher effort to student effort remains too high in the weakest lessons.*
- The pupils are unclear about the key learning for each session because the teachers focus too much on activities and tasks and not enough on transferable learning. *The use of learning questions has been effective in removing task objectives from lessons. Work now needs to focus on teachers planning effectively for questioning in order to break up learning questions into chunks and or stages in a lesson. Developing questioning will also support teachers to move students to independent learners. Moving away from “tell” to “teach” in the weakest lessons.*
- Because the teachers are unclear about the key learning, they do not successfully model to the pupils how the tasks allow them to apply their learning. *In English and Maths modelling is becoming more common place and this is supporting students to progress. This modelling was also in evidence in Music. Further work needs to be completed to ensure that all staff are using modelling to develop students understanding.*
- Support from the learning support assistants (LSA) is variable. In one session observed during the review, the LSA did not engage well enough with the pupils’ learning during the teacher led part of the session and when the pupils moved to group work she asked one of the pupils with whom she was working to repeat an activity which the teacher had already worked through with the class rather than encouraging her to apply her learning to a new calculation *The power of 2 withdrawal and reading comprehension support is having impact as evidenced in the latest data capture. In the most effective maths and English lessons the LSA support was well planned and integral to the lesson (a particular strength was the English lesson in the hall). In a small number of lessons this could be improved further and establish planning time and an effective and agreed support role is necessary.*
- The teachers do not teach the sounds which letters make effectively and this means that the pupils do not have the necessary skills to tackle unknown words or words which they cannot readily read. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, a pupil struggled with the word ‘length’ and could not segment and then blend the sounds  
*Key words were highlighted in many lessons including maths. Training has taken place on how to support students with spelling strategies. The SPG marking scheme is supporting students’ independence in spelling. Year 5 and 6 books showed clear weekly spelling strategies going into place.*
- In most of the lessons observed during the review, the pupils did not respond swiftly enough to the adults’ direction and this means that their conduct is not yet good. *This has been eradicated.*
- Learning time is lost because the teachers do not provide enough activities for the pupils to work

through once they have completed their 'green pen' response to teachers' feedback. *This was not observed as an issue through the February review.*

o Where teaching is having a more positive impact on learning, teachers use open ended questioning to promote the pupils' reasoning and problem solving skills *Further work to extend and deepen questions needs to take place in order to secure active participation for all and increase the challenge further in lessons.*

o The pupils are clear about the marking protocols and how their 'green pen response' helps them to learn *with only two exceptions the green pen response is consistent throughout the school. While the majority of students respond well. A few are still not responding effectively. This is more likely to be pp students than any other group.*

o Where the pupils were interested in their learning, they could articulate what they knew part way through the session which they did not know at the start. *Evidenced in the review.*

o The pupils are clear about the marking protocols and how their 'green pen response' helps them to learn. *Evidenced in the review.*

o The quality of science teaching has improved significantly since the HIP's initial visit. *Work trawls identify that SPG is least established in Science. Extended writing opportunities are too rare in Science.*

o Leaders have introduced learning journals which the pupils take with them from lesson to lesson so that their subject teachers know, for example, which technical vocabulary they need to learn and can build it into their teaching. This initiative is developing well. *Learning journals are valued by year 5 and 6 and are beginning to teach students independent learning habits. However this has not developed far enough to be a regular strategy employed by students in all lessons, yet.*

o The pupils showed the HIP very clearly that they have real potential; the leaders report that the staff are keen to improve. *The teachers worked collaboratively and the school has a positive atmosphere. Progress has clearly been made from the last review.*

#### **Based on the scrutiny of pupils' work books:**

o There are limited opportunities for using concrete apparatus, pictorial representation and problem solving in mathematics; this is the case regardless of the prior attainment of the pupils but is especially true for pupils who find learning difficult. *Observations and Work trawls showed significant progress in this area.*

o In Key Stage 2, the books did not routinely evidence how the teachers meet the different learning needs of the pupils. For example, in English books, in most cases, pupils were offered similar tasks regardless of their understanding of the key concepts. *English and Maths books and lessons can evidence how teachers are meeting the needs of the different pupils. This was harder to evidence routinely in Science and RE.*

o Many of the targets set for the pupils, whether in books or in lessons, were inappropriate. For example, a pupil in Year 5 working well below the expected standard had a target about 'authorial intent' with no exemplification of what it means and some of the most able pupils in Year 5 had a target to make 'no more than 5 basic mistakes.' This suggests that teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are wrongly pitched. *All students spoken to discussed how supportive the English target sheet process was and how this was used by History and Geography. Further work needs to take place to develop targets that are subject specific in Humanities and Science.*

o Experiences across the classes in Year 5 and in Year 6 are inconsistent and this suggests some potential inequalities. *Lesson observations and the work scrutiny showed a much greater consistency in Maths and an improving but not complete picture in English. Variance in the use of the mark scheme and tracking the scheme of work continues to exist for two teachers within Humanities in year 5 and 7.*

o Many of the most able pupils readily complete their work correctly and this means that the teachers are not challenging them well enough. *Greater challenge is evident in books and during lessons. However further work on questioning could increase the challenge immediately within lessons.*

o In subjects other than English and mathematics, the purpose of feedback is unclear and this means that progress is not readily evident; in addition, many of the tasks close down opportunities to develop stamina for writing. *Opportunities for stamina in writing has improved in History, Geography and Art. Further work needs to be done in RE, PSHE, and Science. Feedback in all subjects has focused on literacy last term. This has had impact.*

- Where the literacy marking scheme is used faithfully, the pupils develop independence because they are required to find their errors for themselves and correct them; in these cases, progress is immediate. *This success has continued the majority of staff now used this process. However there is a very small minority who are still not using this systematically.*
- There is evidence of greater output in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. *Year 6 output has increased significantly. Year 5 output in-particular the extended writing opportunities need to be increased.*
- The most able pupils and the most able disadvantaged pupils do equally well. *The work trawl did not highlight any differences.*
- The feedback is consistently applied although pupils do not always assimilate their corrections appropriately. *The significant majority of students respond well to feedback. A minority of PP students are the most likely not to respond well.*
- Humanities provide the best opportunity for meeting the needs of all pupils. *English and Maths are now providing the best opportunities along with History, Geography and RE. Further work needs to take place in RE, PSHE and Science.*

#### Areas from the last inspection to improve upon:

- Challenge pupils appropriately based on a thorough understanding of what they already know. *All data is now moderated and the LA advisors in English and Maths have validated and moderated with staff. Lesson observations evidence that staff knew their students and were accommodating their needs.*
- Raise expectations of what pupils are capable of and plan accordingly in line with the current National Curriculum. *All schemes are aligned to the new National Curriculum. RE scheme needs immediate review in line with the new syllabus.*
- Strengthen teacher's skill in assessing learning on an ongoing basis so that pupils more swiftly through learning. *Consistency of marking is securing good assessment on an ongoing basis increasing the use of assessment in the classroom through effective use of questioning will further support this process.*
- Clarify for teachers, how to identify key learning for each sessions and make frequent reference to this in lessons to reinforce pupils understanding. *Key learning is identified in lessons. Making sure that the weakest lessons consistently use this as a frame to return to.*
- Model key concepts effectively so they are based on key learning points. *Modelling is used regularly in English and Maths lessons.*
- Raise pupil's expectations of conduct by ensuring that they respond swiftly to adults. *Behaviour evidence on the day showed all responding to staff swiftly.*
- Improve the quality of teaching of punctuation, spelling and grammar across the school. *Whole school training has had impact and almost all teachers are identifying and marking spelling, grammar and punctuation, with effect.*
- Improve the quality of teaching of mathematics by ensuring all pupils have concrete experience and pictorial representation before moving to the abstract. Problem solving should thread through all mathematic teaching. *Significant improvements in the use of CPA as evidence in lessons and books. Further training needs to go into year 5 teachers to make sure they are providing regular opportunities for both of these activities.*
- Improve progression for SEN needs or disability by deploying LSA effectively, assessing training where needed and putting in place arrangements to ensure that withdrawal sessions are to a minimum. *All LSA have been redirected towards English and Maths. Training has taken place for LSA on the Power of 2 support and reading interventions. All interventions are now measured for success using data and work trawls. Aptgo is booked for June.*

#### In order to further improve the schools teaching and learning the following needs to occur:

- Staff need to plan their questions in order to provide regular opportunities in the lesson to assess the learning taking place and progress. To stretch and challenge through the use of questioning.

- Develop a “no hands up” culture to secure active engagement of pupils.
- Implement a whole school approach to supporting and challenging students to become independent learners, reducing their reliance on the teacher in the class room, increasing their confidence when faced with challenge and ensuring that the students are the ones doing the balance of work in the classroom.
- Continue to develop the concrete, pictorial, problems solving and reasoning across maths. Support further training of Year 5 to ensure that it is occurring here at the same rate as other year groups.
- Plan and map half termly, the extended writing opportunities in each year group. Secure the use of tracking sheets within this writing, so that the marking is effective and in line with English. Pay particular attention to Humanities and Science to support writing across the school.
- Continue to use modelling as a means of supporting student to understand what is expected of them.
- Develop the effective use of the skills sheets within Science and Humanities so that student’s literacy and subjects skills are developed in tandem.
- Eliminate the one or two class sets where the Marking Policy is not adhered to consistently.