



Southview School Review

1st July 2021

Reviewers: Kim McWilliam (School Improvement Leader HLC)
Georgina Pryke (Headteacher Thriftwood Academy)

Summary

Southview is a highly effective school where the holistic needs of the pupils is considered and met. There are positive and strong working relationships with parents and all staff demonstrate their commitment to ensuring pupils are provided with the best provision. The staff are reflective which informs their practice; there is a culture of continued improvement where collaboration is a key feature.

Scope

The review included:

- Learning walks and lesson visits with senior leaders
- Meeting with DHTs about the curriculum offer
- Meeting about safeguarding with the DSL
- Meeting with staff from the communication team
- Meeting with 2 subject leaders
- Informal conversations with pupils during the day
- Observation of arrival and departure times

Contextual data

There are 74 pupils on roll all with complex needs, often including medical needs. Pupils are supported in small class groups with a typical adult to pupil ratio of 1:2; in some cases pupils are supported on a 1:1 basis. The classes are mixed age and include a wide range of ability. There are currently 3 pupils who are in care and 28% of the school is in receipt of pupil premium. The staff are highly skilled and the team is stable. One of the most significant challenges for the school is the amount of space they have available. This presents a challenge as the majority of pupils have a range of equipment they require throughout the day, e.g. standing frames. This limited space also means the school have to be creative and particularly organised around personal care as there are limited facilities for this to take place.

Covid

The school have adapted throughout the pandemic to ensure the best possible provision is available to pupils during the restrictions. Relationships with parents have developed even further and the support has been tailored to meet the needs of pupils. Examples of the adaptations the school have made is support for parents to ensure there is a continued focus on maintaining and developing communication and support with their physical needs whilst at home, e.g. online yoga sessions. This links to the curriculum offer; the Southview Pillars of Curriculum (SPOC). The feedback which the school have sought from parents following the restrictions has been wholly positive. Each class developed their own Covid action plan which was monitored by senior leaders. This has enabled professional dialogue and challenge to take place and has provided the opportunity to ensure provision is well planned. The school have continued to evaluate throughout the pandemic and modified practice appropriately. This has identified some practices that will continue post Covid e.g. how they have worked with families to continue with developing the use of communication systems.



During the visit the arrival and departure systems were observed. These are in line with the risk assessment that has been published by the school. It is worth noting that these precautions (e.g. sanitising touch points) have an impact on learning time. Leaders will adopt some of these processes permanently once restrictions cease, e.g. continued use of the hall for access for those arriving by taxi.

Quality of Education

Curriculum

A significant amount of work has taken place with the development of the curriculum. This is thoroughly mapped and is linked to a rolling programme of themes. The topics are seen as a vehicle to teach skills, knowledge and understanding in the curriculum map. It is flexible and adaptable and is driven by the needs of the pupils. The curriculum plans have been developed with reference to the national curriculum and EHCPs. In the younger years the EYFS curriculum is followed and is adapted to the needs of pupils. As a result of the school continually evaluating and developing their curriculum offer the pupils are offered a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.

The new subject leaders are developing their approach to subject leadership. As a result of the strong senior leadership in the school they are clear about their roles and show a good understanding of the current curriculum model. They have developed their subject action plans and are able to explain the importance of their subject area.

The leader for PSHE/RSE has bought an external scheme to assist with delivery of this. This is tailored to the needs of pupils who attend the school; all modules align with the requirements of the new RSE curriculum. Leaders are aware that there might be some training needs for staff as they move through the next academic year and the situation returns to a degree of 'normal' following the pandemic.

The leader for physical development is developing the programme and following the lifting of restrictions the aim is for yoga to be a key feature of the curriculum. The leader has been able to work on this with her bubble during the restrictions and has seen a positive impact on pupils, e.g. a pupil who was unable to tolerate any time on her tummy is now able to manage 45 minutes. As a result of the pupil being more comfortable learning is enhanced. For another pupil this is supporting them with their ability to self-regulate which again allows learning to take place. The leader for physical development recognises that the priority is to implement an assessment system for the area.

The sensory curriculum is a key feature of the offer which is embedded across the school which was evident throughout the review. The curriculum planning does not have this explicitly mapped currently and is an area leaders could explore further.

The strategy for supporting pupils with developing communication is embedded and is a strength of the school. This is underpinned by the work of the communication team who are a vital and fundamental element. They are a highly skilled team who liaise externally with therapists and other professionals, support teachers, deliver training, ensure the logistics are appropriate and join class groups to support with communication. The emphasis on ensuring generalisation of the communication skills which are learnt is a strength of the school. During Covid the team modified their approach to include greater work with parents to support pupils who were unable to attend school. This was vital especially as the support from speech and language therapists was not available. As a result of the skilled support pupils are provided, they develop the necessary skills to communicate. This enables them to participate in learning as part of a community as well as being able to express their needs and wants. There are numerous examples of how this focused work on communication have supported pupils, e.g. a pupil arrived at the school following moving to the area and was struggling with communication. Upon investigation by the team it was discovered he had 3 different communication systems; none of which were working for him. The team have worked with



him extensively and he now has a preferred system which is allowing him to communicate. The team will continue to work with him to ensure this develops and that he has the right system to allow him to have a voice for the future.

In the 6th form the offer is developed from the pupil perspective. This is designed to prepare them for adulthood with a focus on independence and life skills. Destinations for post 19 include Chelmsford College (It was not possible to observe the 6th form during this visit).

The school approach to reading and the use of phonics is clearly articulated. The school recognise it is important to have varied approaches to teaching reading and they are aware that as pupils get older the use of phonics is less effective. The school utilise a range of approaches to support pupils with reading. The school currently baseline the pupils using the recently developed system. As this is a relatively new approach this has not been used for target setting or considering pathways and expected progress. The school are aware this is the next step.

It is evident throughout the school that staff are aspirational for the pupils. Examples of this include:

- The option for inclusion for pupils in mainstream settings which the school has fostered links with
- Some pupils have particular lessons in different classes to ensure they are accessing an appropriate curriculum. There is great flexibility in place to ensure the needs of pupils are met as they often have spikey profiles

Staff are skilled in supporting pupils and are aware of the huge gaps pupils often have in experiences in the wider world and as part of this the school implement a range of approaches to help with this. This may be both academic and wider opportunities, e.g. holiday to Portugal, theatre trips, cinema trips

PSHE, computing and physical development, inclusion in mainstream settings.

Teaching

Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge as well as strong knowledge of the pupils they teach. When teachers are teaching outside of their specialism the supportive and collaborative culture which exists across the school means they draw on a range of expertise to help them. They understand the curriculum model and how this applies to pupils they teach. In the classes visited during the review it was often difficult to judge who the teacher was due to the effective deployment and skill of the additional adults. Additional adults are used effectively and contribute towards pupil progress.

The planning seen during the review is thorough and takes into account the starting points of pupils; this confirms how well the staff know the pupils and what they need to make progress. EHCPs are a live document which are used by staff to inform their planning and the learning experiences they design for the pupils. There is evidence of teachers using the support from the communication team in their planning which then translated into what was seen during the review in the classroom setting. From the observations and from the planning it is evident how skilled staff are in using a range of communication systems e.g. Makaton, objects of reference, eye gaze.

Staff are skilled at promoting independence and use questions effectively to support this. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to respond to options; this is demonstrated in the high levels of patience of staff. In one example a pupil was demonstrating her mathematical skills. The additional adult gave her time and offered support with the recording element of the task. This was well timed as the pupil had been given the opportunity to start the task; the additional adult noticed this might be a challenge so engaged in some scribing for the pupil. At no point did the additional adult take over the content of the task.

Assessment



Progress is measured via EHCP targets and the social skills assessment. This is teacher judgement and is moderated by leaders. Leaders will return to the full pupil progress model from September. This has presented a challenge during Covid. Ongoing assessment was observed taking place in lessons during the review. Additional adults were recording observations; in one lesson evidence was shared how this is used and maintained.

Music therapy

This is a targeted programme which focuses on targets for individuals. Examples of areas this focuses on include supporting pupils to self-regulate and to express preferences. This is reviewed on an annual basis and reported to parents.

Pupil Premium and LAC

There are detailed and thorough plans in place for pupils who are in receipt of pupil premium or who are LAC. This is carefully monitored by the senior leaders and demonstrates the detailed personalised planning that is in place.

Behaviour and attitudes

As a result of staff fully understanding the holistic needs of the pupils in the school they are able to support the pupils to develop positive behaviours and attitudes; this was evident throughout the review.

Staff are highly vigilant and through their deep understanding of the needs of pupils they are able to respond appropriately. For example, staff identified a pupil at the beginning of the day who might require support to engage with the day and immediately responded to this. Staff are aware that the subtle changes in behaviour are a form of communication.

Where pupil's behaviour may be an area of concern the school work hard and effectively to implement behaviour management plans (They are able to evidence this through case studies). These are closely monitored and staff are confident when talking about the impact of the plans. Leaders shared an example of a pupil who arrived to the school in KS4 who had been involved in dangerous behaviour in another school. The pupil had been previously excluded and had a poor experience of education. As a result of the school assessing his needs accurately and supporting him he can now access the curriculum and is making strong progress which is leading towards appropriate accreditation.

Personal development

This is a real strength of the school. The ethos and values are evident in all aspects of the school. There is a relaxed, family feel with a high level of respect between staff and pupils. The personal care needs of pupils are met with care and respect; staff manage situations discreetly and sensitively, e.g. in one lesson a pupil had a seizure. The additional adult discreetly moved the pupil to the corner of the room supporting and reassuring the pupil. When he was ready, the additional adult supported him to return to the rest of the class. This exemplifies the relationship adults have with pupils which is thoughtful, patient and respectful. Pupils are encouraged to develop independence in a variety of ways and is based on individual needs and agreed next steps. An example of how a pupil has been developed is a young person in the 6th form who was confident to challenge the taxi company around his safety whilst being transported to school. This shows how the school have contributed to empowering him to have a voice and ensure his needs are met.

It is recognised that the pupils who attend the school will not always experience the opportunities their peers in other settings might. The school look to build the cultural capital of those who attend the school through a range of opportunities described earlier (some of this has not been possible during the pandemic).



The school are using a published scheme to support their delivery of the RSE curriculum. They have modified this to align with the needs of the pupils in the school. Consequently this should meet statutory requirements.

Through the broad curriculum offer the school ensure SMSC is thoroughly covered, e.g. through the topics that are studied, educational trips and experiences, curriculum areas in the overarching plan.

Safeguarding

The systems around safeguarding are rigorous and robust. The systems are clear and are understood by staff. The safeguarding team meet regularly which provides the opportunity to explore cases and to present professional challenge. The school has a system for highlighting pupils who are of significant concern and are consequently the highest priority. This remains under constant review. The Headteacher reviews the safeguarding data and considers trends and patterns. There is a termly safeguarding walk to consider health and safety of the premises.

The curriculum plans map where specific safeguarding learning takes place, e.g. understanding we all have rights and the concept of advocacy. This is mapped across all key stages. The leader for computing is exploring how to further engage parents and pupils in materials around e safety; this might include an online session as parents often struggle with attending school out of school hours.

Attendance and behaviour monitoring form part of the safeguarding conversation as well as a review of incidents/accidents across the school.

The Headteacher maintains a record of all concerns raised about staff.

Areas for further development

Curriculum.

- Review outstanding teaching and learning standards exploring how they apply in different classes
- Rehearse how to articulate the provision in each class
- Colour code the class timetables to highlight where different curriculum areas are taught
- Do the lower levels of the curriculum have enough for pupils to engage in? How might this be articulated?
- Are all of the topics age appropriate, e.g. Charlie and the Chocolate factory, does this work for year 11? How is this theme different for different age/ability groups?
- Map the sensory curriculum
- Leader for physical development to link with PE teachers in other special schools to look at assessment.
- Explore the accreditation opportunities for computing
- Map the curriculum pathways through the different classes

Reading

- Finalise the list of recommended texts which are currently being developed
- Consider what does the progress trajectory for pupils look like in reading?
- How do we track progress within a reading band?

Progress

- Leaders have already identified how they will take the practice in the College provision of measuring progress against targets across the school
- Date achievement of targets rather than tick to show the progress overtime

Areas to look at further

- Early in the Autumn term evidence the impact of the approach to reading
- School Improvement Leader to look at the evidence of observations overtime with Headteacher
- Look at the impact of the approach to teaching RSE.
- School Improvement Leader to review website (including look at PP, Covid catch up)
- It was not possible to discuss with teachers the learning that was observed during the review. This would be a possible area to look at further in the autumn term