

Hertfordshire Improvement Partner Report

Herts for Learning

School	Lakeside School	Number	883	Date	9 th June 2022
Present	Richard Hill (HIP) Lynne Frewin (Deputy Headteacher) Lynnette Johnson (Headteacher) - remotely				

Length of visit: 1.5 day (including offsite critique of SEF and Note of Visit)

Purpose of visit: Keeping in Touch (including detailed critique of the school's SEF)

Main findings/

- Activities incorporated into the school visit included:
 - Robust critique of the School's Evaluation Form;
 - 'Keeping in Touch' discussion with DHT;
 - A comprehensive joint learning walk across the whole school with the DHT, followed by a discussion of strengths and weaknesses in teaching seen during the activity;
 - Discussion with Headteacher and DHT regarding the outcomes of the HIP's critique of the School's Evaluation Form;
 - Follow up discussion with the Headteacher regarding the learning walk;

Learning Walk:

- All classrooms were visited. Each visit lasted between 5 and 10 minutes. Additionally, a swimming session was observed, as was the playground at morning break.
- The learning walk identified a number of strengths across the school. Where teaching was most effective it was because:
 - Staff and pupil relationships were very positive and, as a result, the pupils appeared to enjoy the interactions and learning activities offered to them.
 - Pupil behaviour and attitudes were excellent. When required, interventions were appropriate and sensitive to the needs of the pupil.
 - Staff were highly skilled in communicating with the pupils, using a range of systems to ensure engagement and understanding, including signing and the use of symbol cue boards.
 - Lessons were well planned and relevant learning activities were carefully selected to ensure all pupils were fully engaged and made progress;
 - TA staff understood the aims of each task and were effectively used to promote learning, rather than solely acting as behaviour support.
- Where teaching was less successful it was because:
 - The use of communication systems was inconsistent – for example, in a few lessons some pupils did not have their communication books readily to hand and, on occasions, pupils were physically moved between settings rather than via movement cue card;
 - Some activities would have benefited from being placed within a relevant real-life context, a story or a topic theme;

- On occasions staff intervened too quickly in an activity – or did the task instead of the child - which reduced the opportunity for the pupils to develop their problem solving and independent work skills;
- In some lessons, due to the reliance on whole class teaching, some pupils had to wait some time for their turn, which reduced their opportunities to be involved in the learning.
- Although I.T. was in use in a few classrooms, the activities appeared to be primarily time fillers rather contributing to, or supporting, learning.
- All of these findings were discussed with the Headteacher and DHT.

SEF: Meeting with Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher

- In line with the Headteacher's request for a robust analysis of the new format adopted by the school, the HIP carried out an in-depth evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the SEF.
- The outcomes from the critique were discussed with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher. The HIP agreed to provide a written report to help leaders to develop the document further.
- In summary, the HIP stated that the document would benefit from a more detailed and focused evaluation as, currently, it presents as a description of provision rather than impact on learning.
- The HIP suggested that one way to focus the evaluation is to more closely reference judgements to the criteria in the latest iteration of the Ofsted Handbook.
- The HIP stated that the evaluation would benefit from a sentence structure based around 'Cause and Effect'. Leaders should ask themselves "So what?" after every assertion or description of provision, in order to ensure the report is more focussed on outcomes/impact.
- The document contains a number of graphs that present the raw data pictorially. However, these are not supported by an evaluation and therefore add little to the evaluation as they do not help to communicate a quality of education judgement.
- Additionally, the HIP stated that the new format, taken from TheKey, is confusing and prone to repetition. The Headteacher and DHT agreed with the analysis.
- We discussed the benefits of integrating the SDP with the SEF, so that there is a clarity of why priorities have been adopted. The HIP suggested that leaders looked at the Greenside format as a starting point.

Keeping In Touch:

- Leaders reported that, although the school will be formally funded to offer 81 places as of September, Lakeside will have 93 pupils on roll, with the possibility of at least one more as a result of a pending tribunal.
- We discussed one secondary aged pupil who, although not formally joining the school roll until September, has been engaged in a length transition programme. The boy is a historic school refuser – with significant OCD behaviours - and has not attended his existing SLD school for some time. Despite this, he is already attending Lakeside for two mornings a week as a result of the carefully structured transition programme, coupled by robust and clear expectations of behaviour and rewards. The HIP suggested that this case would be a good case study for leaders to present to Ofsted in order to demonstrate the school's successful pastoral support and individualised curriculum approach.
- There are no vacancies on the Governing Body. Leaders expect governors to further develop their knowledge of the school through direct monitoring visits in the new academic year.
- We discussed a number of staffing issues. It is not appropriate to detail these in the report.

Action agreed / recommendations:

The Headteacher should:

- Ensure that all leaders are familiar with the expectations and criteria of the current Ofsted framework so that evaluations can be more robust in terms of the impact that teaching has on learning;
- Establish a clear agreement, amongst the leadership team, of the expectations that underpin good teaching and learning at Lakeside so that an analytical evaluation report and a detailed improvement action plan can be communicated to all stakeholders;
- Enable leaders at all levels – including members of the Governing Body - to benefit from further training in relation to monitoring, evaluation and action planning.

Date and purpose of next visit:

TBC - Autumn Visit

Hertfordshire Improvement Partner: **Richard Hill**

Date: **9th June 2022**
