

# Ellen Tinkham School Self Evaluation

Summer 2015

## Pupil Profile:

There are 139 Pupils (48 girls – 35%, 91 boys – 65%) aged 3 - 19

There are 38 Pupils eligible for Pupil Premium (27%)

Number of “Children in Care” is 14 (10%)

Many pupils (62%) have complex needs (i.e. two or more needs on their statement/ plan)

Primary needs: PMLD 29%: SLD 45% : ASC 26%

Attendance: 94.4%.

No Exclusions (In accordance with our zero exclusions policy)

## Summary of main improvements since last Ofsted:

- **Teaching has improved.** There is more outstanding teaching (which is never less than ‘good’), planning is further refined, learning support from teaching assistants has been further developed. Assessment systems are better. There are more readers and emergent readers in the school than there have ever been. All adults have an enhanced understanding of what “good” and “outstanding” practice look like.
- **The impact of learning on life chances of learners has improved.** No leavers are “Not in Education, Employment or Training”, (NEET). Several instances of students and leavers gaining paid employment (including an ex pupil employed at the school as a Meal Time Assistant).
- **Leadership has improved.** The understanding of what constitutes effective leadership and management have been enhanced through systematic leadership development and through the establishment of a federation, supporting and strengthening the distributed leadership culture. Middle leaders are highly effective, creating significant capacity to improve. The school is able to support other schools as well as itself, so deepening the leadership learning further. Governance is even stronger, with governors responsible for determining the monitoring aspect of federation-wide planning and effectively holding the head teacher to account through very thorough and targeted appraisal. Leadership of teaching has improved dramatically with the development of a team approach to subject leadership.
- **Personalised learning and services have improved.** The Learn to Live model of person centred working is continuously being developed and refined, alongside families and a range of other professionals. It is the driving force behind improvements in advocacy, curriculum development, staff development and enhanced access to work and living skills related opportunities.

## **Quality of Teaching:**

### **Is Outstanding because:**

- Children make outstanding progress
- Teacher's planning across the whole school is outstanding. It incorporates assessment points, including subject-related objectives and individual home:school agreement targets where appropriate, so addressing skill development as well as subject knowledge. Planning is creatively differentiated ensuring equity of access for all.
- The curriculum is progressive across the key stages, with strong leadership to monitor and support, ensuring a high quality curriculum offer.
- Subjects are led, in clusters, by teams of teachers (and some therapists/specialist staff). The core subject 'E-team' (Empowerment Team) effectively use core subject data to rigorously challenge quality at every level, while devising effective support strategies to tackle areas in need of development.
- Key Stage teams have produced mission statements to clarify their role in the learning journey of pupils so that there is clarity and coherence across the school.
- We work in very close collaboration with families to construct personal targets that will make a positive difference to children's life chances.
- Teaching across the school is at least good, usually better. Teaching is rigorously monitored and there is a strong culture of continuous improvement.
- The school has considerable expertise at hand to support teachers in moving their practice from good to outstanding. This includes specialists in Visual Impairment, sensory learning, communication, behaviour support, advocacy, assessment, transition, access to learning/ children and family services and outdoor learning. There is a strong tradition of working collaboratively as a team and with other schools and professionals.
- All adults have consistently high expectations for all pupils and are relentless in their ambition for children and young people. As a result, there is an absolute belief within the school that anything is possible and an assumption that all learners have the right to access everything that is on offer.
- Learning support is highly skilled, empowering children and young people to lead their own learning. Misconceptions are identified early and addressed sensitively in a coaching rather than a directive approach.
- The school knows how to identify and share best practice, so that all adults know what "Good" and "Outstanding" looks like.
- The school vision is:
  - o Everyone will be the best that they can be
  - o Everyone has a voice
  - o No-one is excludedIt applies to staff as well as students and everyone strives to continually improve. (For example, there are currently 6 teaching assistants working towards foundation degrees).

- The school spends a significant proportion of its budget on staff training and development, reinforcing the culture of learning across the school and reflecting the understanding that children learn best when they are taught by knowledgeable, skilled staff.
- The teaching of communication, writing, reading and maths are particular strengths and are threaded effectively through all learning opportunities because of their high impact on future opportunities for young people.
- Communication is at the heart of our curriculum and along with decision-making, is a key focus for life-long learning, being a fundamental human right.
- Pupil engagement in and enjoyment of, their learning is evident in all teaching observations, due to the quality of learning opportunities and the creativity and courage of teachers.
- Communication between staff teams ensures coherence and clarity in approaches to learning.
- Teachers know students very well and as a result, learning is well tailored to meet individual learning needs, while also inspiring and motivating.
- Students are involved, wherever possible, in evaluating their own learning.
- The school is working in a 'Triad', with the 2 federation schools and another similar school in a neighbouring authority. A system to support and challenge each other, based on an appreciative enquiry model, is further developing best practice.

#### Development Points:

- Use the "Effective learning support" materials to develop a training package for use with new staff and to support colleague schools
- Continue to establish different ways to monitor the quality of teaching, ensuring different things are "seen"
- Further develop the use of the "Top Tips" presented to teachers following teaching monitoring.
- Further develop teaching assistant knowledge of what constitutes "good" and "outstanding" teaching
- Establish more "scaffolded" support for school leavers (post school) so that learners continue to benefit from their education. Support should continue beyond post-school college placements. To include establishing a 19 – 25 provision.
- Further develop 'Triad' work.

#### **Achievement of Pupils:**

##### **Is Outstanding because:**

- We are relentlessly demanding in our expectations and "raise the bar" whenever our data looks like targets are lacking in challenge. Currently 61% pupils are making good or outstanding progress in home:school agreement data (personal skills targets). Considering how hard we have made the criteria – some children

may never be “consistent” in their approaches – we consider their achievement to be beyond outstanding.

- Of the 36% pupils “requiring improvement”, 44% are meeting criteria that says they have met their target, but it isn’t sufficiently reliably embedded to meet our stringent requirements or is still “emerging”. Of the 3% deemed “unsatisfactory”, the lack of sufficient progress has been found to be due to circumstances beyond the control of the pupil. These personal targets are set in collaboration with parents carers and other professionals and sometimes planned support, activities or interventions do not/ cannot happen and impacts on the ability of teachers to assess the target as “fully met”, therefore making it unsatisfactory progress,
- In 2013/14, all pupils were re-baselined against strengthened criteria. Some levels went down but this was due, not to a lack of learning, but to a) better knowledge of students through multi-disciplinary, person centred working and b) better understanding of assessment criteria through clarification of woolly statements in P-Level descriptors leading to increased rigour e.g. “meaningful marks” versus a learned response that may not be intended to convey meaning.
- Having analysed data this year following the re-baselining, we have seen improved progress against teacher predicted targets, across the school.
- Where anomalies arise, we are aware of the story behind it due to rigorous monitoring and can intervene to support the student. Our monitoring includes in-house, across-school and across-County moderation. Our curriculum lead has established an extended P-scale to manage the use of national curriculum levels.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for pupil premium is at least as good as the rest of the cohort, usually better.
- Despite the category of school, there are a number of readers (more than at the time of the previous Ofsted inspection) and pupils across the school employ good reading strategies. Some pupils use their phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. Some have a good core sight vocabulary and use this to read well. Many understand that symbols convey meaning and use them for information. The number of readers in KS2 indicates the effectiveness of phonics teaching.
- Where we are with assessment is very different from where we were 3 years ago. All staff members have been on the journey together. Assessment is now thoroughly and reliably embedded in planning and classroom practice and we do not rely upon commercial systems to gather and analyse pupil learning.

#### Development Points:

- Further develop learner self-assessment processes being established
- Further develop advocacy so that all learners have an effective voice both within school and beyond
- Increase the number of older students who access paid employment

## **The Behaviour and Safety of Pupils:**

### **Is Outstanding because:**

#### **Behaviour:**

- Behaviour is viewed throughout the school as a form of communication; the visible manifestation of communication and decision making. The school behaviour support system is entirely predicated upon this assumption and the knowledge that the most powerful strategy to support better decision making lies in providing opportunities for self-direction in a respectful setting where all communication is fully understood and supported.
- Students are wonderful ambassadors for the school. Members of the public have congratulated students on their conduct and positive interactions when in public places.
- Monitoring teaching, confirm that learner engagement and their attitude to learning is very positive. No learning is lost due to behaviour because planned strategies are implemented consistently and effectively. Teachers plan to ensure motivation and involvement. Lessons are of high quality and sufficiently compelling that learners want to be in the classroom.
- Excellent behaviour support is in place with highly effective leadership,, policies and guidance. There are very few instances of physical intervention, despite the complexity of pupils. There is a strong trend of reduction in physical intervention, supporting the effectiveness of the school policy of de-escalation and advocacy, (see Headteacher's report to Governors Spring 2014). All interventions are carefully and thoroughly recorded and monitored. Children who require them have thorough personal intervention plans devised jointly by families, school other agencies and based around the voice of the individual.
- Advocacy is in place to support the voice of learners. A lead advocate has established a team of advocacy champions across the school. Having a significant "voice" is the right of every student and a strong safeguarding factor. Students are happy and confident because they are listened to and respected.
- There are very few instances of bullying, but staff members are highly vigilant regarding the possibility of bullying and deal with any possible instances openly and firmly, in liaison with learners and families. Differences are celebrated and there is a tangible culture of respect across the school.
- There have been no exclusions for well over a decade because the school operates a strict zero exclusions policy. This has resulted in the development of many layers of strategies and a very skilled staff team.

#### **Safety:**

- "There is a strong culture of safety across the school", (Health and Safety audit, October 2013)
- Evidence of this includes: rigorous risk assessments are in place against all activities including the wide range of off-site activities. There are individual

evacuation plans in place for those who need them and individual risk assessments for all students.

- There is an e-safety policy and e-safety committee in place. There is a team of Young Inspectors and a pupil-elected School Council who, among other things, liaise with the e-safety committee. There are links on the school website to CEOP and other sites, where families can get more information.
- There is a strong induction programme for all staff which includes child protection, moving and handling, health and safety, mobility, disability awareness, Team Teach and emergency medication training.
- All staff members are child protection trained and there is clear information around the school regarding designated people. There is a named child protection governor and there is regular scrutiny of processes.
- Effective leadership is in place, with a senior leader for Health & Safety and premises having a federation-wide remit.
- All staff members are CRB/DBS checked and the single central record is up-to-date. References are always taken up for new staff. Every interview panel includes a panel member who has safer recruitment training.
- There is rigorous health and safety recording of all accidents and incidents, including near-miss accident reporting. There is a link governor for health and safety and governors regularly scrutinise recorded accident and incident data with senior leaders in order to inform actions to mitigate risk.
- There are good security procedures in place for visitors, staff and pupils. The school has a key fob security system and all adults are expected to wear identity badges. Learners have been known to challenge people they don't know who are not wearing a visitor badge.
- The school focus on communication and advocacy is a key safeguarding factor. Learners all have a voice that is heard and listened to, whatever form it takes
- A safeguarding hub has been established to further develop supervision for those involved in children protection by forming a safeguarding hub to regularly monitor and review processes and procedures and to provide emotional support.

Development Points:

- Further empower family involvement in school through person centred processes.
- The Learn to Live model is effectively used in generating Education Health and Care Plans, making them accurate, in depth and well targeted.

### **Leadership and Management:**

#### **Are Outstanding because**

- There is a relentless drive and ambition for excellence across the school, demonstrated by leaders at every level and a well-embedded distributed leadership culture in place.

- The school vision supports this culture of an expectation that standards will be high and improving.
- The establishment of a federation is providing wide-ranging opportunities for development and challenge.
- There is a predominant focus on communication and literacy. There are more readers and emergent readers across the school than at the last Ofsted. This is due to very good teaching, including the teaching of phonics, and an unrelenting and absolute belief that our children can and will access learning through increasingly skilful differentiation. The school development and innovation plan reflects high expectation and aspiration and always includes a key priority in leadership development. The plan is derived from person centred plans involving all learners and families and from the monitoring of teaching and learning standards. All staff teams contribute to responding to the issues identified. Governors write the monitoring and evaluation strands as part of their role in holding leaders to account.
- There is highly effective professional development in place through appraisal and a “linking evidence” process has been developed in preparation for the new Pay Policy in September 2014. This document identifies expectations and standards, describes good and outstanding practice and cites examples of expected practice and its’ impact. The document ensures teachers are equipped to gather systematic evidence over time, of their teaching standards, support needs and strengths. There are appraisals in place for all staff, including teaching assistants, premises staff, administrators and meal time assistants. Staff targets are linked to the school development and innovation plan.
- There are innovative responses to leadership needs, such as the “E-Groups” for subject leadership. Grouped subjects are led by clusters of teachers working in a collaborative, supportive yet challenging partnership. Core subjects sit with the “Empowerment” team, led by the curriculum and assessment lead. Foundation subjects cluster under “Enrichment” (art, humanities, music), “Energise” (PE and sport, outdoor education and “Enable” (access to learning issues, advocacy, communication, therapies). Best practice and leadership are described through the “5 C’s plus 3”. The “5 C’s” defining best practice in teaching and learning are Communication, Clarity, Coherence, Creativity and Courage. Leadership includes this 5 plus Collaboration, Curiosity and Challenge. Teachers and senior leaders have worked on definitions and examples of these and they are used to describe expectations in the “Linking Evidence” booklet used to provide supporting evidence for pay progression.
- Pupil premium is targeted to good effect and pupils eligible are making progress at least in line with the rest of their cohort (see school website). There is a TLR post in place with responsibility for children eligible for pupil premium and children in care. It is the post-holders job to track learning ensure services are at least equitable and advocate on their behalf.
- The school has an excellent programme of sporting activity and opportunity, including annual participation in the Stoke Mandeville National Junior Games. The Sports Premium is targeted well to further enhance participation and opportunity (see school website)

- The Learn to Live person centred movement was established at the school to ensure a set of rights to which every learner is entitled and to embed co-construction of our services with families. The person centred processes that have been drawn together into a “core promise” for families and learners drives the work of the school and is at the heart of the Learn to Live pedagogy model. The movement has drawn in other schools and organisations and is being used effectively in a number of ways and places. The Devon Pathfinder for the SEND Children and Families Bill is using the information gathering “Listen to Me” document from the suite of tools developed in liaison with families. A large secondary school and federated primary schools are using the Learn to Live decision making hierarchy and Good Choices Plan, to reduce exclusions and the Listen to Me to improve transition at year 6. The secondary school is rated Outstanding in all areas.
- Senior leaders and other staff from the school work to support other schools. There is a well-established outreach service available to mainstream schools and the school provides specialist development opportunities for schools in the learning community. Senior leaders had been supporting another special school under a management agreement for 15 months, prior to federation. The school has made very rapid progress, moving from a TISP category to a very strong “Good” in all areas in a recent Ofsted inspection, within a year. Governors take a courageous view in terms of support to other schools and understand that we have a moral obligation as a strong school, to support others. We also understand the reciprocal benefits of working in collaboration and are never complacent about our own standards, understanding that there are always improvements to be made and innovative practice to learn about.
- Senior leaders are actively involved in a number of organisations. The headteacher is working with Leading Schools South West as a Subject Expert, drawing together National College materials for middle leadership courses. A deputy headteacher is facilitating these courses, also for LSSW. The headteacher is on the executive committee of South West Leaders in Special Schools, a training and development organisation for special school leaders. The HR Manager is a member of the School Business Managers committee with the same organisation, working on designing the annual school business manager conference. The Finance and Premises Manager is on the Exeter Consortium Board, a city-wide consortium for improvement of outcomes for children. The school is involved with the local SCITT programme and is supporting placements for 2 BEd students currently. We also provide a number of apprenticeships. The head of HR has been invited onto the panel to select the new Head of Faculty at the local college.
- The school belongs to the Devon-wide SENTient Trust, a co-operative trust of Devon special schools. The headteacher was instrumental in driving this when the chair of SHAD (Special school Heads Association Devon). The trust is developing Devon wide school-to-school support and challenge processes to improve standards and outcomes for every learner in every special school in Devon and to support learners with SEND in any school or setting. There are already effective assessment moderation networks in place for core subjects and



for early years. Research and development projects are under construction and there are several projects in place that have attracted new funding into Devon schools.

- Governors carry out a range of monitoring including learning walks and in-depth scrutiny of key aspects. For example, a governor who is also an accountant carries out random selection finance scrutiny. (See Governor monitoring framework, attached)
- Middle leaders scrutinise pupil data termly so that they know children's learning stories. In this way, subject leaders can effectively monitor and intervene and always know what our data tells us. It is powerful within the E-Group dynamic because these teams support and challenge each other.

Development Points:

- Continue to redefine, clarify and strengthen the role and function of leaders across the federation to further enhance capacity for continuous improvement. The school development and innovation plan providing the vehicle, so that many threads of development continue to occur but they all form part of a coherent whole.
- Roles and function of leadership and governance are further developed to maximise the potential of the federation to establish exceptionally high quality provision.
- Succession planning becomes embedded across the federation model so that talent is nurtured and not lost.

### **Spiritual, Social, Moral and Cultural Learning and Development:**

The vision of Ellen Tinkham School is that:

**Everyone has a voice**

**No-one is excluded**

**Everyone will be the best that they can be**

Our purpose is to:

**Nurture talent and ambition**

**Empower communication and decision making**

**Ensure all needs are met**

Spiritual, Social, Moral and Cultural Development is central to the school ethos of respect and can be found in all aspects of work across the school. Some examples are as follows:

- Multi faith weeks are used to provide students with knowledge of, interest in and respect for, other religions, faiths and cultures
- Topic work is used to broaden learners' experience and knowledge of the world and to inspire a desire to engage with others, understand differences and enjoy diversity

- Ours is a respectful community. People do not shout and there are many random acts of kindness and thoughtfulness in evidence all of the time.
- Teachers cross-reference PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) in their planning of other subjects so that it is integral to all learning. Sex education is taught in discrete lessons. It is clear, calm, uses correct terminology and has a strong emphasis on self-respect, respect for others, public and private and keeping safe
- There is an active student council who are elected and who have a budget. They make decisions, are involved in staff appointments and are invited to comment on school developments
- The school has an advocate who works with learners to make sure their voice is heard
- Charity support days are regularly held with students, staff and families working together to raise money for charities.
- Global citizenship is addressed across the school but is a particular focus in FE. The school has links with, and actively supports, a school in Zambia
- There is a Rural Skills department. Learners are taught to care for animals, to care for and about the environment, to grow food and flowers and to respect the natural world and its' resources
- Learners participate in National and International days and events. A recent example was a celebration across our federated schools of International Women's Day
- Lots of opportunities for outdoor and adventurous learning encourages team work, shared challenge, motivation and self esteem
- Play therapy, music therapy, aromatherapy and yoga are all used to support the emotional well-being of learners.
- Most significantly, the whole-school person centred ethos is the driving force for respectful working and sets the expectation that every child and young person has the right to be heard, to be included and to be the best that they can be.