

# TBAP Courtyard AP Academy

## Peer to Peer Review

### February 2018

Area	The Review Team judged* TBAP Courtyard:	On the Self Review Scorecard Courtyard self-assessed as follows
Overall	Outstanding	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding	Outstanding
Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare	Outstanding	Outstanding
Teaching Learning and Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding
Outcomes	Outstanding	Outstanding

\*Please note that this review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection and judgements therefore are not necessarily equivalent to Ofsted judgements

## The Peer to Peer Challenge

The documents presented on arrival to the review team included:

- The Scorecard and Executive Summaries
- SEF Summary and School Development Plan
- LAB Reports
- Most recent Ofsted Report
- Challenge Partner Report
- Pupil Profiles and tracking data including progress data and information relating to attendance and behaviour
- Case studies
- Destination data
- CPD records
- Performance Management records

Having spent time as a team looking at these and after being given the chance to clarify some matters with Nia Saunders, the review team settled on the following key lines of enquiry:

- Do lesson observations, work scrutiny and learning walks confirm that progress is outstanding for all pupils, especially those with SEND?
- Is leadership and management typically outstanding?
- How far are the contributions of all staff typically outstanding?
- Do learners feel that they are making genuine progress as young people?

## Leadership and Management strengths

The Head leads by example, inspiring learners and staff to strive for the very best. The unremitting focus on excellence permeates the school from when you walk through the door to when you leave.

The climate of the school is based upon meticulous attention to detail. There is an enormous sense of pride shown by everyone who works at the Courtyard including crucially, the learners who positively brim with confidence and ambition.

The leadership of all aspects of the school is extremely thorough. Systems and structures are understood by learners and staff and there is an impressive consistency across all areas of the school. The school is also open to the views of all stakeholders and actively pursues them so as to improve the quality of provision. As a consequence, the school is well placed to judge where it is having the most impact and equally determine what strategies to put in place to improve outcomes further.

Governors know the school extremely well and have a robust appreciation of its strengths, particularly in terms of Teaching and Learning. Their regular involvement at LAB meetings and structured visits through, for example, Learning Walks means they are well placed to challenge and support the positive judgements the school makes of itself.

The school is fully committed to the professional development of all colleagues. The Leverage Leadership programme allied to stringent performance management has resulted in an extremely cohesive and coherent approach to Teaching and Learning and Behaviour for Learning. There is a remarkable consistency to the activities the school undertakes. This is particularly the case regarding the integration of LSPs into the delivery of high quality support and teaching for learners.

LSPs spoke without exception about how empowered they feel within the school. They value both the trust and respect afforded to them by Senior Leaders. As a result, they are able to add a level of consistency to how students are supported that fully complements and integrates with the work of teachers. Because their individual contributions are so closely aligned with school approaches and priorities, it means that overall education at Courtyard is undoubtedly greater than its parts.

The school has benefitted from its position within TBAP and has been judicious in ensuring that opportunities such as TBAP-wide CPD and networking opportunities, fully complement the school's own improvement strategies. However, the school is not just a receiver of support and there are many examples of how the Courtyard has been at the forefront of school improvement not just within TBAP but across some of the mainstream schools and the LAs it is regularly involved with.

Disadvantaged students and those with SEND make outstanding progress from their different starting points. The school tracks how it deploys its additional pupil premium funding and the LAB receives updates on this.

The school has an outstanding record of reintegrating students into mainstream where this has been appropriate. It also swiftly assesses the needs of students on arrival and as a consequence of personalised planning and interventions is able to ensure that gaps in learning are closed and that progress and improvements to attendance are rapid and sustained.

The school works tirelessly to promote positive attitudes and raise self-esteem amongst learners. Praise and positivity permeate the language adults use which is complemented by the physical environment in the form of inspirational displays, films, “calming music” and “scrapbooks”. Combined, these create a culture that encourages confidence in learners not just in terms of their academic progress but also in terms of their sense of self-worth and esteem.

#### Leadership and Management risks and areas for development

The school evaluates and plans extremely well. In doing so it employs TBAP wide planning and evaluation tools. The school’s understandable desire to demonstrate and showcase wider progress means that there is a risk that there appear to be competing self-evaluation systems. The school needs to consider how these can be aligned so that their internal value and significance is readily and easily appreciated by an external audience.

The school is evolving in terms of the profile and needs of its learners. It is now receiving far more students with EHCPs. As a consequence, reintegration into mainstream, for example, would no longer necessarily represent the most appropriate pathway. This progressive shift in emphasis is requiring the school to reevaluate its expertise and training requirements. Currently this is being managed extremely well as evidenced by the recent appointment of a Speech and Language therapist. However, going forward careful thought needs to be given to having either a dedicated SENCO or more systematic and regular access to a qualified SENCO.

The school benchmarks students on entry and tracks progress exceptionally well. However, in the context of “assessment without levels” the school would benefit from providing additional benchmarking information to ensure even there is even greater robustness to their judgement of progress over time.

#### Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare strengths

Records show that the school is particularly adept at rapidly improving the attendance and behaviour of learners when they join the Courtyard. Fundamental to this is the way in which the school ensures students settle quickly whilst developing confidence and trust in the staff. This in essence stems from the consistency of behaviour management including meticulous tracking and evaluation.

The Head is skilled at maximising the resources available to her to ensure that she gets the highest impact from them. LSPs have been empowered to deliver aspects of behaviour management and contribute, for example, to the enrichment programme. By doing this, teachers are freed up at strategic times in the week to review progress whilst the appropriately trained LSPs are able to take a leading role in the education of Courtyard learners.

The Head knows the needs of her learners and the strengths of her staff extremely well. This is particularly evident in the whole school approach to behaviour for learning. Everyone is aware of how their contribution builds to form a composite strategy particularly evident in the morning Catch Up sessions and the well-attended breakfast club.



The Catch Up sessions epitomize the vision and practice of the Courtyard. These sessions happen at the start of the day and are led by students through a structured conversation that they thrive on. Students begin by asking each other “What was your ‘Wow’ moment yesterday? This is followed up by questions such as “What did you do well in your learning?” and “Out of 10 how would you rate your day?”. Teachers and LSPs are invited to contribute by the learner chairing the meeting and this pattern was evident to all team members across each class they visited. The opportunity this gave learners to reflect upon their own behaviours and therefore begin to understand better how they can change these to become more resilient was highly impressive.

Learners with complex needs and less structured experiences of mainstream education benefit significantly from this structured approach to behaviour management. In one lesson for example, all learners sat in contemplation at the start listening to some music so that they were able to transition effectively from a break time social environment to a learning environment. Teachers were also consistent in how they gave praise.

The process whereby staff regularly evaluate the behaviour of students complements the evaluative approach that learners themselves are regularly asked to follow. Teachers and LSPs frequently ask questions which require learners to reflect upon what they have said and then further probing questions ensure that this reflection is deepened. Such opportunities help create a climate where self regulation and independence become a baseline expectation of learners.

The use of therapy clearly makes a significant impact. As a resource, the therapist’s work was well managed to ensure maximum impact. Information was very well shared and transitional work was strong.

The CAPA Panel that meets fortnightly encapsulates how multi agency working can have the highest impact. Because the school tracks and evaluates behaviour so carefully and consistently it is able to base these meetings upon a particularly robust evidence base creating opportunities to plan ahead effectively. Also the cycle of review means that on an individual and class basis the school is constantly able to adjust approaches and interventions to ensure that the changing needs of complex learners are well met. Record keeping at an individual and school level is also exceptionally thorough.

In conversations, LSPs were clear that they benefited from training informed, behaviour management techniques that were consistently applied across the school. They were skilled at encouraging learners to take risks. As one learner said “I can’t do it but I will”.

Displays in classrooms reinforced key messages about learners’ behaviour and targets. These were relevant and kept up to date and were frequently referenced in discussion which helped embed the behaviour management routines and expectations.

Learners appreciated the difference the Courtyard makes to their educational, emotional and social development. “I think this school is amazing” said one “I am now able to stay in class. In my old school I was sent to the headteacher”. Such positive views characterised the learners and was borne out by their day to day behaviour around the school and their engagement in lessons.

Because learners are overwhelmingly positive about the Courtyard they are keen to attend. Attendance has increased from 88% in 2014-15 to 90% currently; in the context of AP this is outstanding. These attendance patterns for the vast majority of students represent a rapid improvement compared to their attendance in mainstream settings. Furthermore, where attendance issues persist the school is relentless in deploying a range of strategies aimed at improving it.



Circus Skills form part of the school curriculum and are a vehicle to develop a variety of student skills ranging from technical motor skills to wider cooperation and collaboration strategies. Whilst fun and engaging, this activity also creatively embeds the wider school vision of developing learners' sense of self-esteem and enjoyment in learning.

Learners say they feel safe and that there is no bullying. There was evidence that the school utilises many strategies across the curriculum to prevent bullying which their data confirms as being highly effective.

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare risks and areas for development

The school recognises the need to share information with relevant people so it has the most impact. It also wishes to strengthen the links between individual classroom teachers and LSPs. Understandably the school has taken the decision to balance whole school meetings with class meetings. However, the increasing number of students with complex needs reflected in the EHCPs means the school may want to reconsider how effectively this current structure will support this in terms of effective communication strategies.

Strategies to improve attendance are well embedded and based upon a regular dialogue with parents. Notwithstanding this, the school may wish to consider formalising some of these conversations through correspondence to improve its evidence base and accountability.

Teaching, learning and Assessment-strengths

Teachers have a very good knowledge of their learners. Their progress is meticulously tracked and evaluated at both an individual and class level. The Head has also structured opportunities whereby teachers and LSPs meet regularly to review progress and plan timely and appropriate interventions and next steps for learners. As a result of this focused and regular cycle coupled with high quality planning, learners make outstanding progress.

Teachers have very high expectations of learners. Learners themselves also take enormous pride in their work as evidenced by their exercise books. These books showed not just outstanding progress but a cycle of reflection on feedback leading to improvements which parallels the behaviour for learning vision of the school whereby learners are constantly expected to reflect upon their progress and identify ways to improve. Their Phonics exercise books, for example, with their use of photographs showing individual progress were a particularly good example of how learners are supported in this process of reflection.

Learners have an outstanding attitude to their learning. The range of engaging activities provided by teachers and LSPs fuel a genuine thirst for learning. In one literacy lesson where learners were looking at instructional writing, the teacher took "risks" with their learning that generated both independence and collaboration which the learners thrived on. During the skilled process of questioning that followed, students demonstrated a deepening understanding and clarity about the aims of the lesson. One learner for example succinctly asserted that: "If it's not verbal it's writing. Verbal comes out of your mouth".

The assessment system is thorough and detailed. Individual records are regularly updated allowing progress to be carefully monitored. Exercise books show that teachers and LSPs are involved in a continuous dialogue about learning, with "post-its" comments, for example, being used to reinforce this.



Priority is given to the tracking of literacy and numeracy. Classroom displays support directly the language and approaches of the teachers and LSPS and provide clear reference points for students. The carefully structured nature of conversations help to reinforce learners' understanding. For example, in a numeracy lesson, learners were well versed in understanding the meaning of "operations" and relished the challenges of applying different methods such that one learner confidently said "I don't have the actual answer but I know how to find it."

Often learners are appropriately challenged with a judicious use of scaffolding techniques which prevents over reliance on the teacher. In a Spanish lesson, for example, a phonics approach typical of a literacy lesson helped learners progress. This was a feature which a learner was able to reflect upon the following day during the "Catch Up" session recalling his use of "me gusta". Such follow up discussions characterise the way the Courtyard embeds learning over time through appropriate routines and learning structures.

Relationships between learners and staff is outstanding and underpinned by a real sense of trust. As a result, learners are confident to explore and seek out answers to questions thereby moving from being compliant to being resilient.

#### Teaching, learning and Assessment- risks and areas for development

Exercise books were impressive. However, the quality of the outcomes doesn't do justice to some of the process work that preceded the written outcomes. The school should consider how it can better show the full journey a student makes. This would be consistent with the school's overall approach which prioritises the process of learning as much as the product of learning.

There is an increasing number of students with EHCPs. In the light of this increase in numbers and demands, the school may wish to review its internal communication strategies to ensure that staff and external providers continue to receive the most relevant and up to date information about learners' needs.

Learners who benefit from the additional Pupil Premium funding make strong progress. However, the school needs to be more precise in reporting how this money is actually spent.

#### Outcomes strengths

Learners make outstanding progress in their social, emotional and personal development. This is evident in the positive trajectories of the learners' BFL profiles. These are also up to date and regularly reviewed.

Successful reintegration is also a feature of the Courtyard. For example, 100% learners who left the Courtyard last year remain in the schools they transitioned to.

The school baselines learners on arrival using the Progress in Understanding Mathematics Assessment (PUMA) and Progress in Understanding Reading Assessment (PIRA) tests which are then used to monitor progress. This progress against national benchmarks is outstanding. The school also ensures that progress in these standardised tests is triangulated with the work of students working in mainstream environments to ensure robust judgements are being made.

Records show that improvements in learners' attendance after they join The Courtyard are substantial and sustained.



Progress in English and maths as evidenced in observed lessons and exercise books supports the school's internal judgment that progress from different starting points for students at the Courtyard is outstanding.

Outcomes- risks and areas for development

The school uses standardised tests to help track progress. They also triangulate these with the progress of mainstream schools. In the light of Assessment without Levels (AWOL) the school must continue to keep abreast of how its internal assessments compare with those of mainstream schools thereby retaining credibility in its ability to assess what outstanding progress looks like in for learners attending the Courtyard.

Peer to Peer Summary

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Overall	Outstanding	Outstanding
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Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare	Outstanding	Outstanding
Teaching Learning and Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding
Outcomes	Outstanding	Outstanding

Peer to Peer Review Team

The team was made up of:

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