

TBAP Cambridge AP Academy

Peer to Peer Review

December 2017

Area	The Review Team judged* TBAP Cambridge:
Overall	Good (2)
Leadership and Management	Good (2)
Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare	Good (2)
Teaching Learning and Assessment	Good (2)
Outcomes	Good (2)

*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 school judges itself as Good in all areas. It identifies particular strengths in its Leadership and Management. Julie Sadler, the Head of School, outlined the journey that the school has been on over the last 18 months. As previous reports document, the school has faced significant historical challenges relating to Leadership and Management, low staff morale, poor learner behaviour and outcomes and a site that requires significant risk management due in part to its listed status. Ms Sadler described the turbulence of previous years as the school moved from a culture of “nurture” to one of “restraint” before emerging under her and TBAP’s leadership as a school where learners “want to be”.

She talked of implementing more rigorous and robust systems across all areas of the school. Expectations of learners in terms of both progress and behaviour have been significantly raised. Interventions for learners are more focused and there has been a fundamental resetting in terms of the school’s culture. One clear area is the reputation the school has gained in the community, moving from one of concern to one of respect for what it is trying to achieve.

The documents presented on arrival to the review team were extensive and well organised. They included:

- The Scorecard
- The School Development Plan
- Pupil Profiles and tracking data including progress data and information relating to attendance and behaviour
- Case studies
- Destination data
- TBAP documentation including reports to Governors
- Staff and pupil surveys

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

- How embedded and secure are the new leadership and management structures?
- How sustainable are the recent improvements in learner outcomes?
- What does current data tell us about improvements to behaviour and attendance? Are incidences of poor behaviour and low attendance reducing?
- How well does the school track the progress of its learners and how robust is this tracking?
- The school argues that it has established an appropriate climate for learning. How far is this evident and to what extent are improvements to teaching and learning demonstrable and part of a strategic action plan?
- Overall, is there enough secure evidence to suggest that the school has emerged from its turbulent past sufficiently to argue as it now does that it is Good in all areas?

Leadership and Management strengths

The Head of School and senior leaders are being effective in creating a calm and purposeful school where learners feel safe and staff are proud to work. They have established robust systems to assess learners when they arrive and to track their progress in English, Mathematics and Science as well as other non-core subjects.

Experienced and senior staff talk of the journey the school had been on. They praise the TBAP strategies which had challenged a previously weak infrastructure that was based upon containing learners rather than developing their social and academic potential. It is now “somewhere you wanted to work.”

The Head of School has the highest expectations of learners and staff. School leaders recognise how she plans strategically involving them, giving clarity to roles and responsibilities whilst holding them appropriately to account.

Strong leadership of the curriculum is resulting in learners undertaking more relevant programmes of study which is leading to improved outcomes. The numbers of learners gaining at least 1 GCSE or its equivalent was 93% in 2017 compared with 45% in 2016. The prediction for 2018 is 100%.

The profile of the school within the community has risen dramatically as have behaviour, systems and organisational structures. This strong infrastructure is having an increasing impact in terms of learner behaviour and outcomes.

Relationships between staff and learners in the school are impressive and help create an atmosphere of trust. School leaders’ strong understanding of learners’ emotional wellbeing means that learners are making greater progress in terms of attendance and progress that they have in previous schools.

There is strong leadership to ensure that learners are well prepared for the next stage of their education. NEET figures are low and retention rates post 16 show that effective transition arrangements are in place for learners.

There is a strong CPD programme including Behaviour Management, Prevent, Safeguarding, Pupil Asset, Assessment and DIRT marking which staff commented upon positively.

The new line management structures build on progress made last year and these are helpfully complemented by TBAP wide structures and expectations.

In terms of Teaching and Learning, there are comprehensive planning and evaluation cycles with termly work scrutiny. The outcomes are then linked to CPD sessions. There’s a new teaching and learning newsletter highlighting best practice. Planning is regarded as a priority and this was much in evidence. A range of external professionals have triangulated judgements about teaching and learning and joint observations confirm that the school judges teaching and learning accurately.

Leadership and Management risks and areas for development

The Keele Teacher Survey credits the school for improvements in Leadership and Management and within TBAP they are ranked third highest. However, scores relating to Pupils, School Quality and Ethos and significantly Teaching and Learning are low relative to both the Keele indices and TBAP itself. This suggests that the school's own strong self-assessment of Leadership and Management may be over generous and that the improvements made within Leadership and Management are not yet be as securely embedded as the school believes. Whilst the team conducting the Peer review were confident that the school has made significant improvements over time and recognised that it was on a positive trajectory we felt it necessary to express some caution over the strength of the "Good" judgement with which it nonetheless agrees.

Furthermore, the team has to consider the capacity the current leadership within the school has to sustain the improvements it has made, particularly with regards to Teaching and Learning and Outcomes. This is made more acute by the fact that the current Head of School, Ms Sadler, will be leaving in January 2018. After due consideration it was concluded that as a result of the strong distributive leadership within the school particularly in terms of the senior leaders enough capacity remains to drive on school improvement. Further confidence in drawing this conclusion comes from the fact that strong interim arrangements are already in place as part of TBAP's Executive Regional leadership.

Therefore, it is recommended that leaders ensure:

- that the clear procedures currently in place to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are more systematically embedded through precise action planning
- that they develop a clearer understanding about what strategies have worked effectively to move them to Good and what strategies will now be appropriate to secure and sustain a judgement of Good

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare strengths

This area of the school is well led. The commitment of senior colleagues was widely recognised and appreciated resulting in a noticeable level of confidence and trust. Relationships between staff and learners are strong. The school provides many opportunities for learners to improve their social and communication skills. For example, the team saw staff interacting in positive and supportive ways at lunchtime whilst the Christmas dinner reflected the embedded care and respect that is shared by staff and learners. As a result of this, learners are better prepared for life after school.

Leaders closely monitor the progress, behaviour and welfare of pupils including when they are in Alternative Provision such as the college. The school keeps detailed support plans to address individual needs and works effectively with external agencies, including health professionals and social services.

The challenging behaviour associated with some learners' complex needs is well managed by staff who have benefited from an effective and extensive training programme. This training combined with the caring and nurturing ethos of the school, is supporting staff to manage learners' behaviour well, using a range of de-escalation techniques. As a result, the number of negative points and fixed-term exclusions has declined significantly whilst positive points have increased.

While learners' attendance is below the national average, it is improving because leaders have put in place a range of measures to support regular attendance. This includes collecting a number of learners to ensure they arrive in school promptly. Furthermore, case studies show that the attendance of a significant number of learners is improving compared to their attendance at their previous mainstream school.

The school is benefiting from carefully planned therapy sessions introduced last September. This includes new learners receiving therapy inductions and assessments. Whilst there has been some resistance from learners who have been at the school the longest, new learners talk very positively of the intervention and there is evidence that the former group of learners are beginning to engage. The outcomes of the assessments have been shared with colleagues and currently in addition to some ad hoc meetings there are 8 learners receiving regular therapeutic care. The care is linked to music therapy and whilst there is anecdotal evidence that this is impacting upon the wellbeing of learners, the second round of testing due to take place in January will, it is hoped, provide concrete evidence of this.

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders make sure staff are trained and understand their duty to keep pupils safe and report any concerns. Tracking systems are effective. Learners said "there isn't any bullying" and that staff listen to learners concerns and act promptly.

Learner attitudes as recorded in PASS are generally positive and the school maintains a comprehensive log of behaviour incidents through SIMs.

Parents have a very positive view of the school. A team member was told by a parent that “I can’t fault anything about the school” it has “excellent communication” and her daughter “now looks forward to coming to school”. Parental surveys reported the following:

- 94% think the school is Good or Outstanding overall
- 100% believe teaching is Good or Outstanding
- 100% believe induction is Good or Outstanding
- 93% believe communication is Good or Outstanding
- 100% believe the way learners are kept safe is Good or Outstanding

Few instances of poor behaviour were observed, but where they were they were appropriately managed. Similarly, inappropriate use of language was systematically challenged.

Learners benefit from a range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities including football, cooking, Art, go-karting, swimming whilst KS3 pupils have a residential trip planned in the New Year.

SMSC was most evident in the way the aspirational ethos of TBAP is reflected across the school. On line tweets and photographs relate many success stories, whilst displays around the schools reveal the rich diversity of opportunities for pupils to demonstrate success. The TBAP on-line Art calendar, for example, showed the pride learners take in being part of this school.

In terms of fundamental British values, this appears within the PSHE curriculum and the need to respect the rights and values of others was a feature of displays across the school.

The school is on a positive trajectory. Learners and staff were united in saying that improvements have been significant particularly in terms of the management of behaviour and attendance.

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare risks and areas for development

Whilst pupil attitudes are recorded in PASS the data is yet to be fully analysed and acted upon. Similarly, whilst the school maintains a comprehensive log of behaviour incidents through SIMs it is yet to identify trends over time. As a result, the school is less well equipped to understand the impact of different behaviour strategies.

The school uses a variety of interventions to support learners. Regular briefings allow this information to be shared. However, these are not always recorded systematically running the risk that interventions are not evaluated in terms of their impact thereby preventing the school again from determining which strategies are most successful.

The school recognises that it manages incidents of poor behaviour well. However, it acknowledges that more needs to be done in ensuring consistency across the school.

The positive trajectory and the journey the school is on is well evidenced. However, it has been a relatively steep process and the school will need to refine how it evaluates its actions to date to ensure that the actions it takes going forward have the greatest impact and secure a consistently stable and enduringly positive environment.

Teaching, learning and Assessment-strengths

The leadership of teaching and learning is strong and ambitious, as evidenced by the school's development plan. The Director of Learning brings notable enthusiasm and commitment to the task. In addition to established systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are strategies to engage staff, as evidenced in the school's Teaching and Learning Bulletin. This includes sections on marking, socratic questioning, Pupil Asset and numeracy.

Lesson observations were well planned and teachers demonstrated strong subject knowledge. Joint lesson observations with the senior leader for teaching and learning indicated that the school judges this accurately.

When learners arrive, a comprehensive induction takes place to identify gaps in their learning. This allows the school to identify starting points for learners against which they can then measure progress. A range of base lining activities inform this process.

The school tracks progress comprehensively and effectively over time using an internal system and TBAP's Pupil Asset system. Both are rigorous and the transition planning for moving entirely to Pupil Asset has been carefully thought through.

The curriculum has been extensively evaluated and improved. The core offer is now well established and more bespoke pathways are available to learners which are appropriate to their needs. The strong transition arrangements with the local college, for example, ensure that these more individualised pathways are successful. Drop-out rates for Alternative Provision at college are much reduced.

The curriculum is well monitored and there is evidence that when appropriate, changes are made. This is evidenced currently at KS3 where the need to improve engagement among a new set of learners has resulted in a review of the curriculum.

In Y11 English, strong subject knowledge and careful planning result in good progress. Learners were kept on task and through the judicious use of questioning and were able to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Charles Dickens' Christmas Carol.

In a food lesson, relationships with learners were excellent, who were also polite and respectful. The quality of feedback was judged as a strength, with learners being given opportunities to test their hypotheses. In a maths lesson there was evidence that the Learning Support Professional and teacher were working together well to support learning.

In Art, there was a strong evidence of teachers building resilience in their learners. One learner commenting to herself said, "Deep breath and start again" which she did with success.

The team saw over 20 books from a range of subjects and across all Key Stages. It was evident that learners took pride in their work. There were examples of teachers giving detailed feedback that included constructive advice about how to improve the quality of student work. Peer assessment and the use of "green pen" marking showed a consistent application of the school's marking policy which was supported by the regular two week review of work with accompanying targets for learners. The latter, with its focus upon

literacy, is clearly successful and when allied to evidence of good planning is why there was robust evidence of learner progress.

Learners were also given opportunities to respond to feedback, an example of which was in Art where a student reflected in terms of how to improve a picture: ***“I could add brighter colours and add the word ‘pow’”***. Having done so successfully he then added later ***“Now I have added the word ‘pow’ and the black out line and it looks awesome because the word stands out like a magazine”***.

Teaching, learning and Assessment- risks and areas for development

There is a strong system in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of Teaching and Learning, which, in turn, is supported by a variety of improvement strategies across the school. However, the team did not feel that these strategies were as fully embedded as the school does. This is not, however, to decry the energy and commitment that is much in evidence in this area of the school.

The school tracks pupil progress well. However, by measuring progress exclusively against mainstream expectations, not enough emphasis is paid to progress relative to individual starting points and the gaps in learning that learners inevitably have. As a consequence internally published data risks presenting progress more negatively than it actually is. Also, the school needs a more comprehensive overview that analyses cohorts of learners by group, such as those who are disadvantaged.

Literacy and numeracy are school priorities but with regards to a number of related initiatives it is too early to judge how much impact they are having. Given the crucial role this plays in the development of learning, until they are more embedded judgements regarding the quality of Teaching and Learning are unlikely to be securely good.

Whilst work sampling showed a number of positive features, there was less evidence that learners were being given the opportunities to develop their extended writing skills and thereby become resilient writers. This is a key area to develop.

LSPs welcomed the commitment to Teaching, Learning and Assessment. They identified there were opportunities for them to have greater impact if they were made more aware of the specific needs of learners. This in turn highlights the necessity to ensure that interventions are more widely planned, shared and tracked. Systems are in place but they are relatively new and therefore the extent of their impact is hard to judge.

For reasons beyond its control, the school has received very little pupil premium money. Now however, it is receiving more money. There is a plan for its use but this needs to be more tightly focused and Governors need to be more aware of the impact it is having.

The comprehensive range of strategies that are linked to teaching and learning needs a correspondingly focused action plan that looks carefully at systematic and sustained impact.

Outcomes strengths

Pupils complete Year 11 having achieved accredited qualifications and GCSEs in a range of subjects, which include English, Mathematics and Science. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for their future education, training or employment. Last year, 93% of learners who left the school achieved at least one GCSE qualification or its equivalent; this year it is predicted to be 100%.

There is an improving trend of learners gaining GCSEs in English and Maths, making good progress from their starting points in these subjects.

Learners' attainment on entry is different for each student. Typically, it is below average in English and Maths because of the gaps learners have in their learning due to previously erratic attendance patterns. However, carefully personalised learning plans and realistically ambitious targets mean that learners' progress can be evidenced.

Almost all learners at the end of Year 11 secured places in education, employment and training showing that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The impressive Work Skills programme benefits from high quality mentoring and relationships. Learners are given appropriate opportunities to produce CVs for example enabling them to move on effectively in their education.

Outcomes- risks and areas for development

Ensure that progress of all learners is effectively tracked and sustained, taking into account their starting points and the gaps in their learning.

Ensure that the positive trend of improvement falls more into line with TBAP's targets.

Peer to Peer Summary

Area	The School judged themselves:	The Challenge Team:
Overall	Good	Agreed
Leadership and Management	Good	Agreed
Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare	Good	Agreed
Teaching Learning and Assessment	Good	Agreed
Outcomes	Good	Agreed

The team agreed with the school’s own self-assessment. However, in all areas the team felt the judgements to be less secure than the school judged. It was recognised that the school was on a positive trajectory and had made significant progress. However, these improvements need to be more fully embedded if the overall Good judgement is to be a secure one.

In particular, the school needs to:

- Ensure an effective transition in terms of the new leadership structure
- Ensure that there is adequate capacity and capability within the leadership of the school to build on and embed to progress made to date across all areas of the school, including learner outcomes

Peer to Peer Review Team

The Team was made up of:

Tim Long (Lead)

Krishna Purbhoo (Executive Headteacher, TBAP West)

Nick Morley (Head of School, Octavia AP Academy)

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