



## **External Pupil Premium Review**

**School – The Kimberley School**

**Reviewer – Richard Sutton**

**Date of Review: 31 January 2020**

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Headteacher                          | Andrew George                             |
| Total number of pupils in the school | 1291 (IDSR November 2019). 1153 Y7-Y11.   |
| Percent of PP eligible pupils        | 18% (IDSR November 2019 – below average). |
| Total funding 2018/19 and 2019/20    | 2018/19: £202, 647. 2019/20: £214,146     |

### **Summary Report**

#### **Leadership and management**

- The Kimberley School has been led through a period of significant improvement in recent years. Based on evidence from this review, the school is now a calm, purposeful learning environment. Pupils appreciate the good quality provision which they receive and the large majority work hard, including those who are disadvantaged. Teachers visited during this review had good subject and examination specification knowledge and also strong pedagogical skills. Pupils typically produce a great deal of good quality work in their books, including disadvantaged pupils.
- A crucially important dimension of the improvement journey has been the deliberate creation of a culture of positive discrimination towards disadvantaged pupils. This is now embedded in the school and it is the single most important reason why disadvantaged pupils are catching up quickly with their peers. Positive discrimination is threaded through all aspects of the school's work. This ranges from systems and structures which prioritise support for disadvantaged pupils through to practical classroom strategies which increasingly



ensure that no disadvantaged pupil is left behind. Many of the strategies which this very experienced reviewer often recommends to schools are fully in place at the Kimberley school.

- The pupil premium strategy is well-thought through. However, it could be sharper if measurable targets were aligned to each objective. End of year targets and milestone targets, across the year, would further add to the rigour which is necessary regarding leaders' and governors' ability to robustly and objectively evaluate which approaches are effective as well as any which require improvement. In addition, it is suggested that the school uses the DFE recommended template for the strategy and, importantly, allocates expenditure to each of the objectives in the plan.
- This approach would support governors to more rigorously hold school leaders to account for the impact of the additional funding. At present, governors do not have any benchmarks against which to hold leaders to account. As a result, the governing body is not as well informed as it could be. However, governors plan to appoint a PP governor and this is a positive move.
- Governors do receive appropriate information relating to the achievement, behaviour and attendance of disadvantaged pupils. However, as we discussed, this could be streamlined so that all key information is in one place, perhaps as an annex to the regular headteacher reports. It is important to ensure that PP reports to governors are focused on the tangible impact of the objectives which are funded by the additional grant. This point, as well as the recommendation to include targets in the strategy plan, is linked to the evaluations made by Ofsted at the last inspection regarding reporting to governors.
- The 'closing the gap' group is a good approach which ensures that key disadvantaged pupils who are underachieving are kept under close review. Membership of the group is well coordinated to ensure that all aspects of provision for individual pupils can be evaluated and linked. The work of the group could be further enhanced by introducing pupil premium monitoring activities within the school monitoring and evaluation calendar. These could be scheduled prior to a 'closing the gap' meeting and any relevant findings from monitoring could be incorporated into the group's agenda. This would further ensure that pupil premium provision and impact is under regular scrutiny.
- Leaders have rightly identified that many disadvantaged pupils have weaker literacy skills than others. As a result, there are various interventions in place to support improvements in this area. For example, learning mentors support pupils in Year's 8 to 11 and the deputy learning support leader coordinates a team who support Year 7 pupils. As a relatively high proportion of the cost of learning mentors is funded from the pupil



premium grant, leaders should develop a robust approach to evaluating the impact of learning mentors. At present, this is not done with the rigour required.

- Leaders may wish to consider how the work they are doing to develop the curriculum could include the explicit inclusion of vocabulary development across subjects. This would be highly appropriate in the ongoing work to close gaps, particularly as disadvantaged pupils nationally typically have a much weaker vocabulary than their peers. The school has begun work on this, but leaders acknowledge that it is not yet embedded.
- Leaders are working hard to close the gap between high ability disadvantaged pupils and others of similar ability. We discussed one strategy, which is summarised in the relevant recommendation, below. In addition to trailing the suggested approach to curriculum planning and delivery, the Sutton Trust has identified metacognition strategies as a cost-effective approach to closing gaps.
- The core subject leaders who met the reviewer communicated a clear and consistent commitment to the culture of positive discrimination. They described various approaches which they adopt to support disadvantaged pupils but were less convincing regarding the impact of their actions. Interestingly, however, the pupil premium leader mentioned that there were some actions which the subject leaders take to support disadvantaged pupils that they failed to mention. The leader said that this is because many approaches are so embedded that they are taken for granted. Some these were seen in lessons, including strategic seating plans and targeted questioning and support for disadvantaged pupils. This is further evidence of the culture which exists regarding disadvantaged pupils.
- One of the deputy headteachers has relatively recently changed her areas of responsibility. She is now leading all aspects of pastoral provision. A thorough review of procedures has resulted in a clear development plan which has been produced. This should better ensure clarity around lines of accountability, including for attendance. The plans place an appropriate focus on prioritising support for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders are succeeding in improving the life chances of disadvantaged pupils. This success stretches beyond examination success and is well focused on developing cultural capital and pupil's wider personal development. The recommendations in this report are offered very much as a 'menu' of options which leaders could adopt. Several of the recommendations represent some of the marginal gains which could further enhance the very good work the school is doing on behalf of disadvantaged pupils.



### **Outcomes, Teaching and Learning**

- Year 11 disadvantaged pupils attained standards that were a strong improvement on the previous year. However, the cohort joined the school with higher prior attainment. The progress made by this cohort was around one-third of a grade below average, as it was in 2018. Nevertheless, this was better than disadvantaged pupils nationally. Leaders are aware that the aim is to achieve rates of progress which are at least similar to that of others nationally.
- Many disadvantaged pupils who are currently in the school are making strong progress in many subjects. All year groups are now benefitting from the impact of the multiple strategies that have been implemented over the past few years. Work in the books of disadvantaged pupils that was sampled showed little difference compared to the books of pupils with similar ability. The large majority of books contained a high quantity of work, well presented and completed in appropriate depth.
- All the lessons that were briefly visited confirmed the key points that leaders spoke about at the start of the day. There were consistent approaches in all the lessons to prioritising the support for disadvantaged pupils. This ensured that pupils remained focused and were making strong progress, most of the time. All the teachers knew who the disadvantaged pupils were in their respective classes. Some were able to identify the pupils without referring to their seating plans.
- All of the teachers visited demonstrated very strong subject and examination specification knowledge. For example, in an English lesson the teacher skillfully guided pupils to understand new vocabulary and apply this understanding in context. The teacher also ensured that pupils were clear about how to improve in relation to the examination mark scheme.
- The books in each of the lessons visited suggested that the short visits were indicative of wider typicality. Research shows that good quality teaching has a proportionally higher impact on disadvantaged pupils than others. This triangulates with the work in the books of disadvantaged pupils, school tracking data and the focus leaders have given to staff development.
- In relation to comments elsewhere in this report about literacy, leaders may wish to think about the reading demands placed on pupils of some of the handouts / worksheets that were seen during the lesson visits. Although only a very small number of pupils were asked to explain what certain phrases and sentences meant in some work sheets / handouts, it was evident that some did not have a strong enough vocabulary to properly



access the texts. It is acknowledged that this is only a tiny sample, however leaders may wish to explore this further.

- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is lower than others. Leaders said that most teachers do have strategies to help pupils catch up missed work or key concepts. However, they also said that this is inconsistent. It is suggested that leaders should ensure greater consistency in this regard as absence and missed work is a significant reason why disadvantaged pupils underachieve nationally.
- We discussed the six-lesson challenge approach. This may be useful for certain pupils / teachers. The approach focusses on the small steps of progress that a pupil needs to make in order to catch up. It requires teachers to identify a small number of disadvantaged pupils who are underachieving and identify the precise subject specific reasons why each pupil is underperforming. Teachers are asked to reflect on what they will do differently to address the underperformance. Finally, teachers are asked to state what the impact will be in the pupils' book at the end of the challenge period. If leaders adopt this, they are encouraged to build in checks at the mid-point and summatively. The checks could be conducted by relevant subject leaders.

### **Personal Development, Behaviour and Attendance**

- As mentioned earlier, the deputy headteacher has reviewed pastoral provision and put in place effective plans for further improvement. More robust accountability has been built into these plans at all levels.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is a significant cause for concern. At the time of this review the persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils was reported as 37.5% and attendance was 89.9%. Leaders are well aware of the pressing need to improve matters and they have better data systems than previously to help them quickly identify priorities.
- Procedures for checking and improving attendance are sound and typically reflect what is seen in most schools. However, given the recent changes, the time is now right for leaders to evaluate which strategies have been the most and least effective in the past. In addition, it is recommended that leaders place a higher priority on rewarding improved attendance. In part, this is because many disadvantaged pupils will never reach the school's target, but all can improve. Leaders are encouraged to make this approach high profile, including sending congratulatory letters to parents. Further suggestions for improving the attendance of disadvantaged were discussed and these are summarised, below.



- The behaviour of disadvantaged pupils is improving, though it is not as good as other pupils proportionally. Leaders have good analysis in place which tells them about any patterns or trends. They are, therefore, able to target resources and preventative actions where they are most needed. During the lesson visits no poor behaviour was observed.
- Pupils in all of the classes visited were predominantly working hard and trying their best, including disadvantaged pupils. Most pupils were demonstrating good attitudes to learning and, in mathematics, a good level of resilience and determination to succeed.
- The two groups of pupils who met the reviewer spoke positively about school life. It was evident that pupils appreciate the good quality of education which they receive. One pupil said, "teachers are always on hand if we need anything".
- Both groups of pupils were not fully aware of the various positions of responsibility which are available to them. Leaders could do more to ensure that pupils know what is available.
- Pupils were asked about their involvement in extra-curricular activities. Interestingly, more of the disadvantaged group said that they usually attend at least one club. Of course, this was only a small sample, but leaders are encouraged to monitor uptake. In particular, they could check on any disproportionality between disadvantaged pupils and others, as extra-curricular provision can provide pupils with valuable opportunities which they may not otherwise have access to. This is also an important aspect of pupil's personal development.

### **Recommendations**

The following points are offered as advice to further improve provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. They are not a definitive list of actions which the school should take. More, they are actions which school leaders could consider after reflecting on this review.

#### Leadership and management

- Use the DFE recommended template to outline the pupil premium strategy. Apply the recommended aspects of good practice which were suggested in the pre review planning (see above).
- Include measurable targets for each objective in the strategy. Include end of year targets and end of term, milestone targets.



- Include pupil premium focused quality assurance activities within the whole school monitoring and evaluation cycle.
- Ensure that there is a consistent approach across subjects to helping disadvantaged pupils to catch up any missed key concepts due to higher absence rates than others.
- Develop the role of 'PP governor' and ensure that school visits are appropriately focused on the progress that is been made towards achieving the suggested targets in the PP strategy plan.
- Refine how PP reports are presented to governors so that all key information is in one report. This could be an annex to the headteacher reports.
- Develop a more robust approach to evaluating the impact of the learning mentors. This could be through targets which are set for pupils in terms of the small steps of progress that are required.

#### Teaching and learning

- Consider the six-lesson challenge approach for particular pupils and / or teachers.
- Explore 'talk for writing' to further develop literacy skills. Also consider how developing strategies to improve pupil's oracy could result in improved written communication for pupils.
- Continue to work on strategies to improve outcomes for the most able disadvantaged pupils. Consider trailing an approach which involves engaging one or two of the school's most effective departments as follows:
  - reviewing a scheme of learning which will be taught in the coming months,
  - evaluating the end points of the scheme and ensuring that they are appropriately differentiated for high ability pupils,
  - deliberately planning opportunities for high ability pupils to develop independence through the development of metacognition skills,
  - adapting the sequence of lessons within the scheme so that they are aligned to the revised end points,
  - requiring the selected departments to evaluate the impact on closing the gap between high ability disadvantaged pupils and others of similar ability.
- Consider how the intent and implementation of the curriculum could further develop cultural capital by including explicitly planned and logically sequenced opportunities for pupils to develop vocabulary, including the application of new vocabulary in different contexts.



Personal development, behaviour and attendance

- Make pupils more aware of positions of responsibility which they can take on. Monitor any disproportionality between disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Monitor any disproportionality between disadvantaged pupils and others with respect to involvement in extra-curricular activities.
- Improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and reduce persistent absence, by:
  - robustly evaluating which strategies have been effective and which have not,
  - checking the post codes of pupils who have low attendance to establish if there any issues with transport so that targeted actions can be taken,
  - ensuring that there is a logical approach to prioritising which pupils will receive support, perhaps beginning with those who are only a little below 90%,
  - including milestone targets for improving the attendance of disadvantaged pupils in the pupil premium strategy,
  - rewarding pupils who improve their attendance through high profile assemblies, for example. This could be the 30/40 most improved pupils each month, 50% of whom could be disadvantaged,
  - sending positive letters to the parents of pupils who improve their attendance over a relatively sustained period of time.

Richard Sutton