

7-8 November 2018

Foci for the Peer Review:

The team was asked to focus on the following areas:

- Progress of Post 16 Students
- Progress of Disadvantaged Students
- Quality of Teaching and Learning and Implementation of the Knowledge Curriculum
- Standards of Behaviour, Ethos
- Safeguarding
- Middle Leaders, (boys and Literacy).

Post 16

- Students report that they feel safe and know how to stay safe, they are given information about local incidents by email, they also have a number of assemblies about safety including; alcohol, sexual harassment and online safety.
- Students are tolerant and accept differences, they are clear that the school is inclusive; there is an active LGBT society across the key stages.
- Students say that they feel well supported with their mental health, one student expressed that she 'couldn't have got through the year without the support of the school staff.'
- Students report that teachers and staff are approachable and friendly.
- Some students, although not all, were able to explain what their target grades were and the next steps they needed to take to reach them.
- During lesson observations teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge, developed positive relationships with students and generally supported students well. In the best lessons teachers challenged students, adapted tasks to the learners needs and used feedback to support learning.
- Leaders have recently implemented a number of new initiatives including the VESPA programme, a focused subject review, and more curriculum time; it is too early to judge the impact of these initiatives.
- Leaders are able to articulate some of the areas for development, although not all of those were identified at the last peer review, and are able to explain how they are addressing those areas.
- Leaders use tracking data to identify students who are underachieving and focus support on these students, including mentoring and the use of school improvement plans (SIPs), although evidence of impact is limited.
- Leaders, including the senior leader new to post, have developed some clear actions to address a number of the issues for concern at Post 16.
- Leader can effectively articulate the progress and attainment of Post 16 students and are able to refer to historic data. For example they can explain how boys historic underachievement has changed to boys outperforming girls, although they accept that this may be due to girls doing less well.
- Leaders are clear about and have a plan to further focus on improving outcomes by reviewing the quality of teaching. However there is a mismatch between outcomes and the leaders' judgement of the quality of teaching.

Areas for Improvement

- Quality of teaching and course rigour remains a priority. Some inconsistencies in teaching continue and whilst there are pockets of excellent practice, some teaching does not challenge students across the ability spectrum.
- Leaders should routinely identify and track disadvantaged students in the sixth form. A keener focus on these students should improve outcomes.

- Leaders should more closely monitor the attendance and punctuality of students and groups of students. Although attendance has improved, and some initiatives have begun to have impact a more focussed and rigours approached to this area of sixth form could improve attendance
- Ensure compliance with student programmes e.g. enrichment, work experience which complements student ambitions and careers advisory work.

Disadvantaged Students

- The disadvantaged group of students is not homogenous at BGLC. Approximately 39% of the group is from an extremely deprived ward in Leicester city. This group requires quite different forms of support and intervention from the remainder of the group.
- External barriers are being successfully tackled by the support team. They have raised the attendance of disadvantaged students over the last three years. However, the attainment gap is still large, so attention must turn to in-school barriers to learning.
- There is a very clear focus on narrowing the performance gap at strategy level. It is a central feature of Performance Management. It is also a feature of all documentation and senior leaders are clear about the imperative to narrow gaps. However, leaders and staff see the barriers as being external to the school rather than reflecting on changes that could be made to classroom teaching to bring about stronger performance.
- Outcomes data would suggest that the strategy for tackling the disadvantage gap may not be operationalised in every lesson.
- Feedback from students - All the students were in agreement that where they felt that they liked their teacher and their teacher liked them, behaviour was good – they said, ‘It’s all about the teachers.’
- Students wished there was a place where they could work independently.

Areas for Improvement

- Ensure the leadership strategy for disadvantaged students is being implemented in the classroom by:
 - clearly articulating expectations and ensuring senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers are taking responsibility for the progress of disadvantaged students
 - making disadvantage students’ learning a focus for lesson observations
 - greater challenge where the policy is not being implemented
 - ensuring ‘Chase Challenge Check’ is implemented, specifically to disadvantaged students – focussing on work rather than behaviour, e.g. students to complete classroom work in line with target grade
 - applying a KS2 performance levy to disadvantaged students’ performance, so that they have more of a chance of ‘landing’ in sets where poor behaviour is less likely
 - checking implementation through lesson observation and student voice.

Teaching and the Knowledge Curriculum

- Throughout the two days 83 lessons were observed; these included scrutiny of work and discussions with students and teachers.
- The school has a clear vision about the expected quality of teaching and learning in the school, based on the most current research, good practice and particular needs of their learners. Leaders strive to make these expectations as transparent as possible and deliver this through a range of policy, CPD and a QA system. This clarity has led to clear routines in lessons, especially with the introduction of the ‘do now’ activities, which students attempt on entry into the room. In the best lessons, the expectations of good modelling, scaffolding and questioning are also apparent and teachers skilfully deliver these to ensure rapid progress across all groups of students. In the best lessons, model answers were carefully considered against success criteria and scaffolding was gradually reduced to allow students independence. However, the use of these strategies was

not consistent, which led to some students being unable to articulate how to be successful, or fully understand what was required of them.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and in the best lessons, the curriculum is delivered with expertise, enthusiasm and engagement. Students are keen to do well and are in the majority positive about their lessons and teachers. They take pride in their work and conduct themselves well.
- The new knowledge curriculum has been carefully implemented and middle leaders are supportive of the process and its positive impact on students' progress. Schemes of learning have been designed to support progression towards the now more demanding GCSEs in place. Students reported that they found the work neither too easy or too hard and felt generally supported by their teachers.
- Knowledge organisers have supported the new curriculum and most students welcomed the introduction of them. Year 11, particularly, found them useful for revision and some teachers were consistently using them for retrieval practice. Year 11 students felt it was easy to not complete the homework assigned to the knowledge organisers and for this to go unnoticed. Some students felt knowledge organisers could be useful in lessons to support learning, though the majority used them mainly at home.
- Leaders are aware of the need to refocus on STAR time and student response to marking. In the best lessons, students had attempted work, successfully self-assessed, attempted to improve their work and then given teacher feedback. They then improved their work again. This led to rapid progress amongst these students, many of whom were exceeding target grades. However, there was inconsistency across the school and within subjects, where, at times, assessments had not been completed or feedback not been targeted. In some cases, teacher feedback was clear, but students had not acted upon this and progress was limited. This was reflected in student voice. Students felt that when they had the opportunity to respond, they felt good about their progress, but this did not consistently happen.
- In good lessons, teachers know their students and use BRAG sheets to identify and address individual needs. Teachers' questioning targets various groups of students, deepening their understanding and ensures all groups are making progress. Verbal feedback is given as teachers support learning during lessons and in the best lessons, disadvantaged and SEN students are a primary focus of this feedback. In some cases, these groups are not included in teacher questioning and feedback and some students felt it was very easy to go unnoticed by a teacher if you were quiet and 'just got on with it'.
- The quality assurance calendar is monitored by SLT and Faculty Leaders and has a prescribed amount of drop ins and work scrutiny which are timetabled by the faculty leaders. SLT support in this process and findings are discussed with SLT links and then fed back to departments and individuals. Faculty leaders are instrumental in the process of implementing actions to support development of teachers who may have areas for improvement as a result of this.
- The professional development of staff is comprehensive and supports staff at every career stage, enabling personalised choices depending on interests or aspirations. CPD offers support for whole school priorities and also enables cross curricular opportunities. Staff appreciate these opportunities and feel valued and supported by the SLT.

Areas for Improvement

- Ensure consistency of marking and feedback across the school. Teachers' marking should be acted upon by all students to improve progress. Include and explore models of excellence so students can see what they are aspiring to achieve. Consider how students are equipped to peer and self-assess successfully.
- Consider the use of knowledge organisers and how they can not only underpin learning, but also how they can better support the cultural capital for disadvantaged students and literacy. Be clear to staff and students about their use and purpose in lessons to support leaders research on cognitive load theory, but also work in the classrooms.

- Focus on challenge for all students and scaffolding to help all achieve. Implement Chase Challenge Check during lesson times so that high expectations of work and behaviour have immediate effect, especially for boys and therefore rapid progress can be made and low-level disruption minimised
- Be more prescriptive in the QA process to make sure staff are being vigorous in their pursuit of challenge and progress for all students.

Standards of Behaviour and Ethos

- Students are confident learners, they take pride in their work, and their appearance. Students are proud of their school.
- The campus is an orderly environment and litter is rare. Students conduct themselves well throughout the day, including at lunch times and other unstructured times.
- In KS3 tutor time observed standards of behaviour are well established, 'coats off, bags on floor', and students were attentive.
- In tutor time in KS4 standards of behaviour were not as strong. In some of the KS4 sessions tutors were not challenging low standards and students were not engaged in the activities.
- In KS5 standards were inconsistent. Of the five one to one sessions scheduled for Y12 only one was seen to take place.
- In lessons standards are generally high. In most lessons teachers have high expectations. In a minority of lessons low level off-task behaviour is not addressed or challenged by the teacher
- Standards at the start of the day are inconsistent. The ethos feels different across the buildings. In the Brookvale building presence of staff encourages students to move quickly to lessons. In the Groby building, low staff presence on the corridors and at the front door means students are not challenged to remove headphones and put phones away.
- There is a system in place to address lateness to school. Staff on the gate issue 'pink slips' which triggers a break time detention. Systems are in place to ensure students complete their late detention.
- Pockets of lateness to lessons were seen across the two days, and on some occasions this goes unchallenged.
- A tutor programme consisting of: programmes of activities and an effective tutoring handbook is in place for tutors to follow. All staff have a performance management target around the quality of tutor time, which will be reviewed mid-cycle. Highly effective tutors have been identified to act as a coach for tutors that need support and guidance identified at the mid cycle review stage.
- KS3 students speak positively about tutor time, they enjoy the activities that are completed during the week. From the team's observation of tutor time the KS3 tutor programme was being followed and students were attentive, though passive. In the observations of KS4 no activities were seen.

Areas for Improvement

- Establish tighter quality assurance systems across all key stages to ensure that tutor time is purposeful, and standards are high.
- Identify tutors that need further guidance then support and pair with highly effective tutors
- Increase staff presence at the start of the day in the Groby building to ensure high standards

Safeguarding

- The school has completed an audit of safeguarding which was conducted by an external agency. The resulting action plan has been further improved and added to by the senior leader and show a clear plan for further improvement and action.
- Safeguarding of the site was discussed and the leader is aware that the site is not fully secure, plans are in place to address this, although a written risk assessment would go some way to address this issue.

- The leader reported that parental and student feedback are very positive about students feeling safe 98%. There is little difference between year groups.
- The school use Zumos, an online, system to support mental health.
- Bullying is tracked and recorded centrally. There is a dedicated anti-bullying coordinator who works with both the perpetrators and victims. Last year there were a total of 33 incidents of bullying of which nine were racist and two homophobic.
- The school has made a concerted effort to make safeguarding visible to all. They have raised the profile with staff, through training, and students including dedicated safeguarding assemblies which are targeted at different year groups. They have ensured that relevant staff including, Heads of Year are trained as DSLs.
- The leader was able to articulate a comprehensive understanding of their role and the responsibilities; he is knowledgeable about its contribution to whole school development
- Appropriate leaders are safer recruitment trained and the school interview process includes a separate safeguarding interview.
- The school almost wholly accept the local authority safeguarding policy and have liaised with local police and social care to see if there are local concerns, which there are not.
- Attendance has improved for SEND from two years ago from 88% to 93% and for disadvantaged students over the same time period from 89.3% to 93.71. The leader is clear that this is due to the new initiatives.
- Alternative Provision: there are currently two students out on alternative provision – one is full time the other is four days a week. Both students are tracked and monitored for their attendance and progress – visits have been made to the provision including one joint visit including the SENDCo as the student is SEND.
- The leader was able to provide evidence of the impact of the strategies that have been put into place; more detailed case studies would provide a greater insight into the impact of the initiatives.
- Safeguarding arrangements for reporting, responding to and tracking seem to be secure although not all evidence was seen due to time constraints. There are currently 146 safeguarding files, with two students on CP plans and 4 students on CIN plans. The school has made one referral to PREVENT.

Single Central Record

- The single central record is currently split into the two different schools and it is not easily filtered with different column headings for each.
- Different groups of staff are entered by different staff and therefore a more coherent overview by one person would be beneficial, it would also be useful for another member of senior staff/governor to QA the SCR.

Areas for Improvement

- Ensure the safeguarding action plan is followed and actions are embedded.
- Check the arrangements for PSHCE education for those on Alternative Provision.
- Continue to review and update the plans for site security including producing a risk assessment.
- Provide case studies of students to show the impact of the structure and procedures that are in place.
- Explicitly demonstrate the links between initiatives and the improvement of attendance including for groups.
- Address the following minor admin errors in the SCR; The person responsible for checking the DBS checked their own someone else needs to do this; change column headings from CRB to DBS; complete the blanks for the governor and record maternity leave.

Middle Leaders

- The Heads of Faculty (HoF) appreciate and respect the well-established senior leaders' support and guidance in leading their faculties. They also value the consistent visibility of the senior team around the campus at break and lunch time.

- HoFs appreciate that the change management of the merger of the two organisations has been well led. They believe the sound leadership reduced any negative impact to the students' learning to a minimum and maximised the advantages of bringing the two organisations together.
- The HoFs have worked hard to implement the recent changes to the examination courses, and also implemented resultant changes in the KS3 courses. Many of these initiatives have been soundly based on educational research. They have ensured resources are written and shared across the subjects to reduce workload and improve learning and teaching.
- The joint observation undertaken with the HoFs shows that they make accurate observations about the teaching and learning in the lessons. HoFs can readily identify barriers to faster progress and so have a good basis for constructive feedback to the teachers.
- The campus wide assessment system is being rigorously implemented and is now well embedded. Standard assessments are frequently given, a minimum of six times during the academic year, and the results are used by the HoFs to check students' progress and hold teachers to account.

Areas for Improvement

- Work needs to be done so the HoFs and their teams have clear responsibility for addressing the issues of the persistent gaps in progress of different groups e.g. DS v. non DS / boys v. girls.
- To overcome the persistent gaps in progress of some groups HoFs need to focus more on these groups in their lesson observations to ensure that the rigour of the 'Chase, Challenge, Check' is being fully applied in the classroom.
- HoFs need to gather and reflect on evidence of impact of change and new initiatives, so they can evaluate those that are more successful, and abandon those that have not had enough impact.