



School Improvement Review, Autumn Term 2016

School: Chaucer School, Sheffield

Review date: 7 October 2016

Reviewer: Dr Michael Maddison
Director, Maddison Education Consultancy

Report compiled: 08.10.2016

Report finalised: 19.10.2016

Dr Michael Maddison is an independent educational consultant, inspector and trainer. He has served as one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (2006-2015) and as National Lead for history (2008-2015). He continues to inspect as an Ofsted Inspector, undertaking whole school inspections and working in particular with schools subject to special measures and with ITE partnerships. Since leaving Ofsted Michael has undertaken a number of whole school, faculty and subject reviews throughout the country. As a result, he has extensive experience of working with schools to improve standards and achievement.

As National Lead, he was responsible for leading Ofsted's curriculum and dissemination work in inspecting and reporting on history. He was the author of 'History for All', Ofsted's highly regarded national report on history in schools, and of Ofsted's first subject-specific professional development training materials for teachers. Michael has particular interest and expertise in school and subject leadership and management, governance, the curriculum, and teaching and learning. Besides history, his subject expertise includes humanities, English, literacy, and citizenship.

Prior to working for Ofsted, Michael held a number of senior leadership positions in secondary schools in the North of England. He is an experienced teacher having taught both history and politics for over 25 years and having served as senior examiner and moderator for GCSE history and as principal moderator for A level history. Michael has been awarded the NPQH. He is currently Deputy President of the Historical Association.

1. Context

- Chaucer School is a sponsored academy and part of the Tapton School Academy Trust (TSAT).
- This was the third visit to the school by this consultant to undertake a School Improvement Review.
- The school was last inspected in April 2016 when it was judged to require special measures. The first HMI monitoring visit has not yet taken place.

2. Evidence

A wide range of evidence was seen either before or on the review day at the school. The consultant:

- held separate discussions with the headteacher, several members of the leadership team, a selection of middle leaders, and a group of classroom teachers;
- held separate meetings with groups of students representing Years 7 and 8, Years 9 and 10, and Year 11;
- scrutinised a range of documents linked to the results achieved by Year 11 students in 2016; governance; performance management review targets; marking and feedback; and behaviour and attendance.

3. Focus

- The purpose of the visit was to evaluate the progress made and the impact of actions taken since the previous visit and since the Ofsted inspection.
- Specific attention was paid to each of the priorities identified at the inspection, namely improving:
 - the effectiveness of leadership and management;
 - the quality of teaching, learning and assessment;
 - behaviour and safety.

4. Overview

- It is pleasing to report that the term has started well. Senior leaders are well focused on implementing actions to address the areas for improvement identified by the Ofsted inspection team and there is an avowed determination to bring the school out of special measures as soon as is practicable.
- Governors have reviewed their committee structure to best meet the school's needs and a Core Improvement Group has been established to maintain a clear focus on the post inspection action plan.
- The Pupil Premium Review has been undertaken and an action plan has been put in place.
- Staff morale is high and teachers particularly welcome the introduction of the new behaviour management system – Positive Discipline (PD) – and its impact on improving students' attitudes to behaviour and learning.
- Overall, there is much purposeful activity and, although it is not yet possible to assess fully the impact of this work, it is clear that effective steps are being taken to respond to the areas for improvement. It is also evident that some of these steps, notably PD, are bringing immediate benefits to the school.

5. Commentary

This report covers the following aspects:

- the effectiveness of leadership and management;
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment;
- behaviour and safety;
- outcomes.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

- The governors' decision to align their sub-committees to the Ofsted priorities should help them to focus upon what is important to help the school improve.
- In addition, the creation of the Core Improvement Group should assist the headteacher and his senior team by requiring them to update governors of progress on a monthly basis.
- The school has received support from TSAT and it is appropriate that the post Ofsted Statement of Action states the commitment of the Trust to deploying 'good and effective staff from within the Trust' whenever possible.
- It is vital that the Trust maintains its capacity and flexibility to respond to requests from the school for all types of support and not just for teachers of specific subjects.
- The school has also sought support from outside TSAT and the Rodillian Multi Academy Trust has provided some significant assistance through the introduction of the system of PD.
- The headteacher has a clear understanding of what needs to be accomplished and he is well supported by his colleagues on the senior leadership team whose responsibilities have been aligned with the post-inspection areas for improvement.
- Senior and middle leaders are well aware of what they need to do to help the school to improve.
- Quality assurance procedures have been overhauled and those now in place are much tighter and clearer than hitherto.
- Performance management review targets have also been linked to the school priorities.
- As a result, there is a clearer picture of accountability with systems in place which should help all leaders to be more consistent and effective in their work.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Visits to classrooms during the learning walks undertaken on this visit revealed the vast majority of students to be on task and undertaking purposeful learning.
- Staff report that this is because the new system of PD is creating an atmosphere which allows them to be more creative in their teaching and enables them to implement the Teacher Enhancement and Effectiveness Programme (TEEP) on a regular basis.
- TEEP has become a non-negotiable expectation for teachers and staff are using the TEEP strategies to greater effect than seen on previous visits.
- Students note that the way that teachers plan the lessons is helping them to better understand what they are learning.
- The regular scrutiny of students' work has revealed that points made by the teachers in their marking to help students improve (the Even Better Ifs) are not providing sufficient subject-specific guidance and could be much better related

to the subsequent Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT) tasks. Action has been taken to deal with this.

- Senior leaders have rightly recognised that it would be beneficial to adapt the work scrutiny requirements to meet the demands of different subjects.
- Senior leaders would be well advised to review the instructions to staff on marking and feedback to alleviate teachers' concerns about workload and to make marking by teachers as effective as possible.
- The move to ensuring that homework tasks are more integrated into in-class learning is to be welcomed in that students will be expected to use homework time to prepare for the next lesson as well as respond to what had been learned in the last lesson.
- Students interviewed report that lessons are improving, though those in Year 8 felt that they had spent much of Year 7 repeating what they had already learned in primary school in Year 6. Senior leaders would be well advised to research into this concern and ensure that all lessons contain appropriate challenge for all students.

Behaviour and safety

- Recognition by senior leaders that the behaviour management system in place last academic year was not working as effectively as desired has led to the adoption of Positive Discipline.
- Staff and students report, and learning walks undertaken during this visit reveal, that PD is already having a substantial impact upon students' attitudes to behaviour and learning.
- Teaching staff note that students are clear about the consequences of their behaviour and that they are more willing to moderate their behaviour because they dislike the repercussions. Staff also feel that they are being fully supported by senior leaders.
- The division of the school into zones and the creation of break-out spaces in the zones to which students whose behaviour or attitudes become unacceptable is seen by staff to be a helpful innovation. It is clearly understood by students who state that they do not want to be 'zoned'.
- Senior leaders themselves add that they have an increased ability to identify underachievement and target intervention because teachers are now more focused on identifying the extent to which students are making sufficient progress in lessons. They also welcome greater engagement with parents and carers.
- Middle leaders approved of PD, not least because it allowed them to be proactive in helping to improve students' behaviour and attitudes and to challenge those teachers who did not use the systems properly. They did feel, though, that it was important that all staff use PD more effectively when students are moving between lessons and at break and lunch times.
- Students like the new system because there is less misbehaviour in lessons and, when it occurs, it is dealt with. To them, school is a 'better place'. They also like the reward stamps because they are a visible record of their success and this gives them 'a sense of pride'. However, not all students have yet shown that they are keen to collect stamps and students interviewed are concerned that overuse of stamps by teachers could undermine the value of the whole initiative.
- Students did add, though, that teachers are more consistent than last year. In their words, it is a 'fairer system but it is not always implemented fairly'. This is because some teachers adapt the PD steps. They argued that this doesn't help

because for PD to be effective ‘all teachers have to apply the rules in the same way’.

- Senior leaders are aware that PD is not yet being consistently implemented and they would be well advised to:
 - ensure that the use of stamps is moderated where needed so that they maintain their value,
 - redouble efforts to ensure that all staff enforce PD in the same way,
 - consider how the approach to PD and the use of recording in planners can be used more effectively to note what is happening at lesson change over time on corridors and at break and lunch times.
- The school remains concerned with the behaviour and attitudes of some students in Year 9 and their success in improving behaviour and attitudes of these students will be a focus on the next visit in Spring Term 2017.

Outcomes

- The results gained by students in 2016 were disappointing but not wholly unexpected. The Progress 8 figure of -0.57 places the school below the government’s floor target for secondary schools.
- There was a slight improvement in progress in English for all students including disadvantaged students but in mathematics progress was lower than in the previous year for all students including disadvantaged students.
- Senior leaders have undertaken an urgent review of teaching and learning in mathematics and put in place an action plan to raise attainment and achievement.
- Throughout the school, academic targets for students have been reviewed and revised ones have raised the level of challenge and expectation.
- Overall, senior leaders know that much has to be accomplished in all subjects if students are to meet their targets.

6. Points for consideration

The school has a clear list of priorities identified at the inspection in April. To help it respond effectively to the areas for improvement which have been set, it is recommended that leaders and managers:

1. ensure that the Core Improvement Group maintains a rigorous focus upon evaluating the impact of actions to improve the school;
2. maintain their work to refine DIRT activities, adapt work scrutiny requirements, and review the instructions to staff on marking and feedback to help alleviate teachers’ concerns about workload;
3. embed all new initiatives especially PD, with all staff enforcing this system in the same way, moderating where needed their use of stamps, and making greater efforts to use the PD way as effectively outside lessons as in lessons so that the school benefits quickly from the clear advantages it has already brought;

7. Next visit

Proposed date: Visit 4 to be confirmed

Foci – to be determined in discussion with the headteacher:

- Progress of all students especially those in Year 11.
 - The impact of the pupil premium funding on the progress of disadvantaged and more-able disadvantaged students.
 - Progress in improving behaviours and learning attitudes across Year 9.
-