GOVERNOR FOCUS VISIT

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| **Date & names of governors participating** |
| **Friday 7th July 2023** – Jane Swettenham (JS); Katharine Boulton (KB); Clare Hoddy (CH); |
| **Focus of visit** |
|  Student BehaviourStaff Welfare |
| **Discussions and observations** |
| **Discussion with Clare Costello (CC) Headteacher**Governors discussed the forthcoming monitoring visit with CC which was to be focused on staff welfare and student behaviour. Behaviour amongst a minority of students is challenging. There are affordability issues for putting in support. SHS does however have an extensive offer of support and interventions. Discussion of blended learning platform and PIC centre for core lessons. Importance of flexibility such as offering engineering. The PIC team sits within safeguarding. The school will continue to look at improving mental health provision. DSLs and PMs are supported in their challenging work. Alison Connelly provides support as a detached agent. She undertakes scheduled meetings with staff. Recognise the importance of supporting staff. Line managers focus on well-being. SLT play a major role here.**Discussion with Jamie Rigg (JR) Deputy Head Designate - Behaviour*** The school has a comprehensive behaviour policy in place.
* Discussion around how that is applied by staff and how it is understood by staff and students.
* Feeling that consistency of application is getting harder as the school gets bigger and there is more challenging pupil behaviour, more EHCP and management plans in place.
* Some students need to be treated flexibly due to their needs and it is hard for some teachers to see the bigger picture when they feel some pupil behaviour isn’t being challenged enough, particularly when that behaviour impacts on other students
* Focus next year will be on pushing understanding of discrimination and protected characteristics next year – improving student understanding of individuality of others.
* Confidentiality of students key – but issue then in allowing staff / students to understand increasing numbers of students with high tariff needs.
* Key is always going back to the policy and trying to keep consistency of approach if possible.
* Key rules in class are:

1 Stay silent when others are talking1. Respect the staff member
* 80% of behaviour issues relate to those two rules
* Discussion on toilet breaks in lessons
* Key thing is students need to be safe when using toilets
* School does not have toilet supervisors
* Teachers don’t know what children are thinking when they are asking to go to the toilet, there have been issues with self-harm previously
* Toilet passes are issued if needed but with strict rules
* Balance between need of children to use toilet and expectations of behaviour.
* Safeguarding issue – pupils not supervised when using toilet facilities in lesson times
* Transition update
* Previously bell was rung to signify form time, break and lunch
* Bells now also rung between lessons 1-2, 3-4
* Two bells rung now – first one means children need to move to next lesson, second one means they need to be in class
* This will help to improve punctuality to class
* Work in progress and new Assistant Head Teacher will lead on that from September
* School priority – primacy of lessons
* Ensuring that all lessons have a structure, proper supervision and starters to get pupils engaged from the start of the lesson
* Detentions moved to department led rather than whole school detentions
* Learning behaviours is focus of Karuna Shaunak-Hobbs using CPD/monitoring to make sure all staff are leading teaching in the same way
* Belief – relationships are good if pupils see strong teachers. Safe/stable, strict/high expectations, firm/fair

Behaviour impact on staff* National trend of poor behaviour in schools.
* Issue that staff have more options outside SHS so retention is impacted.
* Lots of experienced staff here but they don’t see other schools and how we compare to them
* Staff want more accountability on behaviour so dept detentions welcomed but that depends on size of department – easier in larger departments
* TL/TLR/UPS manage detentions
* But different depts deal with detentions in different ways so not always consistent
* But important to give autonomy, flexibility and empowerment to TL and staff
* Middle leaders were deskilled by previous system so good to have back in departments
* Y7 especially difficult cohort due to number of EHCPs and extreme needs children
* Focus on high needs children does impact on what can be done for the rest of the cohort due to high level of resources and impact on time required
* Y7 having to self-manage a lot and that’s not acceptable
* Staff having to consciously focus on rest of year “silent majority” as not servicing them as much as we would like
* Limited local authority support
* Inclusion partner works with us to try and manage support and move to CSS – but limited time
* 3 x PEX this year but waiting lists for PRU / CSS
* 50% increase in PEX in Essex this year but some other schools don’t do PEX and fund offsite provision – easy to do in large MAT
* c50 EHCPs in total in school
* Next step – blended learning platform of core lessons and vocational qualifications
* Not out culture previously but one we need to develop.

Staff Welfare* DSLs and Pastoral managers receive counselling
* Scheduled regular meetings
* Georgia Day putting mental health strategy in place with wellbeing focus

**Discussion with Liz Smith (ES) SENCO and Vicki East (VE) Y7 Pastoral Manager**Y7 cohort* 2 key needs – reading/writing support and SEMH / behaviour and emotional support required
* Reading / writing support is part of teacher training but SEMH is not taught and staff struggle with that
* Teachers finding it hard to keep up with having so many pupils with SEMH needs
* CPD gap – SEMH so ES looking at specialist support and training that Essex might be able to provide
* Concern – so much focus on high needs pupils, can’t support rest of year properly
* Y7 are a great cohort – but small group of pupils with issues taking all focus
* Defiance towards staff is big issue in suspensions
* One EHCP has detailed swearing as acceptable – hard for rest of students when language not challenged

SENCO wellbeing/support* PMs/SENCO support each other
* External agencies / Essex are not helpful
* High needs pupils verbally abusive to staff and that is issue
* Essex did give financial support for 1-1 support but can’t do 1-1 as not safe for staff
* Link educational psychologist only 2 days a year and only 2 students supported
* ES has self- funded external counselling

Key interventions* Behaviour policy adjusted
* Nurture group
* SEMH specialist employed
* PIC – Rob Maynard
* Inclusion Partner
* External agency referrals
* But – still seeing suspensions 2 key needs – reading/writing support and SEMH / behaviour and emotional support required
* Parental involvement - SENCO /PM do daily update calls to 4 Y7 parents each day, collate info from class teachers.

PM / SENCO workload* Incredibly high
* ES works 7am – 4.30/5pm
* VE feels current Y7 big shock – created lots of extra work
* SLT support incredible (JR / CC) but workload does become overwhelming
* Previous SENCO didn’t fulfil all duties – i.e. EHCPs not reviewed in timely fashion – so ES having to do additional tasks to get department back on track and all funding in place

Governor feedback* External support to SENCO/PMs from Essex not acceptable
* ES/VE doing amazing job with difficult cohort and limited resources

**Discussion with Simon Brooks (SB) – Internal Suspension Room / CCF**CFF impact on SEND Children* Quite a big impact on behaviour – many do temper their ways to a degree
* Gives students a sense of belonging
* New friendship groups developed
* Issue it is not seen as “cool” to some of the lost children who would benefit
* Major Maynard is excellent hire – excellent role model to children as he has lived experience of difficult adolescence and choice was prison or army

**Visit to Internal Suspension Room*** Empty due to teacher strikes and school closed to most pupils
* 10 individual pods with computers and some tables
* Free access to internet with filters but all key strokes / websites monitored plus individual CCTV in each pod so all behaviour monitored
* Internal suspensions full day– if started after 10am then the next day will also be in the IS room
* If pupil decides to stay at home and not do internal suspension, they will be expected to do it on their next day in school
* Referral and Engagement Document completed for all students
* Logs behaviour during day and helps student to understand what they need to do in future to improve behaviour
* The reset IS only been in place since April but already seeing a reduction in suspensions9

**Discussion with Lesley Hollingsworth (LH) – TL Social Science**CPD for staff* External CPD would be appreciated
* Good to share good practice as a group internally but would like external courses
* Prefers in person to remote learning but acknowledges online can be cheaper or free
* Completed an online ADHD strategies course = found it helpful
* Current need among staff = ADHD / Autism training
* Would be useful to have external training then follow up with internal SHS session tailored to our school requirements

Work-life balance* SS department good at supporting each other
* Helps that a lot of teaching is 6th form which means experienced staff can leave those groups to self- manage while dipping in and out to support other classes
* 4 ECT in dept over last couple of years
* They have struggled especially with Y7 cohort
* One leaving after two years – decided teaching not for them and financial pressures mean they can get more money outside teaching
* PM support is invaluable
* When LH has a free period she uses it to help colleagues, especially ECTs, so has to do marking outside of school hours, but she’s always done that so not an issue for her

Student Behaviour* SS department strong for behaviour management
* Behaviour issues not in class but when pupils moving around school / breaks
* Lots of angry children, default position is to be hostile / defiant when talked to
* Pupils not good at engaging positively with staff – always assume going to be told off when a teacher tries to talk to them
* Pupils feel in control outside classroom – strength in numbers – but teachers in control in class unless supply
* Supply teachers especially get a difficult time
* SS dept will send internal teacher over to start the lesson when cover is in place to help set the tone
* Departmental detentions felt to be positive – so long as small enough numbers to be manageable
* Feel teachers have enough information on high needs pupils and understand strategies to help them (ie separate or sit together)

PSHE* Looking at strengthening work on relationships / manners
* SS department strong for behaviour management
* PSHE work good for SEND students as can be done in lots of ways, not just written answers/essays so can be creative with helping students to engage in and complete work

**Discussion with Ben Clifford (BC) Assistant Head curriculum / SLT Link Y10 / Outgoing Head of English**Does English Department get support required?* As behaviour of students getting more extreme requirement to adapt behaviour codes and R points and feels behaviour policy gets a bit grey
* Sometimes staff do feel a bit unsupported
* Student behaviour biggest impact on staff well being
* Feels English department is good at managing behaviour and is an oasis of calm compared to some areas
* Personally BC can cope as he has 11 years of experience and previous work in challenging schools
* Feels it is going back to those days

CPD for staff* Some has been very valuable
* Behaviour CPD / Behaviour Buddy useful
* Some a waste of time
* Likes CC’s view that inset days should be for staff training – more traditional view
* Originally liked SHS CPD with lots of different things to chose from
* Post COVID feels it is not the right approach, need whole school training to help them deals with new challenges together

Work-life balance* Always had set work hours of 7am – 4.30pm
* ECTs do find work challenging – one left after one year
* Issue of high level of parental emails / paperwork / challenging behaviour
* Extreme behaviours of students gives extra level of stress
* New teachers don’t have same level of classroom exposure due to COVID and can’t always cope
* BC has experience he can draw on
* Recruitment is biggest challenge – tougher to find good English teachers and ECTs don’t have the resilience
* During Covid couldn’t test recruits in classroom situations

Student Behaviour* Biggest impact on teachers
* Cover lessons tough as behaviour deteriorates during those
* Students don’t value cover work
* Other schools have same issues with student disruption
* Strike days have allowed staff to work together and reconnect. ECTs have been marking work together and bouncing off each other. Positive.
* Behaviour definitely deteriorated since COVID

Y10 SLT link* Core group of difficult students – 15 in all
* As a year group, bad reputation, but not deserved and feel doing well this year
* Has been eye opening seeing work from a Pastoral view point and what they deal with day to day
* Y10 mocks have been interesting – Language good, Literature not so as clear not prepared properly, will be back to basics in September
* Issue with behaviour in afternoon exams

Detentions* Pros and Cons for bringing in departments
* More lunchtime than after school
* When centralised he would see the same pupils week after week so not working
* Now in departments feels better but with behaviour escalating, feels need for another layer – higher level of sanction
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| **Questions for reflection** |
| * Consider if a review of CPD is needed and how best to meet staff training needs
* What further support can be given to ECTs to ensure retention particularly as their training opportunities were adversely affected by the pandemic
* Although behaviour from a small minority of students is challenging, the majority of students are impeccably behaved. Possibly look at more ways to acknowledge further and celebrate “the silent majority” who are wonderful ambassadors our school.
* Student behaviour does have an understandably negative effect on staff well-being particularly more inexperienced staff. However it was clear how much support staff give each other particularly within departments and the support from SLT.
* The re-setting of the internal suspension expectations introduced in April is having a positive effect
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| **Actions, by whom and by when** |
| **Governors to keep staff welfare under review, create a new link role for staff welfare and ensure this issue is a regular agenda item either at FGB or S&P. JS to seek volunteer for link role by end of September 2023.** **Student voice on behaviour should be sought at monitoring visits. Next visit December 2023.****Governors to continue considering behaviour data regularly at meetings.** |