GOVERNOR FOCUS VISIT

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| **Date and and governors participating** |
| **Thursday 8 December 2022** – Jane Swettenham (JS) - Chair; Julian Beard (JB); Katherine Boulton (KB); David Churchill (DC) |
| **Focus of visit** |
| SEND provisionSafeguarding, including SCR checkLinks between SEND and safeguardingSEND student voicePupil Premium provision |
| **Discussions and observations** |
| KS3 student meetings* 5 students who are on the school SEND register were very open and honest in our discussions with us. They were happy to talk about their specific needs, and how the school was helping them. They were very supportive about the support they were getting, and how this was impacting positively on their learning. 2 of the students were now working towards their gold award for positive behaviour points
* Annie Goodrick (AG) joined us for the meeting, and the students clearly had a very good relationship with her. It was a testament to how well the students felt supported that they were so comfortable talking with us as governors. AG was also very quick to spot when a student was getting anxious about their timetable for the day, and stepped in quickly to reassure her that they would sort it together
* It was also encouraging that all the students were involved with some form of co-curricular activity, whether that be cadets, music, art club or sport. They also talked about the activities offered by C8, which is like a tutor group and safe space that has been set up for them
* There were some even better ifs, for example even though they confirmed it had improved, they thought behaviour could sometimes be improved. They also talked about some of the financial challenges students faced, for example on equipment and school meals

KS4 student meetings* Two students on the SEND register were again very open, honest and comfortable in talking to us about their needs and how they felt supported by the school. One student shared that she was being helped through a difficult home situation. One student shared that the school had really helped when he had experienced some bullying in a previous year
* Again, the students felt that behaviour had calmed down since they had first returned after covid. They really enjoyed the weekly 1:1 mentoring sessions that the SEND team provided, and could also go to them at other times if they needed to
* They were also involved in the co-curricular programme, whether that be cadets, performing arts or the sports club

SEND lead* Liz Smith (LS) only took on the SENDCo role midway through 2022. She has taken on a significant task, as there were gaps in the one plans that ideally all students would have
* LS was very positive about her team and spoke very highly about their experience, their commitment and their impact. She was also very positive about the support she had received from Claire Costello (CC) since her arrival. CC had reduced her teaching hours to give her more capacity, but LS still really enjoyed having some teaching hours. CC was also very mindful of LS’s workload and wellbeing
* LS was very organised and clearly had done a lot of work quickly to tighten up SEND processes and plans. She was very prepared for the meeting, bringing an overview of her team, current numbers with an EHC Plan and other SEND support, a summary of main needs, and a list of the key interventions that the team works on. There are currently 355 students on the SEND register, including 41 with an EHC Plan. Both of these figures are significantly above national averages. The highest need is in Year 10, with 12 EHCP students and 66 further students with SENd support
* The passion and dedication of LS shone through, and all governors agreed that we are very lucky to have her as our SENDCo

SEND team* Similarly, the SEND team were extremely positive about LS as the SEND lead, and were very complimentary about her organisation, her attention to detail, and her support for them. They were also extremely positive about CC since she had joined the school
* For the discussion, we were joined by 4 HLTAs - Maggie Howell (MH); Sharon Pickering (SP); Stacey Richardson (SR); Stacey Toole (ST). All had extensive experience, and1 was a long serving member of the Shenfield team while 3 others were relatively recent joiners
* They talked through how CPOMS is used for recording safeguarding incidents, and the training they had received on using the system
* Their dedication and commitment to the students was very evident, and they spoke passionately about the job satisfaction from their interventions. In particular they enjoyed mentoring and Thinking Reading. Students had also confirmed how much they liked these two interventions
* The HLTAs shared some really helpful data on 33 students currently on Thinking Reading. This had a breakdown of gender, SEND, PP and EAL. It was good to see that 12 students had already graduated this year from the Thinking Reading programme
* All the HLTAs in the meeting felt strongly that setting wasn’t working for the SEND pupils, and that they make better progress if the school adopted a more blended approach
* LS had done a lot of work on SEND training for staff and on an information booklet. They welcomed that some staff attended these, but felt that some Departments didn’t engage as much as they should. They also felt that SEND students tended to mention the same teachers where they were having issues in class. They also wondered how we could ensure that substitute teachers had the SEND info they needed when taking a class
* One more “even better if” would be if there was more time to have more regular Departmental meetings to share information and key communications. On a previous visit, LS had also said that a slight extension in HLTA hours may help to strengthen communications

Safeguarding lead* JS and JB checked the single central register (SCR) with Karen Whordley, and all was found to be in order
* The safeguarding discussion was with the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) DJ Barron (DJB)
* DJB discussed the challenges of safeguarding in a SEND context. SEMH presents huge safeguarding challenges. SEND students often have intrusive thoughts (e.g. self-harm/suicidal ideation) as they are very literal which naturally triggers a robust response. As DSL, DJB has to deal with self-harm issues and suicidal ideation on a regular basis. This could be a student having a bad day which is not the same as a student who does want to harm themselves. However, it is not the role of DJB or his team to diagnose, as they are not qualified to determine whether a child is suicidal. There is no “crying wolf” category, but support can be stretched as there are students who really do need support. SENd students report at higher levels for suicidal ideation and in line with other issues/catagories. Accessing support from external agencies for SENd students is difficult. Some bespoke charities are not funded to work with SENd students. Agencies do not share their flowcharts and the school gets so far with the referral process and are then informed the student cannot be helped. The school should know if there is any point in referring initially.
* The recent external review of safeguarding provided good external validation. An internal audit had already identified the small number of issues raised which were being addressed.
* DJB may need to look at online safety and make appropriate changes to the curriculum when the online safety act finally becomes law. CEOPs does exist on the school website with a “report a concern” element. An Alan Mackenzie video is used as part of the in form programme on sexting and the CEOPs facility can be highlighted there. A Channel 4 documentary on online grooming has been used in small groups.
* DJB will look at further developing parental engagement on safeguarding issues. The newsletter has been used to share advice with parents on online safety. However encouraging parents to come into school to engage is challenging. DJB will consider either releasing pre-recordings or live streaming on e-safety to support parents.
* DJB will report further on the work of the Respect and Tolerance working party, formalising the work into action plans.
* Recent initiatives have included the White Ribbon Day (violence against women) and Show Racism the Red Card. All staff wore red on that day which served to generate discussion with students. There are plans for Pride. They will also look at disability. The school is effectively using assemblies and the form tutor programme to promote inclusion.
* CPOMs. Only DJB can edit. He is the administrator. There is an audit trail built into CPOMs. The DSLs can see everything and can add to any category. Pastoral and SLt can see information (for example look up a specific student) but cannot add to everything. Other staff can only add an incident about a specific student.
* Liz Smith the school SENDco is also a DSL and filters the information regarding SENd students. DJB reviews this information with LS and the SENd team.
* Staff use TES development and are tested on their understanding of KCSIE. The system maintains a record of their training.
* Essex County Council also offers specific safeguarding training for example FGM.
* DJB delivers level 2 training in house with regular updates. Jo Barclay the Essex lead on safeguarding produces material (96 slides) which are provided to staff. DJB delivers the safeguarding induction training for new staff.
* DJB would like more level 3 trained staff. There is an appetite amongst staff. However Essex County Council insists this should only be for DSLs.
* The school has invested in mental health training.
* The school is looking to develop our counselling and obtain accreditation.
* DJB was also extremely positive about the support of CC since she had joined, and welcomed her extensive knowledge and prioritisation of safeguarding in the school

Pupil premium (PP) lead* Jane Martin (JM) has an extremely wide portfolio as one of the Deputy Heads. She is responsible for a lot of the school organisation, such as timetabling. Her strategic time has been extremely limited recently as the school is carrying an exams officer vacancy
* JM was very helpful in showing the data information that the school holds on pupil premium, and how this is looked at in Departments and by the relevant year group leads. Some of this summary data might be useful for governors to see
* We shared the PP data that had raised questions in the December FGB. PP was the worst group for persistent absence. All 9 students excluded this term were PP. The percentage of PP students recorded on the safeguarding log was noticeable. JM said she would look at this in more detail and report back to the governors in the New Year
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| **Questions for reflection** |
| * What is the best data to give governors an overview of progress that PP and SEND pupils are making in Years 7 - 9?
* How is the numeracy intervention programme designed by the maths Department being implemented and is it having impact?
* What are the views on provision from parents of our Pupil Premium and SEND pupils?
* Linked to the school’s priorities and development plan, what would be a suitable focus for the governors next visit in Spring 2023?
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| **Actions, by whom and by when** |
| **by end Dec 2022** - DC will send JM information about a tool to help track FSM families and about TKAT ACE, which may help us think about our own Pupil Premium provision - **COMPLETED****for Jan 2023** - CC will ensure a tab is added so that the headteacher and governors can record when they have checked the SCR**Spring 2023** - JM will report back to governors on the PP data that had raised some questions at December FGB, on what the school was doing in response, and where there had been impact**Spring 2023 -** DJB to provide an update on the work of the Respect and Tolerance Working Party |