

Report following first school improvement visit

School/Academy name	Easterside Primary Academy
Date of visit	Friday 5 th May 2017
Senior Consultant	Jim Alexander
Principal	Delyth Linacre

Information about this visit

This visit has been commissioned by school leaders for Easterside Academy. Before the visit, the academy's 2016 RAISEOnline was analysed, along with the school's self-evaluation summary and also the school's website. The consultant and principal visited classrooms to observe learning and behaviour in lessons, from the nursery class to Year 6. The consultant conducted a number of activities jointly with the principal and senior leaders, including looking at work in pupils' books. The consultant spoke with pupils about their views on behaviour and how the school keeps them safe. The consultant also discussed with pupils their learning and together looked at work in their books. Pupils' behaviour was also observed at lunchtime and around the school. Meetings were held with senior leaders and school staff. The consultant observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring, records of behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection.

Focus of visit

The focus of the one-day visit was agreed before the day. The consultant focused on the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and the effectiveness of leaders at different levels and their impact improving outcomes for pupils. This first visit was an opportunity for the consultant to understand the context of the academy.

School context

Easterside Primary Academy is a larger than average-sized primary with currently 306 on roll. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is over twice the average. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups is below average. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also below average. In school, the proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is broadly similar to average, but more have an EHC plan than average. The school has a key stage 1 high needs base (HNB) for 12 pupils.

Self-evaluation summary

Leaders have judged that the academy is an outstanding school. (January 2017)

Timetable for the visit

When	What	Who
8:30	Arrival/Introductions	Leadership Team
9.00	Discussion about SEF/current school improvement priorities/post-Ofsted plan	Headteacher
9am	Learning walk – Early Years and KS1	Headteacher
10:30am	Coffee and reflection	
10:45am	Learning walk through – KS2	Headteacher
11.45am	Meet to discuss priorities and predictions	EY and KS1 Leaders
12.15	Lunch and meet to discuss standards for English and mathematics and provision for greater depth across subjects	DHT and AHT
1.30pm	Meet school council	
1:45pm	Provision for pastoral care and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils	HT and Care team
2.15pm	Book scrutiny (maths and project books)	HT and SLT
3pm	Reflection	
3:15pm	Feedback	HT/DHT/AHT
4.00pm	Close of day	

Ofsted inspection

The school was inspected, initially under Section 8 and then converted to Section 5 in February 2017 and was judged to be a good school. Leadership and management, personal development, behaviour & welfare and early years were all judged to be outstanding. Two areas for further improvement were identified:

- Improve pupils' progress in science, RE and foundation subjects, including geography and history.
- Enhance the quality of teaching to strengthen pupils' progress (matching tasks to abilities; increase greater depth; and share best practice).

The school's website

The website is informative and welcoming. A range of policies are available, for example regarding equality and transgenderism. While these policies refer to the 2010 Equality Act there are also reference on the website to what is specifically for boys or girls (for example, school uniform) which does not provide equality for the non-binary community.

Outcomes for pupils

Attainment: (RAISEOnline 09th February 2017, validated)

Early years:

- In 2014, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development was 55%, compared with 61% nationally. In the same year, 35% of disadvantaged children reached a good level of development, compared with 45% nationally.
- In 2015, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development was 62%, compared with 66% nationally. In the same year, 57% of disadvantaged children reached a good level of development, compared with 52% nationally.
- In 2016, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development was 61%. In the same year, 47% of disadvantaged children reached a good level of development, compared with 88% nationally.

Year 1 phonics:

- In 2014, the proportion of all pupils who reached the expected standard was 70%, compared with 74% nationally. In the same year, 64% of disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard, compared with 63% nationally.
- In 2015, the proportion of all pupils who reached the expected standard was 81%, compared with 77% nationally. In the same year, 72% of disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard, compared with 66% nationally.
- In 2016, the proportion of all pupils who reached the expected standard was 49%, compared with 81% nationally. In the same year, 48% of disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard, compared with 70% nationally.

Key Stage 1:

Attainment of 'all' pupils:

- Reading: 81% of pupils attained 'expected or above', compared with 84% nationally.
- Writing: 72% of pupils attained 'expected or above', compared with 65% nationally.
- Mathematics: 72% of pupils attained 'expected or above', compared with 73% nationally.
- Science: 91% of pupils attained 'expected or above', compared with 82% nationally.

Attainment of 'greater depth' pupils:

- Reading: 25% of pupils reached a 'greater depth', compared with 24% nationally.
- Writing: 13% of pupils reached a 'greater depth', compared with 13% nationally.
- Mathematics: 19% of pupils reached a 'greater depth', compared with 18% nationally.

Attainment of 'disadvantaged' pupils:

- Reading: 76% of pupils attained 'expected or above', compared with 78% nationally; and 18% reached a 'greater depth', compared with 27% nationally.
- Writing: 65% of pupils attained 'expected or above', compared with 70% nationally; and 0% reached a 'greater depth', compared with 16% nationally.
- Mathematics: 65% of pupils attained 'expected or above', compared with 77% nationally; and 0% reached a 'greater depth', compared with 20% nationally.
- Science: 94% of pupils attained 'expected or above', compared with 85% nationally.

Key Stage 2:

Attainment of 'all' pupils:

- Reading: 67% of pupils reached 'expected or above', compared with 66% nationally.
- Writing: 70% of pupils reached 'expected or above', compared with 74% nationally.
- Mathematics: 83% of pupils reached 'expected or above', compared with 70% nationally.
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- Grammar, punctuation and spelling: 73% of pupils reached 'expected or above', compared with 72% nationally.
- Science: 80% of pupils reached 'expected or above', compared with 81% nationally.
- Combined (RWM): 60% of pupils reached 'expected or above', compared with 53% nationally and a floor standard of 65%.

Attainment of 'high' prior attaining pupils:

- Reading: 7% of all pupils reached a 'high' standard, compared with 19% nationally.
- Writing: 10% of all pupils reached a 'high' standard, compared with 15% nationally.
- Mathematics: 17% of all pupils reached a 'high' standard, compared with 17% nationally.
- Grammar, punctuation and spelling: 10% of all pupils reached a 'high' standard, compared with 22% nationally.

Attainment of 'disadvantaged' pupils:

- Reading: 55% of all pupils reached 'expected or above', compared with 72% nationally; and 0% reached a 'high' standard, compared with 23% nationally.
- Writing: 55% of all pupils reached 'expected or above', compared with 79% nationally; and 10% reached a 'high' standard, compared with 18% nationally.
- Mathematics: 75% of all pupils reached 'expected or above', compared with 76% nationally; and 10% reached a 'high' standard, compared with 20% nationally.
- Grammar, punctuation and spelling: 60% of all pupils reached 'expected or above', compared with 78% nationally; and 10% reached a 'high' standard, compared with 27% nationally.
- Science: 70% of all pupils reached 'expected or above', compared with 86% nationally.

Progress (RAISEOnline 09th February, validated)

Reading:

- Progress score for all pupils is +1.53, compared with a zero nationally and a floor standard of -5.0.
- Progress score for the most able is +2.67, compared with a zero national score.
- Progress for the disadvantaged is +0.78, compared with a zero national score.

Writing:

- Progress score for all pupils is +0.85, compared with a zero nationally and a floor standard of -7.0.
- Progress score for the most able is +3.76, compared with a zero national score.
- Progress for the disadvantaged is +0.34, compared with a zero national score.

Mathematics:

- Progress score for all pupils is +3.18, compared with a zero nationally and a floor standard of -5.0. This is **SIG+**, but not yet in top 10% of all schools.
- Progress score for the most able is +1.84, compared with a zero national score.
- Progress for the disadvantaged is +2.72, compared with a zero national score. This is **SIG+**, but not yet in top 10% of all schools.

Floor Standards:

- The government's current floor standard is met if at least 65% of pupils meet the combined reading, writing and mathematics expectations; or the school achieves sufficient progress in all three subjects (-5 in reading and mathematics and -7 in writing).
- **The school meets the government's current floor standards**

School-based assessment information:

- School leaders have developed a system to plot the standards pupils reach against the expectations of the new National Curriculum.
- School leaders use Target Tracker to measure the progress pupils make. This identifies that pupils should make six steps per year to maintain expectations appropriate for their age. During the visit, senior leaders discussed the need to

identify how many steps would represent good progress and how many would represent outstanding progress.

- Assessment information for this current year suggests:

Early years

- o 67% of children in the early years will reach a good level of development (this prediction does not include the children from the HNB)

Year 1 phonics

- o 80% of pupils will reach the expected standards.

Key stage 1

- o 71% of pupils are on track to reach ARE in reading and 21% to reach a greater depth (this prediction does not include the children from the HNB)
- o 74% of pupils are on track to reach ARE in writing and 13% to reach a greater depth (this prediction does not include the children from the HNB)
- o 71% of pupils are on track to reach ARE in mathematics and 18% to reach a greater depth (this prediction does not include the children from the HNB).

Key stage 2

- o 80% of pupils are predicted to reach ARE in reading and 17% to reach a higher standard
- o 75% of pupils are predicted to reach ARE in writing and 10% to reach a higher standard
- o 85% of pupils are predicted to reach ARE in mathematics and 20% to reach a higher standard
- o This would be a significant improvement from the 2016 combined attainment figure.

Progress since September 2016

- o The school assessment system suggests that pupils should have made four steps by this stage in the academic year.

Year 2			
	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Disadvantaged	4.1	3.6	4.3
Low prior attainment	2.4	1.9	2.9
Most able	4.7	6.0	5.0
SEN	2.0	2.0	4.0

Year 6			
	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Disadvantaged	4.8	4.8	4.9
Low prior attainment	5.8	4.3	5.0
Most able	5.0	-	5.0
SEN	5.7	5.2	5.1

Teaching, learning and assessment:

During the tour of lessons we observed the following:

- Across the school, support staff were deployed to effectively support individuals or small groups.
- Teachers and support staff were observed using a wide range of questions to consolidate learning and challenge thinking.
- Classrooms were neat, tidy and well resourced. Typically, classroom environments were calm and purposeful.
- Teachers make good use of the outside areas to support pupils' learning. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4, for example were conducting science investigations and pupils in Year 6 were completing a mathematics fractions challenge.

- Staff across the school have successfully supported pupils to learn collaboratively.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are aware of the standards that are expected for the age of the pupils in their class.
- Pupils in the HNB benefit from well-equipped and carefully considered resources and provision. Relationships with highly skilled staff are positive and promote effective learning.
- Teachers who are relatively new to the profession are well supported to continually improve.
- In the vast majority of classes, pupils were actively engaged in their learning. In a minority of lessons, some pupils took longer to settle than others.
- Teachers have introduced traffic light beakers for pupils to use to identify when work is too easy (green), suitably challenging (amber), or too hard and confusing (red). When speaking with pupils (school council and ambassadors), most thought they were suitably challenged for about 80% of the time.

Work seen in pupils' books:

- Pupils take pride in their work, which is presented well.
- In mathematics, books show that teachers are providing a wide range of age-appropriate activities and tasks. Typically, pupils do not spend too much time on tasks when they understand the concept or skill being taught.
- Teachers plan a good sequence of learning, which leads towards activities in which pupils have to use their skills, knowledge and understanding to complete problem solving tasks.
- In English, books contain evidence of writing across a range of subjects, for example in geography and science.
- In most year groups, pupils benefit from opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects.
- Teachers also organise trips, which support pupils desire to write. For example, pupils in Year 6 have recently visited Alnwick Castle, which generated some high quality writing following the trip.
- During discussion with senior leaders, it was agreed that there needs to be a shared and agreed understanding of what represents good and outstanding progress in pupils' books. Page 45 and page 54 of Ofsted's handbook will provide a good starting point for discussion with staff.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Personal development and welfare

- Pupils speak very highly of their positive experience of school life.
- Pupils are exceptionally friendly towards staff and visitor. They are also very encouraging and supportive of one another.
- Pupils respond very positively to the encouragement they receive from their teachers.
- The care team support a wide range of complex issues very effectively.
- In 2015/16, pupils' attendance was in line with the national average (96.1%). During the same year, the proportion of pupils who were persistently absent was also in line with the national average (8.9%).
- The proportion of pupils with 100% attendance is growing significantly each year.
- A fewer than average proportion of pupils are excluded from the school.

Behaviour

- Pupils' behaviour is clearly outstanding and they respond exceptionally well to the high expectations teachers have of them.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to their work in class and can be trusted to work independently and in small groups in the outside areas.
- When speaking to the school council and school ambassadors, they obviously have a great pride in their school.
- Leaders and the care team carefully log incidents of unacceptable behaviour, which are rare.
- A small minority of pupils need more support to manage their own behaviour and emotions. These pupils respond very well to the support they receive.

Leadership and Management:

- Leaders are highly ambitious and determined that Easterside continues to grow from strength to strength.
- The headteacher, together with senior leaders, have developed robust procedures for monitoring the work of the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's strength. Plans to further develop areas that could be even better are well considered.
- The headteacher uses performance management procedures to drive forward improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The headteacher is currently the school's SENCO, but plans are in place for this responsibility to be reassigned in the autumn term.
- Leaders are reflective and keen to engage in professional discussion about school improvement.
- Within school, four members of staff are moderators for the local authority. This adds a great deal of strength to internal assessment arrangements.
- Senior leaders are currently trailing improvements to the teaching of foundation subjects, responding to Ofsted recommendations.

Governance of the school

- Governance was not a focus for this initial visit.

Safeguarding

- Safeguarding was not a focus for this initial visit.

Effectiveness of the early years

- When children start school, their skills are typically below those expected for their age.
- Ofsted judged provision and outcomes in the early years to be outstanding.
- The early years leader shows no sign of complacency and expectations are high for staff and children alike.
- By the time children leave the reception class, the proportion of mainstream class pupils who reach a good level of development is above average.
- Within the early years, staff are well deployed and have clear guidance about what is expected of them and of the children for whom they are responsible.
- Work seen in children's writing books confirms that they are making outstanding progress from their starting points.
- The early years leader is strong, knows what is required and determined that the provision continues to improve.

Things the school should think about:

- Discuss and agree with staff how many steps represents good progress in the school's assessment information (data) and how many represents outstanding progress.
- Discuss and agree with staff what represents good and outstanding 'grapple' in pupils' books, making sure that there is always suitable challenge.

I trust you found my visit helpful for the continued improvement of Easterside Primary Academy.

Signed: 

Date: 5th May 2017