

*Never look down on anybody unless you are helping him up. Jesse Jackson*

## Barley Lane School

*Hard work, humility, kindness*

**HT Spring 1 report to FGB/SBLT com:** reporting on autumn 2017-18 (working SIP and rolling SEF)

### Context for this report

Our third set of meetings this academic year moves from September's review of 2016-17 and the scrutiny in December of our work and progress set against our improvement priorities for the academic year 2017-18 and all this now framed by a hugely positive and affirming Ofsted section 8 inspection visit and subsequent report. This has reshaped and reframed existing improvement priorities and they are summarised below

### Leadership and management

- Ofsted outcome confirms progress and competence of governance and they are fluent in our improvement aspirations now reframed by inspection outcome
- DJ to lead and DJ/CM and RM to form core of leadership cluster that ensures rigorous day to day management and drives good behaviour now and this in step with Ofsted judgments.
- Leadership clusters will challenge colleagues in their diverse roles.

### Learning, teaching and assessment

- Returning lead SR will reform cluster with CO/AM/MM and build on Ofsted identified strengths and a collective approach for example to best practice in assessment.
- They will also troubleshoot emerging challenges.
- They will make planned improvements for example understanding AD and OD and how that impacts teaching?
- They will be robust in both self-criticism but also brave enough to challenge peers. They combine with behaviour cluster to address shared challenges for example classroom management and the promotion of a positive climate.

### Personal development, behaviour and safety

- MMc leads whole school cluster and protects and consolidates and builds on positive Ofsted judgments about our culture and values

- Behaviour and learning clusters respectively will maintain the core element of robust self-awareness and self-improvement.
- MMc will lead whole school “cluster” that sustains that habitual and challenging conversation about safeguarding and builds on strengths and is open and proactive about frailties.

It remains true each report looks back on the preceding half-term block and incrementally as the academic year unfolds. It is an incremental and “live” self-evaluation and a window into how the school is now and that is significant because SEMH schools can slip into serious difficulty very quickly and established governors are fluent and canny in this and understand too their regular presence in school critical to their having a credible and reliable sense of how stable and safe school is...or indeed isn't?

This report then will reflect our progress and the obstacles and challenges to progress and our response in the completed second half of the autumn term 2017.

### **Brief narrative report**

The absence and reduced presence of very talented and productive colleagues across disciplines and in key roles continued to impact powerfully and incrementally with some corrosive force on our effectiveness, energy and morale.

The remaining team and many and diverse figures again across roles and disciplines continued to offer significant discretionary effort. The school as a result remained stable.

The corrosive impact of “blame culture” persisted and persists; a product of the greater negativity, and propensity to escalate and even resort to aggression and intimidation by a few disaffected parents and carers ranging from small discourtesies to powerful unfairness and even threats of violence.

As my last report set out the funding model where money is not frontloaded but follows pupils means in a setting where numbers are not stable and those leaving do so as a cohort but those arriving to replenish numbers and so funding do not creates financial pressures and shortfalls. This is then compounded by historic heavy spending on personalised packages to keep highly vulnerable youngsters safe until they leave or new suitable placements are secured (a lengthy process) and not all monies are recovered.

All of this ultimately positively framed by an enormously affirming and encouraging Ofsted outcome.

MMac 17.12.17

## Effectiveness of leadership and management: current self-evaluation: good

### Planned and proactive school improvement activity in 2017-18

1.
  - Governors have again been habitual visitors and their visits have been lengthy and developed and robust.
  - New governors are steadily more established and have been engaged and proactive in both their visits and in their initial meetings.
  - The informal dialogue with lead governors for example safeguarding has been on-going.
  - Established and embedded governors have ensured headteacher and senior team supported in a tough context bringing that element to balance the very clear challenges faced and bolstering morale.
2.
  - New behaviour leaders in both primary and secondary schools embedded further...
  - Acting leaders continued to have tackle the significant gaps in operational leadership and key admin' tasks
  - Established leaders maintained their visibility and discretionary effort.
  - Emerging leaders across disciplines have remained doggedly independent and resilient and self-managing.
3.
  - Junior staff have continued to offer drive and initiative and ambition
  - The team is fully committed to a problem solving "change us to change them" mentality and culture.

### The impact of that improvement activity?

1. Governors including proportionately new governors have a clear and reliable view of how the school is and the challenges coalescing and offered insight and encouragement and support to the team at a time where "friendship" is needed but remain "critical" and this creates a sense of both support and challenge in senior staff and this in turn serves the children well.
2. The school community has continued to function safely and purposefully despite challenging context.
3. Their autonomous working and informal "leadership" and consequent success allowed stretched resources to cope and senior staff free to manage extreme and high risks.

### The impact of that improvement activity on pupil outcomes?

1. In a context of pretty extreme and coalescing challenges morale held and so the positive climate for learning and more powerfully the stability of the community and how safe the children feel and are.
2. The incremental half-termly review of key measures of safety and behaviour support again a judgment of a student body behaving well in a large majority and where risks to their safety and wellbeing are reliably and robustly made safe.
3. The children's experience across school life remains positive in a very large majority and the inevitable SEMH high risk moments and episodes are made safe and the children feel secure.

### The challenges and obstacles to improvement; threats and opportunities

1. These were known as we entered 2017-18 and embedded in SIP but their full impact unknown and arguably underestimated and the loss of a senior colleague has powerfully eroded into staff energies and morale and this reached an almost crisis
2. The "blame culture" and the creeping lack of trust in and respect for teachers including unfair and escalatory and abusive behaviours in a very small minority of parents and carers generated powerful stresses and hurt and both sapped staff energy and diverted it.

### Consequent reactive school improvement activity

1. Leading staff and governors worked tirelessly and compassionately to support and affirm staff and promote their wellbeing and morale.
2. Criticisms, complaints and behaviours regardless of their credibility or fairness or in some cases lack of balance have been responded to promptly and openly and fully and scrutinised by Ofsted and investigations described by them as "meticulously investigated and documented".

### The impact of that improvement activity?

1. Morale and motivation and effort all high and school stable and Ofsted inspection in penultimate week of the traditionally and measurably toughest term successfully navigated.
2. We have maintained our integrity and responded to criticisms of all kinds as we have promised, "no criticism or recriminations as a result of expressing a criticism or complaint" and a "willingness to listen fully and openly and avoiding knee-jerk defensiveness". Equally we have asserted our right to fair and reasonable treatment and been vindicated by Ofsted inspection judgments

### The impact of that improvement activity on pupil outcomes?

1. Behaviour is good in a large majority and as described risky behaviours made safe and governor visits confirm prevailing atmosphere and relationships both good.
2. Resolving and repairing relationships with parents and carers is powerfully beneficial to the children.

## **School improvement priorities 2017-2018: key challenges and opportunities**

### **Leadership and management**

- 1.** Progress in governance is consolidated. Governors are increasingly fluent in the work of the school, confident with the available and diverse indicators and measures. Their growing presence in school is sustained and embeds their understanding and triangulates their judgments and their ability to call the school to account. New governors play “catch up” quickly.
- 2.** The safe day to day operational running of the school in all its risk and complexity and challenge is further delegated to established, relatively new and emerging leadership talent across the team and that group is diverse in its make-up.
- 3.** All staff across disciplines but most powerfully the teaching and support team embrace their responsibility to be owners of and lead in their own increasing understanding, competence and influence across school life.

### **Pertinent Ofsted grade descriptors: the effectiveness of leadership and management; “good”**

- Leaders set high expectations of pupils and staff. They lead by example to create a culture of respect and tolerance. The positive relationships between leaders, staff and pupils support the progress of all pupils at the school.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for all pupils and promote improvement effectively. The school’s actions secure improvement in disadvantaged pupils’ progress, which is rising, including in English and mathematics.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the quality of education at the school. This helps them plan, monitor and refine actions to improve all key aspects of the school’s work.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity and diversity, resulting in a positive school culture. Staff and pupils work together to prevent any form of direct or indirect discriminatory behaviour. Leaders, staff and pupils do not tolerate prejudiced behaviour.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders and staff take appropriate action to identify pupils who may be at risk of neglect, abuse or sexual exploitation, reporting concerns and supporting the needs of those pupils.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment: current self-evaluation good**

**Planned and proactive school improvement activity in 2016-17**

1.
  - The team had quickly and openly identified “frailties” and moved together to reflect and respond tangibly to them in the critical spirit of “change us to change them”.
  - Three themes remained: complex groups, high risk individuals and motivating Y11s.
  - The team continued to bring resilience and hard work in a tough context to meet these challenges and more widely to promote and protect a positive climate for learning.

**The impact of that improvement activity?**

1.
  - As reported previously a work in progress albeit the complex group is being managed creatively and progress made...
  - High risk individuals were made and kept safe through daily dynamic and pragmatic risk management.
  - Senior staff persisted in supporting and engaging and motivating year 11s to good effect.

**The impact of that improvement activity on pupil outcomes?**

1.
  - The positive climate for and the right to learn both being asserted and children engaging and learning in class as Ofsted saw and judged positively on.
  - There is notable progress and success in attending and behaving well and learning for complex and high risk children.
  - There are pockets of success for example college courses recovering focus and positivity and of course setbacks motivation in IT but always optimism and perseverance to engage with challenge and support the young people and achieve small but hard won successes...we persist...

**Emerging challenges and obstacles to improvement; threats and opportunities**

1. SIP this year anticipates and embraces the mercurial and ever complex and shifting and diverse and out of left field challenges the children and young people bring and they have as described above.
2. Key staffing absences increase workload and risks and opportunities to reflect and be creative dented.

**Consequent reactive school improvement activity**

1. See above and on adjacent page key element 1iii in SIP
2. Stoic and determined and discretionary effort to persist in asserting a positive climate for learning and the right to learn and the dignity of the classroom.

**The impact of that improvement activity?**

1. In tough circumstances we remain positive and problem solving and focussed as a team and secured a hugely positive Ofsted outcome.
2. In a large majority lessons and pupils are orderly and purposeful and progressive as Ofsted experienced and described.

**The impact of that improvement activity on pupil outcomes?**

1. All children whether engaged and motivated or disaffected and disruptive are relentlessly challenged and supported to be the former.
2. Pupils experience a largely “normal” classroom experience where learning is protected and promoted and happens.

## School improvement priorities 2017-2018: key challenges and opportunities

### Learning, teaching and assessment

1. Across the team and in every individual there is robust and reliable high expectation of the children and self and an urgent and habitual transparency about the inevitable challenges and setbacks and clear and tangible steps are taken to meet those challenges and address those setbacks by making **personal positive changes** in one's practice through a commitment to:
  - i. The humility to recognise where practice has frailties\* and standards are slipping and behaviour and learning are at risk and the humility too to speak up and seek help to improve;
  - ii. Continuously seeking to understand the children better in all their diversity and complexity, spark and challenge and being a "present" and active listener and contributor to and sometimes leader of the shifting and dynamic conversation formal and informal about best-practice;
  - iii. Consistently demonstrating the graft and energy to make real both emerging and the established best practice we have learned and shared and set out over time through bloody hard work and being alive and open to new ideas and ways of working.

\* is teaching exciting and engaging and modified and differentiated as that drives good behaviour not the other way round.

### Pertinent Ofsted grade descriptors: the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; "good"

- Teachers use effective planning to help pupils learn well. Time in lessons is used productively. Pupils focus well on their learning because teachers reinforce expectations for conduct and set clear tasks that challenge pupils.
- Teachers develop, consolidate and deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. They give sufficient time for pupils to review what they are learning and to develop further. Teachers identify and support effectively those pupils who start to fall behind and intervene quickly to help them to improve their learning.
- Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan learning that sustains pupils' interest and challenges their thinking. They use questioning skilfully to probe pupils' responses and they reshape tasks and explanations so that pupils better understand new concepts. Teachers tackle misconceptions and build on pupils' strengths.
- Teachers expect and encourage all pupils to work with positive attitudes so that they can apply themselves and make strong progress.
- Most pupils commit to improving their work. They are given time to apply their knowledge and understanding in new ways that stretches their thinking in a wide range of subjects, and to practise key skills.
- Teachers challenge stereotypes and the use of derogatory language in lessons and around the school. Teachers promote equality of opportunity and diversity in teaching and learning.

**Personal development, behaviour and welfare: current self-evaluation: good**

**Planned and proactive school improvement activity in 2016-17**

1. We protected and sustained the self-awareness and a commitment to and a belief in the power of modelling always the behaviours we want to promote in the children and young people most notably and pertinently greater self-control and self-awareness recurrent goals in "statements" and EHCPs.
2. As challenges and frailties have emerged the team remained committed to a more reflective and creative response to change us to change them.
3. Safeguarding continues to be relentlessly privileged and the dialogue about it formal and informal and our interventions central to our work every day.

**The impact of that improvement activity?**

1. Ofsted have powerfully confirmed and affirmed by privileging positive modelling and a more reflective approach we have then promoted the good relationships that underpin safety and good order and maintained a safe and stable community in the face of many pressures and disadvantages.
2. Risks and challenges whether year groups, classes, individuals, combinations and chemistry have been acknowledged and prompted the reflection and action and creativity that ameliorates them and protects and promotes good behaviour and learning.
3. A multiplicity of risks have been made and kept safe as Ofsted judged, "everything possible is done to keep pupils safe".

**The impact of that improvement activity on pupil outcomes?**

1. Their safety wellbeing, their good behaviour and their learning protected and promoted.
2. As above
3. As above

**Emerging challenges and obstacles to improvement; threats and opportunities**

1. As with learning and teaching and assessment although we anticipated and planned to an extent for staffing losses and their impact the accumulative effect proved greater and our collective emotional stamina and energy critical to promoting personal development, behaviour and welfare denuded and the latter put at risk...
2. As described above the "blame culture" and the creeping lack of trust in and respect for teachers including unfair and escalatory and abusive behaviours in a very small minority of parents and carers generates powerful stresses and hurt and both saps staff energy and diverts it.

**Consequent reactive school improvement activity**

1. Governors engaged quickly with emerging risk and challenge and offered support. Leaders of all kinds established and emerging and the unexpected led by example. Genuine team-working and an esprit de corps long embedded sustained and motivated group.
2. As described above the school sought to be transparent and assertive and conciliatory and accommodating to preserve the positive home school relationships that promote good behaviour in the children

**The impact of that improvement activity?**

1. Vigilant and visible governance both in school and through regular communication provided support and encouragement and bolstered and sustained SLT and this healthy contagious positivity and mutual respect and support tapped into and enhanced established strong team spirit and in adversity team remained positive and problem solving and the good health of community protected. We secured a deserved and affirming and confidence building Ofsted judgment and report.
2. Relationships were healed and bridges built.

**The impact of that improvement activity on pupil outcomes?**

1. The student community largely experiences school as "normal" despite described pressures and visiting governors note whilst it is clear things are hard the prevailing mood in school is stable and positive and good natured (this powerfully linked to our determination to model positive behaviours always)
2. The behaviour of those young people stabilised and improved in all but one case.

## **School improvement priorities 2017-2018: key challenges and opportunities**

### **Personal development behaviour and safety**

1. The proven power of positive role-modelling and the insights we have gained through exploring attachment disorder and the mental health and wellbeing of the children and we will seek to embed our understanding of what it means to be: playful; accepting; curious and empathetic with our EP Bryony.
2. Throughout the team and as a part of a core theme in our improvement efforts each individual across disciplines will relentlessly ask themselves how they are going to develop their understanding and practice to promote and embed positive behaviours in the children and young people? We replicate the priorities of personal change set out in learning, teaching and assessment.
3. We all consolidate and protect the rigorous habitual sharing of safeguarding risks generated by and around the children, by their lives, by us, by our systems and ways of working and critically act quickly and intelligently to manage and make those risks safe.

### **Pertinent Ofsted grade descriptors: personal development, behaviour and welfare; “good”**

- Pupils’ good conduct reflects the school’s efforts to promote high standards. There are marked improvements in behaviour for individuals or groups with particular behavioural needs.
- Parents, staff and pupils have no well-founded concerns about personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- The school’s open culture promotes all aspects of pupils’ welfare. Pupils are safe and feel safe.
- Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day, including at lunchtimes.
- In secondary schools, pupils use impartial careers guidance to make choices about the next stage of their education, employment, self-employment or training.
- Teachers and other adults are quick to tackle the rare use of derogatory or aggressive language and always challenge stereotyping.
- Teachers and other adults promote clear messages about the impact of bullying and prejudiced behaviour on pupils’ well-being. Pupils work well with the school to tackle and prevent the rare occurrences of bullying.

Supporting documents	Pertinence
1. behaviour and safety indicators Autumn 2 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence to support our assertion we have protected and promoted safeguarding, wellbeing and the positive climate for learning.</li> </ul>
2. SIP-PM 17-18 review and action Autumn 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes sharper an simpler focus post Ofsted</li> </ul>
3. Ofsted report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ultimate QA for governors</li> </ul>
Access to all website published documents for example our safeguarding portfolio ( <a href="http://www.barleylane.devon.sch.uk">www.barleylane.devon.sch.uk</a> click “about us” section”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors curiosity often leads to these documents for example scrutinising absconding naturally prompts a look at our guidance on its management.</li> </ul>