

Barley Lane School

Hard work, humility, kindness

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Head-teacher's supplementary report to SBLT com: Summer 2016

Context for report

Now five weeks into the last half-term of the academic year this report supports the interim reporting to committee/governors that described the completed first half of the summer term 2016. It dovetails with and is prompted by the final meeting of the SBLT com in the penultimate week of the term.

The challenges described in my interim reporting a little over a month ago have persisted and indeed sharpened and been augmented in the weeks that have passed.

- The emerging failure of a sister school locally a powerful and humbling reminder of both our own journey and of the critical importance of good order and discipline and a positive climate for learning in our setting as **without them nothing else good can happen** most powerfully and pertinently you cannot keep young people safe and they cannot learn.
- Multiple legitimate and unavoidable staff absence through significant health issues, training commitments, personal challenges, career changes and jury service impact on capacity: this compounded by the loss of two of our most talented and influential support staff until September.
- The accumulative fatigue felt by ever present and “visible” staff whose discretionary effort has been both essential and uplifting but also worn them out with many like footballers carrying injuries that mean they should be rested but there is no capacity to do so.
- The matter of “capacity” identified by governor visits as a key challenge both now in protecting the positive climate in the community and our wellbeing and in our improvement planning.
- Spike in high risk behaviours from an elite of super complex youngsters (this at first persisted and increased and then declined and we regrouped and reasserted a prevailing positive climate for learning) increases demand and pressure on already denuded capacity;
- Exam and accreditation pressures on students and staff (these continued in the first few weeks of the new half-term) and their labour intensive nature (the majority of children have one to one support of some kind in public exams and others carefully risk managed with off-site exam centres and multiple invigilators compounds pressure on already denuded capacity);
- Anticipated and now overdue Ofsted visit inevitably impacts staff anxiety and stress levels adding to already tough environment.

As with original reporting for summer half-term #1 this narrative supported by a range of documents.

- An update on key behaviour indicators
- An update on attendance
- Recent examples of work in quality of teaching and learning
- Work done to ensure alternative provision meets Ofsted expectations.
- A reminder of both DfE guidance and our own in the sensitive matter of holding children.
- The Ofsted report on a sister school judged “inadequate” as a reminder of our own potential frailty and the critical importance of maintaining good order and discipline and a positive climate for learning.

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Leadership and management

Key activity and impact:

- The leadership team in the primary school has maintained its stability without drawing on secondary resources and it autonomous working therefore a significant contribution to the wider recovery of the community. Leading staff and their team proving both talented but hugely committed and resilient and robustly independent as a result the positive climate for learning protected. A related positive outcome is their ability to attract students and overcome parental concerns even prejudices as visits to the primary school so consistently positive and reassuring for families.
- The headteacher temporarily both leading more often and working daily alongside senior colleagues and visibly supporting them and if necessary taking the lead in response to the persisting levels of risk and challenge and a sharp rise and “spike”: as a consequence the community recovered it equilibrium and a measurably sharp fall in incidents and a return to the critical “positive climate” was achieved by week 4 and sustained into week 5.
- AHT with responsibility for alternative provision has worked tirelessly both pragmatically to sustain and create vocational and mentoring opportunities that have supported the “elite” group responsible for bulk of risk and challenge and to quality assure the provision offered using Ofsted frameworks and recent feedback on AP. In doing so both the individuals and the wider community of children have benefitted: the former have avoided FTE even potential PEX in two cases and in some long term cases stabilised and returned to conventional school based learning the latter because the community has stabilised and been made safer. The QA work has ensured AP is safe and purposeful (DJ has shared evidence with governors and attends SBLT).
- AHT for learning and teaching has led by example providing safety and success in class for our most challenging and complex youngsters and groups providing a benchmark for what can be achieved and in doing so preventing the ever present risk of a dropping of standards and less rigorous colleagues excusing poor behaviour and learning.
- AHT for learning and teaching been forensic in day to day deployment of staffing and in doing so scaffolded the return to good order and discipline.
- Emerging leaders in the teaching team have been prominent in their contribution to our now building positive momentum and recovery leading in the wider school for example activities and lunches and deepening and broadening the sense of strong benign authority in the community that the children and young people must sense to prevent poor behaviour becoming contagious.
- It remains true and colleagues deserve affirmation here that both the bursar role and the innovated SDO support officer role are embedding; the former has ameliorated uncertainty created by current funding model and allowed essential decision and action on staffing and supporting students at risk of PEX, the latter has ensured we are ever present at all professional meetings and increased our capacity daily and accumulatively to document, reflect and act on the multiplicity of safeguarding risk.
- As a result of esprit de corps and generosity of spirit and hard work the children and young people have accessed a positive climate for learning despite pressures as a result and also benefited from the improvements described.

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Learning and teaching and assessment

Key activity and impact:

- It is critical to restate the already shared: teachers identified have accepted need for consolidation and improvement and latter tangible already in some cases for example improved environment and “buddying” **building confidence and assertiveness and teacher pupil relationships improved.**
- We have maintained a robust dialogue about best practice and from that conversation formal and informal **key areas of focus for next year are tangibly emerging for example “differentiation” and “bossing the room”** (of course these big subjects need unpicking and measuring) **and the team now “own” these emerging priorities empowering me to hold them to account.**
- The conversation about best practice where we insist we reflect relentlessly on what we need to do consistently well, differently or better (we use our extended morning briefings that bookend the week, daily briefings and debriefings and our Tuesday extended twilight sessions) **keeps motivated honest staff just that and casts light into the corners where a small minority of staff would prefer to stay in their personal comfort zones: the rigour and good health of the herd then insisting the potentially unhealthy and uncommitted are accountable and exposed.** We resist the inert information sharing and negation of personal responsibility that characterise poor practice and failing schools (governors have received a copy off the Torbay report and please note behaviour being left unchallenged and an absent headteacher) and we have been just that too and can never be less that committed or we will return to failure. **The team’s focus is sharply on core skills and outcomes: maintaining good order and discipline and the positive climate for learning and achieving both.**
- The emergence of natural leaders and leadership in the teaching team and this across a range of activity from a hugely successful DoE project and a wider well established outdoor ed’ package through strong classroom practice and “buddying” of colleagues to engaging positively with families and other professionals and throughout intelligent and influential contributions to a pragmatic, insightful and creative approach to the best practice conversation. **Colleagues then have improved the experience of the children in class and beyond and impacted positively also on the community of children and young people**
- It is at this time that AHT SR gathers learning outcomes and we await GCSE and other accreditation results to report in the Autumn **but successes are already secured in PE for example where A-C grades again achieved and the successful completion of DoE for a group of KS3 youngsters.**

Pupil development welfare and safety

Key activity and impact:

- We continue to share and explore daily safeguarding risks in the spirit previously shared, *“The breadth of risks from benign neglect through physical and sexual abuse to CSE and radicalisation prompted both by type and actual children have been revisited and tested”*. Sharing with social care colleagues is habitual and also with the MASH hub. The SDO support officer continues to grow into her role successfully. **Vigilance and diligent sharing and recording make children safer.**

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- A powerful theme emerging around safeguarding in the weeks since I last reported has been the difficulty supporting children who have likely experienced or witnessed abuse including domestic violence. As they emerge as young adults in many cases we observe a significant intensifying of emotional agitation and consequent risks to them and the children and adults around them. AHT DJ's personalised AP packages have done much to pragmatically manage and ameliorate these risks. Co-operative working with social care and other diverse colleagues including GPs and family support workers and our attached EP has secured specialist settings and planned moves. We have tried both to understand and politely pursue other professionals most notably and frequently CAMHS and their sister organisation JACAT that can provide therapeutic help for our most risky and vulnerable youngsters. *As a result our most vulnerable youngsters are accessing support or we are actively seeking that support. We are also clear about not admitting children where the trauma is significant and the impediment to learning beyond our reach.*
- Another theme has been AHT DJ's work in quality assuring alternative provision and this has included as already shared making sure providers are safe. In practice this has meant sharing our guidance and expectations and best practice with providers and in highlighting any emerging frailties. *Children accessing AP are safer as a result.*
- We now have in-house counselling and mentoring capacity formalised post a project to test demand and we now move to testing effectiveness. *Six children currently are actively engaged in counselling in school and in time we can use our measures of behaviour and learning to track any improvement as a result.*
- The DoE project reached its conclusion and as a builder of character and confidence it is hugely credible and worthwhile both for the direct experience and the kudos it rightly enjoys. Alongside the physical challenges and learning the secondary students helping younger primary pupils with their literacy and reading a highlight. *Our young people have grown as a result and their access to further education, training and work all enhanced by the prestigious nature of their accredited achievement. Our school values of hard work and kindness embedded in this activity.*
- Notable too and worthy of sharing is the school's cricket team won a special school tournament but this significant because of the sportsmanship and kindness offered other children less physically able. *Kindness (empathy) we see as the critical personal quality we want to develop in our students and to do so through modelling and good example and through its promotion and celebration. To see it manifest spontaneously in public and offered to vulnerable peers a source of huge happiness in the team.*
- Recent reporting has made clear an elite of super high risk students creating huge challenges and as reported a month ago, *"Managing some super risky episodes and making safe the children involved through pragmatic and creative work with children, their parents and carers and attached professionals."* *This has continued and we are now successfully reintegrating youngsters and building personalised packages for those emerging as super risky*
- Significant daily safeguarding housekeeping is ongoing with attendance checked daily and reviewed weekly with trends monitored and poor attendance targeted. *We know where children are every day and how their attendance is in the medium term trends positive and negative. We engage with families and other professionals to improve matters.*
- We continue to reflect on and stay vigilant about the risky but necessary matter of holding children: *some children need to be held to be safe and to learn plus other children must be protected in both these things.*

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Pupil outcomes

Key activity and impact:

- As described previously through strong discretionary effort and esprit de corps **both individuals and the wider school community have been kept safe despite a very significant spike in very high risk behaviours.**
- Teachers have not been allowed to “drift” and where there has been “slippage” or attempts to dilute accountability or agreed improvement steps it has been robustly but professionally addressed. **This accountability protects the quality of work done with and for the children and young people and therefore their behaviour and learning.**
- The public exams have been tackled by students and staff with positivity and commitment and the school though wobbling at times has absorbed the considerable impact of the exam effort (it is very labour intensive and brings powerful stresses). **School community is again stable and year 11 students given maximum support and opportunity at this critical point of GCSE examinations.**
- As described AHT DJ sponsoring Y11 students with proactivity and persistence and maintained “packages” **and fought hard to promote attendance and engagement at a time when some leaving students can become very challenging. Careers Southwest report all recent leavers have actual placement in education training or practicable plans to secure places.**

document	Context	Pertinence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> behaviour and safety indicators update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a summary of behaviour and safety indicators to supplement original sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> personal development, behaviour and welfare
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> examples of development work in safeguarding and teaching and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence of ongoing dialogue and professional conversation about best practice in both. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> leadership and management/learning and teaching and assessment/ personal development, behaviour and welfare
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative provision: is it meeting Ofsted expectations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are high risk and complex youngsters doing as their finish line approaches? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learning and teaching and assessment/ personal development, behaviour and welfare/ pupil outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tracking attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update on students where improvement is needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> personal development, behaviour and welfare
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DfE guidance and our own in the sensitive matter of holding children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent vigilance essential in this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> personal development, behaviour and welfare
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ofsted report on a sister school judged “inadequate” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a reminder or our own potential frailty and the critical importance of maintaining good order and discipline and a positive climate for learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learning and teaching and assessment/ personal development, behaviour and welfare/ pupil outcomes