

Melland High School
Quality Assurance Review
17th October 2017

Principal	Sue Warner
Quality Assurance Consultant	Jim Muncey
Last Ofsted Inspection	February 2013 - Outstanding
Date of review	17 th October 2017
Purpose of review	<p>To review key developments within the school including teaching and learning, and developments in the curriculum and assessment arrangements as described within the School Improvement Plan.</p> <p>To reflect on, and discuss the development of, work on home learning.</p>
Summary of sources of evidence	<p>Website</p> <p>Documentation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson observation guidance • Lesson plans • Y7 literacy and numeracy catch up premium • Pupil premium 2016-2017 • Self evaluation • School improvement plans 2016-17 & 2017-18 • Teaching and learning • Assessment and whole school target setting 2016-17 • Assessment toolkit • Pupil progress and achievement over time • Achievement highlights 2016-17 • Summary of achievement • Outreach and inclusion • Quality assurance reports from consultants and challenge partners <p>Lesson observations of English, mathematics, science, complex needs and PMLD</p> <p>Discussions with SLT and middle managers, and during lessons: teachers, pupils, TAs and TLAs .</p>

Key Findings

Whole school:

- Documentation is comprehensive, relevant and succinct. It is understood and used by staff. It facilitates the translation of the strategic vision into the daily work of the school. It is focused on securing progress.
- The School Improvement Plan reflects the strategic priorities and is informed by rigorous self-evaluation. Priorities are monitored and evaluated by named governors, thereby reinforcing the strategic role of the Governing Body. The implementation plans for the priorities, which include details of monitoring, evaluation and evidence of impact assist the process of evaluation.
- Staff work effectively as a team. They have great professional respect for each other. They are willing to share successes as well as explore areas where they are experiencing difficulties. Where particular issues with individual pupils are encountered it becomes the responsibility of the team to resolve these issues and develop the most effective practice to ensure that progress is maximised. This willingness to share, discuss and debate challenges underpins the work of the school as an effective learning community where both pupils and staff are improving their knowledge, skills and understanding. Even where there is outstanding practice there is no complacency. There is a belief that all areas can be constantly improved and the robust processes of review and development ensure that this is the case. There is a “can do” culture. Staff want to respond effectively to the changing, and increasing, demands placed upon them. The fact that the school is receiving an increasing number of pupils with complex needs is seen as an appropriate challenge which has to be addressed. Being members of an effective team makes staff believe that they can, and they will, respond positively to change.
- Analysis of pupil progress is central to the appraisal of staff. Appraisal, in turn, is linked to professional development. Importantly the impact of professional development is evaluated. Questionnaires to evaluate impact are used at the conclusion of a professional development opportunity, as well as after there has been time to implement what has been learned. Impact is also examined through classroom observation. The fact that both the starting point and the conclusion of CPD is rooted in pupil outcomes is indicative of the focus of the school on achieving the best for its pupils. Priority 3 of the 2017-2018 Annual School Improvement Priorities is to review and refine the appraisal process for teaching assistants. Not surprisingly, this will examine how objectives can be underpinned by relevant professional development.

Classroom observation:

- The school has recently circulated The Ofsted grade descriptors for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. These form a useful adjunct to the other materials that have been developed to enable lessons to be evaluated. Whilst it is important to be mindful of these descriptors they should not detract from the detailed analysis of effective practice that is being developed within the school. This appropriately emphasises making judgments by examining the impact of actions on pupil progress. Indeed, the revised Ofsted framework of 2015 recognises that for some pupils, where cognitive ability is such that attainment will always be very low in relation to national norms, judgments on outcomes should be based on the evaluation of pupils’ learning and progress relevant to their own starting points. Ofsted also recognises that judgments of effective teaching and learning should take account of any assessment measures a school uses. It is therefore essential that there are robust systems for assessment and recording of pupil progress in the school.
- Within Melland the assessment of pupil outcomes is central to the process of teaching and learning. It underpins the flexible and creative teaching observed in classes. Teachers are

adept at exploring approaches that are best fitted to the changing needs of pupils. They are skilled at developing and testing hypotheses. This allows solutions to be found to overcome the barriers and challenges to learning experienced by the pupils. Teaching is therefore responsive to the needs of each individual. Staff are relentless in their quest to optimise pupil progress. They have high expectations of all pupils. The relationship that staff have with their pupils means that these expectations are communicated to pupils who want to do well and believe that they can.

- In classes teamwork is excellent. Staff work together to arrive at a detailed and accurate analysis of each pupil's needs. They adapt approaches to ensure that progress is maximised. They are well able to describe how a particular action has led to a specific outcome. The accuracy and ongoing use of assessment ensures that teaching approaches are responsive to the changing needs of the pupils.
- A scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrates the progress that they are making. Judgment of progress is facilitated where pupils' work is recorded overtime in exercise books or is collated within a file. For some pupils this is a useful means of demonstrating to them that they are making progress. It could also help to inform parents and carers about the work, and the progress being made.
- TAs and TLAs are deployed effectively within classes. Under the guidance of teachers, they have a detailed knowledge of what pupils can do and what they need to be taught next. Importantly, they know when not to intervene as well as when to offer direct support. They understand the importance of allowing pupils to try things for themselves rather than rushing in to complete tasks on their behalf. One TA stated that a significant change in her work was that she now focused on ensuring that pupils made good progress and maximised their potential. Whilst they may be focusing on particular pupils within a class they are prepared to offer support to other pupils when it is appropriate to do so. This flexible deployment is important in ensuring that the resource they offer has the maximum impact within a class.
- Knowledge of the pupils enables staff to make judgments about how long it is reasonable to expect an individual to engage in a task. Individual programmes are tailored to match attention spans. For some pupils work is interspersed with planned programmes of physical activity. This maximises the period of effective learning.
- Staff understand the importance of cross curricular work. For example, in a science lesson on rocketry there was appropriate reference to mathematical language and measurement. This ensures that learning is reinforced and also made relevant to the needs of the pupils. The pupils also enjoy the challenge and excitement that such lessons provide. It secures their motivation to learn and makes them want to find out more about the world around them.
- Technology is used to support and enhance learning. For example, with PMLD the "Evidence for Learning" app is being used. In an English lesson iPads were observed being used as accessible dictionaries, which was also a useful motivator.
- Group work is effective. Staff knowledge of their pupils enables them to encourage pupils to work constructively together. Pupils feel sufficiently comfortable with each other to cooperate with tasks; for example, in an English lesson on "Treasure Island" pupils were asking each other questions. This facilitated them using prior knowledge to predict what might happen next.

Assessment:

- Assessment of progress is central to the work of the school, ensuring that teaching is effective and learning maximised. National work on assessment, including commercial schemes, has been examined in order to ascertain the relevance to the school population at Melland. Analysis has allowed a comprehensive assessment toolkit to be developed which combines commercial materials, such as B squared, with locally developed approaches.

The whole school approach that is being developed, which is adapted to the different needs and ages of the pupils, covers knowledge, skills and understanding. The process the school has been through to develop a coherent, relevant, robust and practical approach is clear. Decisions taken can be explained, evidenced and, where necessary, defended. The approach that has resulted ensures that what is important for the pupils is assessed rather than only what can be easily measured and quantified.

- As well as directly informing teaching, pupil outcomes are analysed at a whole school level. This enables the monitoring of the progress of individuals and key groups, such as pupils eligible for the pupil premium. Data underpins the process of moderating judgments. The work is scrutinised by other schools and professionals external to the school. It is symptomatic of the work of the school that staff are constantly striving for the best. High aspirations characterise the work. Accurate assessment is the vehicle for identifying aspirational and challenging targets which are linked to national and local benchmarking data. Personalisation of targets is facilitated by the detailed knowledge of each pupil's needs. This knowledge informs the accurate professional judgments made by the staff. Regular progress meetings are used to moderate judgments and, where necessary teaching methods, by identifying specific interventions to maximise progress.
- The work of the assessment group on the development of assessment without national curriculum levels, coupled with the retirement of the data manager, has led to data analysis becoming a more distributive process. This has had the benefit of empowering subject co-ordinators and teachers and making them more accountable for progress in their areas.
- Staff are well aware that the system of assessment is a vehicle to inform planning and assess the impact of their work. It is not in itself a curriculum and does not dictate what should be taught. Developments have allowed for greater creativity, with assessment supporting the professional judgment of teachers. The fact that subject co-ordinators are now more accountable is important to these developments.
- The school is systematically building up longitudinal data whilst linking with other schools to establish what is outstanding progress as well as practice. Links with other establishments is also an important element of moderation, a process that is already undertaken rigorously within the school as a consequence of the effective teamwork.

Early cognition and communication assessment (SIP Priority 5):

- Much work has been undertaken on researching what is the most meaningful curriculum and assessment arrangements for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The aim is to produce a curriculum that is an holistic, process based, sensory curriculum that is delivered through a personalised approach. The key areas covered include thinking skills, communication, physical development and personal care and independence.
- Importantly the work that is being undertaken is not prematurely jettisoning the current system, whilst recognising its limitations. The teacher leading on the development has the confidence of the team working in this area and they are keen to rise to the challenge of developing new approaches.
- The developmental work is appropriately focused on physical development and communication. This helps to ensure that the work is relevant to the pupils and meaningful to their families.
- It is recognised that progress is not linear and that teaching therefore needs to be responsive and creative. There is a significant variation in the needs of the pupils with PMLD, who form an heterogeneous group. Also the needs of individual pupils with PMLD can change over a short space of time. The new approach has the ability to be responsive to these changing needs.
- The teaching assistants working with pupils with PMLD are positive about the developments. It is enabling them to take on a wider role. They feel more confident in going beyond a caring role. They are becoming adept at knowing when to intervene and

when not to intervene; that is they are becoming better at knowing and responding to the needs of their pupils. The environment in which they work encourages discussion and fosters a team approach to problem solving.

- The development of the learning hierarchy covering acquisition, fluency, maintenance and generalisation of skills has great potential.

Integrate range of pupil outcomes identified in EHCPs, PEPs, and LAC reviews (SIP Priority 13):

- It is proving a challenge to integrate the targets in the EHCPs in particular into the work of the school in a manner which is both manageable and meaningful. Whilst it is important to be able to demonstrate progress in relation to targets in these documents it is essential that they are interpreted in a manner which allows them to be assimilated into the developing work on the curriculum and assessment taking place in the school.
- The Assistant Principal leading on the work is developing possible practical approaches. This was demonstrated by taking the example of an EHCP outcome for 2022, “to develop functional maths skills”. Work is also taking place on how school reports could be used as a vehicle for reporting the outcomes identified in other plans.
- The Head of the Sixth Form is working on the implication of the reviews for older pupils in terms of planning and commissioning future provision.

Raise standards in reading and ICT through a cross curricular termly focus on reading, ICT and home learning (SIP Priority 14):

- Cross curricular work is evident within classrooms in terms of planning, teaching and learning and displays.
- The challenge now is to develop home learning so that it is relevant, practical and manageable.
- Discussion took place on some of the most appropriate ways to develop home learning and the benefits of working with an identified group.

Possible Areas for Further Development:

- It is recognised by the school that the development of new approaches to assessment and data analysis is not without risk. B squared does not provide the benchmarking that has been helpful for comparative judgments and it does not transfer readily to CASPA. It is therefore important to continue to develop collaborative work with other schools whilst remaining vigilant to national and local developments.
- National changes to the science curriculum pose a challenge as there is an insufficient skills content for pupils at the school. The work on developing a bespoke, skill based assessment system is encouraging and needs to continue. It is also important to continue to explore and develop approaches to the assessment of citizenship and humanities.
- The school is mindful of the need to ensure that all pupils are challenged appropriately. Changes to the curriculum and assessment arrangements, together with the changing profile of pupils being admitted to the school, means that it is particularly important to keep the definition of what constitutes outstanding and good progress under review.
- Developments taking place in the school with the curriculum and assessment arrangement for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties have the potential to be useful to other teachers, particularly as the school is admitting an increasing number of pupils with complex difficulties. However, before wider dissemination occurs further work needs to take place and be evaluated.

- The work on the integration of outcomes identified in EHCPs, PEPs and LAC reviews is on the right path although more remains to be done. It is important that the school is able to integrate the pupil targets into the work of the school in a meaningful way that does not distort the effective work being undertaken on the curriculum and assessment. Initial development should be piloted on a small scale before any decision is taken to roll out the work across the school.
- Different ways of communicating with parents need to be explored and it needs to be established what it is that the school could do best to support parents. Discussing this further with staff is a first step. Ideas may also be found on the internet including exploring the work of professionals such as Barry Carpenter.
- In order to conform with DfE recommendations about school websites consideration should be given to information related to the funding and contact details for the Chair of Governors. It would also be helpful if the section for parents had the details of the member of staff that they could approach for more information. More information on what should be published can be found on the Gov.uk website.