

Larwood School

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WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT OURSELVES-LARWOOD SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION SERIES 2019-20

FOCUS: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

This report should be read alongside others in the 'What we know about ourselves' section of the website or internal server.

CONTEXT

Larwood School is a primary school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH) and all pupils have an Educational Health Care Plan. Pupils are referred to us as part of a panel system organised by Hertfordshire. Key factors to consider as part of this year included:

- During the course of 2019-20, we added to our capacity from 80 to 86 pupils. This was due to the revamping of a previous space called the Playbarn, which enabled ore pupils to join our school and reduce lost time away from education. This was in direct response to the placement crisis that Hertfordshire has been experiencing with special needs pupils.
- During the course of the year, around 60% of our pupils either had a formal diagnosis of autism or had the traits of autistic behaviour
- Like other schools across the country our provision was effected by Covid 19. We took the decision to close down at the start of the crisis (March) due to a lack of staff and the high infection rate. During the Easter holidays we opened for Key Worker pupils, then slowly but carefully expanded numbers over a period of weeks. BY June we had all pupils experiencing some physically based provision, except those that needed to shield, and those whereby parents choose to keep children at home for a variety of reasons. Therefore, we had half of the year effected by Covid 19, which impacted upon our attendance, progress and curriculum model.
- We adapted our provision in light of Covid 19 to provide a physical school and virtual school.
- We continued to support a local secondary SEMH School (Brandles) that had gone into Special Measures following inspection in 2018. In Feb 2020, they were formally adopted in Larwood Academy Trust.
- We were inspected by Ofsted in October 2019 and it concluded that:

Larwood School continues to be a good school.

There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now.

Pupils thrive at this school. They learn in a stimulating environment where adults deliver curriculum that is exciting and helps pupils learn well. Pupils' needs are often met through carefully planned activities from specialist teachers. Staff organise learning to get the very best from pupils.



All of our pupils have all experienced exclusion and at least 1 term away from education. The vast majority of pupils arrive at Larwood having been receiving part time education. One hour a day quite often being the norm.

It is appropriate to state that all of our pupils have experienced the challenges and issues that any officially designated pupil premium pupil may have.

Please note there are specific characteristics of this cohort which include family related breakdown including pupils witnessing violent incidents, legal proceedings, medication issues, family upheaval/displacement, and drug and alcohol related issues.

OVERALL GENERAL PROFILE FOR THE SCHOOL DURING 2019-20

Year	Number of pupils and % change over the year	Boy/girl	% Autistic Spectrum Condition	% 2years plus at Larwood	Profile Low/Mid/High
1	0-	NA		0	
2	6-50%	Boys	67%	0	80/20/0
3	10-50%	Boys	60%	40%	90/10/0
4	17-53%	16 B 1G	67%	41%	78/22/0
5	25-28%	23B 2G	44%	50%	92/8/0
6	26-35%	20B 6G	50%	11-46%	84/16/0

KEY POINTS ARISING FROM THIS PROFILE WITH IMPACT ON FUTURE PRACTICE:

1. The biggest 'in year' pupil variation took place for across three year groups this year, whilst we have tended to have one year that stands out. Therefore, Years 2, 3 and 4 all had 50%+ variation. Our systems have refined to such an extent that this is our 'norm' and I have challenged many an external visitor (including Ofsted in October 2019) to identify new pupils in the class. None have been successful so far!
2. We remain heavily boy orientated however, we did have our highest number of girls for some time- 7. Curriculum adjustments were made to reflect this, including some topics and groupings being for girls only.
3. The Space Hub evolved and much of its practice refined to assist pupils with autism. This was noted via our 2019 inspection.
4. As with many other schools and the rest of the UK, we only had what can be described as a 'normal' six months of provision. From March onwards, we had to rapidly adapt due to Covid 19. This led to a restructuring of staff roles and a vast range of video/online learning resources being used for our pupils. We maintained a Key Worker/most vulnerable group throughout the pandemic, and then gradually extended numbers when safe to do so. Therefore, by July, we had approx. two thirds of the pupil population accessing at least two days of physically taught curriculum per week.



PROCESS AND RIGOR RELATED TO SELF-EVALUATION AND HOW THIS IS THEN USED

As a school, we have developed a comprehensive and critical approach towards our own self-evaluation. The process operates as follows:

Daily review of pupil performance and well-being via the **reflection process**.

Questions used are:

What has gone well and should be repeated?

What didn't go so well and should be avoided?

Celebration of 'magic moments'



This feeds into a **weekly SLT meeting**, based on data drawn from Behaviour Watch, and leads to us critically asking how we can make the next day/hour/week better for our pupils? (Friday-8:00am)

An additional weekly SLT meeting (3.50 until finished) reviews any matters of a strategic nature, again using data where possible.



We **review our own pupil performance data on a half-termly/termly basis**, which generates some professional development training sessions and pupil interventions.



Information is sought from parents, pupils, staff and governors at various times during the year to assess our performance in a variety of ways. For example, there is an annual Governing Body Training Day whereby all governors visit classes to see how we work and generate critical questions based on their visits, we generate staff and parent surveys, staff are involved in strengths, weaknesses and next type activities.



Half-termly moderation of assessments and moderation of assessments with Local Authority/School Colleagues during the year.

We work with an external advisor, who is also an Ofsted Inspector to review our work, assess our own internal judgements such as lesson observations and data analysis, as well as helping to develop staff.



Annual '**What we know about ourselves**' self-evaluation reports, written by the Headteacher covering Behaviour, Attendance and Exclusion, Teaching and Learning, Pupil Progress and Achievement, Pupil Premium, Sports Premium, Children Looked After, Residential Provision and Leadership and Management.



Individual plans related to various areas of school improvement and created using school based and external data. For example, to focus on the improvement of extended writing in terms of quality and quantity over time. Annual review of progress as noted above.



Creation of School Development Plan, which last for three years.

Ofsted Inspection aligned with time scale for Schools judged as 'good' during their last inspection



POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS DURING 2019-20

- **School vision, ambition and expectations.** At the start of the academic year, we expected to raise the bar again, in all that we do. We looked forward to an Ofsted visit and worked hard to ensure Brandles School joined our Trust. Ofsted confirmed our internal self-evaluation and we continue to move forwards in providing outstanding provision. Staff met expectations and many delivered in a hugely positive manner during the pressure and anxiety associated with the Covid pandemic.
- **School vision, ambition and Expectations - Governance.** Throughout the year, the governing body have committed time and energy to challenge and support the school. This has included the additional responsibility of potential sponsorship for another school, the continued expansion of knowledge needed as an academy in terms of financial accountability and ensuring that the pupils received the best quality/value of education possible. **School vision, ambition and expectations - Two pupils from Year 6 returned to mainstream settings during the secondary transfer process.**
- **School vision, ambition and expectations.** Sharing our skills and knowledge with others. We had numerous examples of this during the course of the year. Up until Feb, and with DFE delays we decided to implement our own plan of support for Brandles. This included weekly visits/meetings and advice by the Headteacher, weekly support for site and health/safety and weekly ICT support. Financial support was delivered by our Trust lead for this area. This had to be modified when the person concerned moved to Switzerland but our early adoption of Zoom/Teams has meant continued high levels of support and guidance. The result of this was a negative budget has very quickly been transformed into a healthy one. **Our capacity to support the Stevenage community with behavior and well-being was also enhanced** in 2019-20. Additional staff were added to the team led by Joe Scales, and until Covid took place we had set a pace of adding more training and including extra depth to training for this year. The Headteacher (Exec Head from Feb 2020) remains an important part of the Hertfordshire Heads association and continues to be retained as Professional Partner by Hertfordshire. The locality recognizes our continued work in improving behavior, attendance and innovation.
- **Leadership and management of behavior and attendance.** (Please see dedicated report for this). I am proud to note the continued reduction for the need of use of restrictive physical intervention (RPI) to the lowest figure in the school's history, until Covid took place and all pupils were present. With just one incident requiring a restrictive based hold, we believe we would have stayed on this number for the year. Internal reflection of behavior management and external improvement partner all agree this is an area of outstanding practice.
- **NO FIXED TERM OR PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS THIS YEAR OR FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS.** Attendance systems have been reviewed and altered, and attendance finished the year at 94.8%, until March 2020.
- **Leadership and management of the curriculum.** Great steps were taken in this area last year, as confirmed by a number of comments in our Ofsted report - Oct 2019. We shared the view of inspectors that we still have work to do but we had established a strong platform for continued review. The Chris Quigley curriculum and associated assessment procedures



have given our pupils and staff a relevant and adaptable way of working that is met with enthusiasm and results in better progress for the vast majority. 'Hands on Mondays', dedicated RE/PSHE weeks, innovative PSHE lessons, and progressive core subjects enable good levels of pupil engagement. So much so that one inspector commented how pupils were 'wired for learning' during the inspection process. Numerous trips, and additional activities supplement our work such as local theatres, sporting venues and competitions, parks, and geographical/historical events on close proximity.

- **Leadership and management of safeguarding** - Due to the excellent communication and procedural systems for this area, Bianca Osobu and Sian Ford have ensured we lead from the front in this area. Additionally, having recruited another member of the staff to be trained in this area-Nic Newman, last year, we decided to add another for the next year (20-21). This was partly due to Nics role changing in relation to ICT and the Trust but also enabled continued development and progression for our support staff where appropriate. We continue to randomly sample and challenge our work practice on a weekly basis (Covid pending) and as Ofsted noted we challenge with dogmatic dedication where we believe support is not appropriate or to the standard the pupil requires. Please refer to Headteachers notes/examples-confidential.
- **Leadership and management of personal development.** This continued in the same vein as last year, with a strong focus on day to day wellbeing, application of the Life Skills courses via Skills afternoons, the introduction of Coaches and Rangers (peer to peer coaching after course/qualification and making an impact in the local community via various events including litter picking and supporting the elderly). Great emphasis placed on personal safety throughout the year, and pupils are well versed in the key questions about being able to access a trip. **This includes 'are you safe and can you be trusted.' Please ask any pupil for proof!** A wide range of pupils would have normally taken part in developmental activities such as horse riding, a PGL trip away for 3 days, a whole year group trip to London to see a theatre performance however, as expected some of these events were cancelled due to the pandemic.
- **Leadership and management of British Values.** We have continued to drip feed these values through to pupils via formal and informal events and curriculum activities. As noted previously we have good support (in comparison to previous years) from the Police. Meetings with pupils and attendance at assembly has taken place. The rule of law has been reinforced carefully, Democratic process and its value is seen day by day, with pupil voice being sought in a variety of scenarios, and an elected pupil council. Respect and tolerance are encouraged via formal curriculum planning and via our rigorous behavior management policy. We have also added to the breadth of our curriculum this year to engender further respect and tolerance of others via trips to places of worship and exploration of alternative faith/cultures. A key aspect of pupil led change at Larwood is for them to take responsibility for themselves, their actions and their learning. Our continued pattern of reduced RPI's, incidents, increasing number of pupils achieving our Shirt Award program (90+/100 points each week for at least 6 weeks in a row) also indicated good progress in this area. Our continued expansion of pupils managing themselves led to having to buy additional benches for them to sit on during Friday reward assemblies.



- **Leadership and management of well-being pupils/staff.** Attendance data indicating 94.8% attendance, reduction in the use of RPI and incidents (See separate SEF reps), all indicate positively for general well-being of pupils and staff. The introduction of class led initiatives such as meditation and mindfulness seem to have been well received but need thorough review. Supportive therapies for certain pupils included horse riding, school based therapy dog, externally sourced therapy dog, counselling, art therapy, school based family and pupil support worker, and use of an externally sourced family and community based support worker were all deployed.

During 2020, a locally based counseling service, moved onsite to be based at Larwood. This has added to our repertoire of services and quick access when needed for pupils and families across the Trust. We are the only Special School in Hertfordshire to work in this way.

Well-being for staff has been enhanced by involving staff in continuous discussions and then acting accordingly when possible. Our previous provision of Perkbox discounts was upgraded to Medicash for all staff within the Trust. This provides cashback for a wide range of medical procedures (e.g. eye tests) as well as discounts for shopping. Up until lockdown, we provided free weekly fitness session delivered at school, unique attendance reward scheme, access to counselling and financial support via our insurance scheme provide comprehensive coverage when compared with others. The staff room was completely revamped in summer 2019, based on staff views and refined practice at school.

- **Leadership and management of CPD.** A comprehensive CPD program has been delivered and records of this are available. A number of sessions were evaluated by staff and actions take where needed, as well as feedback shared with staff who delivered the training. Comments have included ‘more in-depth knowledge of record of concerns’, ‘made me revisit the safeguarding policy’, ‘the features and symptoms of psychosis were well detailed and explained at good pace. In fact, the trainer explained every aspect of psychosis that he brought up’, and importantly:

‘Helpful and look forward to the next one. Good to see that our comments last year have directly influenced the training this year as well’.

- **Leadership and management of finance and resources.** Our documented minutes from Finance, Premises and Personnel meetings (see minutes) indicate continued stringent planning for financial matters and allocation of resources to enhance learning. We adapted the leadership of this area, by retaining a Trust Leader who moved away but works via Teams/dedicated visits etc. as well as having a school based Finance Officer. Please see our budgets/balances for evidence.

WHAT DID WE DO DURING THE PANDEMIC RELATED TO COVID 19?

After an initial two closure just before the Easter holidays (unsafe staffing levels due to isolation procedures), we started to have a number of pupils back in school during the Easter holidays. We did the following over time:

- ***Initially maintained a small group of pupils in school with a small cohort of staff***
- ***Started to rotate staff each week for one/two days in school where they were able to***
- ***SLT came in every day but maintained social distance***



- *Monitored all pupils each week via tutor based calls/emails*
- *Tutors sent out personalized videos using the Larwood School YouTube channel*
- *Produced over 300 online lessons/assemblies and challenges for pupils when they were not in attendance*
- *Gradually extended the number of pupils and staff back in school over time. By July, all staff had been in school for at least one day and approx. two thirds of pupils had been back. Only those pupils whose parents did not want to send them back, or were shielding did not attend in July.*
- *We concentrated on outdoor learning and did not follow our prescribed curriculum for pupils in attendance at this time.*
- *The Headteacher write to parents each week and surveyed them as to what they wanted/planned for with their children.*

WHAT SHOULD LARWOOD SCHOOL DO TO ENHANCE BETTER PUPIL PROGRESSION, AS A RESULT OF THIS SELF-EVALUATION, NEXT YEAR?

Description	Desired impact	Indicators for success	Any cost?
Revise, implement and review our approach to leadership as the pandemic evolves	Consistent provision, 'first do not harm' approach and staff/pupils health. Flexible leadership that can rapidly adapt and maintain impact.	Pupil and staff attendance, alongside adapted and flexible provision.	2k for evolution of virtual learning.
Create and share a Trustee succession plan	Clear pathway for development over time for Trustee's	When needed, Trustees are ready and able to fulfil new roles as well as deliver quality challenge and support for Trust progression.	500-training
Revisit our approach to tracking and monitoring personal development	Renew approach to this with greater consistency and analysis.	Termly review/analysis of data alongside other assessment data.	Time
Set, monitor and evaluate Trust wide performance indicators	Evidenced based progress in all areas of the Trust	Attendance improved, behaviour (RPI/incidents) reduced,	Grant for such change is £75k



Continue to consider and evolve the MAT, where appropriate	A six school MAT by 2023, with all schools classed as good/outstanding and all financially stable	One school added by July 2020. One other school added by 2021. Six schools by 2025	Initial costs covered by associated grants, but process would seek to reduce costs for the MAT via economy of scales
Well-being for staff	Following staff involvement, additional staff wellbeing measures to be introduced.	Staff survey results/attendance and retention will continue to be excellent.	TBA

