



Larwood Academy Trust

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Larwood School

Deputy Headteacher: Mr Pierre Van Der Merwe | BA, NPQH |

Brandles School

Headteacher: Mr David Pearce | BA (hons), PGCE, NPQH |

What We Know About Ourselves-Larwood School Self Evaluation Series 2020-21

Larwood School Context and Generic Profile-Please see separate document.

NB-This year we have introduced the use of **KISS** to assist our self-evaluation review process:

K-Keep it

I-Improve (by doing what and what would be the expected outcome)

Start-a different way of working or project to assist this area, outlining the reasons and outcomes

Stop it! With reasons for this.

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, plus Safeguarding info and leads to us critically asking how we can make the next day/hour/week better for our pupils? (Friday-8:00am)

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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 termly basis**, which generates some professional development training sessions and pupil interventions. This comes from Depth Of Learning



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.

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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.

We work with Challenge Partners. We therefore have some form of review and SLT members take part in other school reviews each year

We seek accreditation and review from the National Autistic Society. This takes place every 3 years and we currently hold advanced accreditation status.



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.

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What has been working well and therefore we will Keep!

- ***School vision, ambition and expectations.*** At the start of the academic year, we had gone through the start of the pandemic and drawn our own conclusions of adaptations ready for Sept 2020. We reorganized SLT based on this experience (AHT-remote ED, DHT-Physical school based ED and Exec Head-Covid strategy and response for the Trust). We planned for external accountability with Challenge Partners and NAS accreditation process and delivered both, with very positive report/advanced accreditation status. We also ensured that progress was continued with rigor at Brandles School (our secondary school sponsored as part of our Trust-see separate reports such as Challenge Partner and key data such as results, incidents, attendance etc.) The impact of this has meant a challenging yet seamless change of leadership delivery which has maintained the quality of provision and enabled the school to meet externally based and demanding levels of quality assurance. ***In essence, in the most challenging of circumstances, we have continued to drive forwards according to plans and with Covid taking place.***

Impact-Challenge Partner Report 2021-There is also a culture of relentless improvement, described by the Headteacher as 'never standing still' coupled with a welcoming of 'outside eyes'. Self-evaluation is very rigorous. Each document in a wide-ranging series concludes with a section entitled 'What didn't go according to plan or as well as we had hoped?' This is followed by a section entitled 'What should the school do to enhance better pupil progression?' Staff are asked 'What may have slipped and what could we do better?' This self-reflection feeds into a thorough school development plan with ambitious targets for all areas in the school.

The report also stated the following: There is a culture of high challenge. For example pupils are encouraged to develop the communication skills to be able to provide feedback to their peers on their work.

- ***School vision, ambition and expectations-Governance.*** Trustees have had to adapt and overcome a range of obstacles during the course of the year due to the ongoing situation with the pandemic. Sub Committee meetings have adopted 'dashboards' for succinct overviews of school behaviour, attendance, safeguarding, teaching and

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learning. This has provided the platform for challenge and support in a virtually dominated world of governance. Trustees were part of the Challenge Partner process and an additional Trustee has been recruited. A LA endorsed application has been created and submitted to the DFE to be able to add further pupils at Brandles School which recognizes the progress made there in respect of teaching and learning. The Trust also now benefits from having the Chair of the Board also in the role of The Major of Stevenage and the Trust being one of the three nominated Mayoral Charities for 2021-22. Again, the impact of such decision making has meant an uninterrupted focus on the Trustees developmental plans for the schools/Trust during the most challenging of times.

Impact-Challenge Partner Review report -2021-The school has an ambitious vision to provide a nurturing environment for its pupils with a national reputation for quality and outcomes. This vision is shared across the leadership team. Governors, who are embedded in their local community, also share this vision. They have a good understanding of the school's priorities.

- ***School vision, ambition and expectations.*** Outreach. This continued under the leadership of Joe Scales and additional team members including Stuart Jacobs. Again the pandemic equated to increased need for flexibility of delivery modes over time. Much has been delivered virtually, some physically and there has also been a blended approach where needed. Even with such challenges, the impact has been noted as support for 35 children in 18 primary schools, across all age ranges. 83% of those worked with moved onto an increased timetable or full time provision, and staff surveys noted having a range of individualised strategies modelled as 'helpful, non-judgemental tailored approach, the creation of time with pupil to talk through possible choices, weekly updates and different approaches, understanding that noises made by a child in a heightened state is often self-regulating noises.' This helped staff to understand and handle situations differently and effectively, amongst other comments. (See detailed separate report)
- ***Leadership and management of behavior, safeguarding 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 no incidents requiring a restrictive based hold, reduced incidents, and attendance at the 96% mark.

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Considering the pandemic, the difficulties that families and pupils faced and the interrupted nature of the year, this is outstanding work by all involved.

NO FIXED TERM OR PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS THIS YEAR OR FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

Impact-Autism Accreditation Report-May 2021 stated Behaviour support and monitoring is focussed, pro-active and helps produce a great atmosphere with a focus on learning, well-being and progression. It guides interventions which are delivered across the school and adapted to meet the needs of the individual. The school during observations was really calm and where pupils were experiencing distress this was managed calmly without escalating the situation.

- ***Leadership and management of the curriculum.*** The year was characterized by the need for adaptation, flexibility of approach and we ensured that mental health came first! We had to react rapidly to the lockdown situation and there were no lost days of learning for any pupil due to technology. We had some pupils in all of the time during this phase so ran similar approaches for both sets of pupils. Geography and History were reviewed and changed using the similar approach to Math's/Literacy etc. and as suggested by our last Ofsted report. 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.

Impact-Challenge Partner Report 2021-The school has an exciting and engaging curriculum. It is built around literacy, numeracy and creativity. Larwood is a fun place to learn. There is a strong focus on the development of a love of learning.

The report also stated: The school seeks to embed the mastery and retention of learning by drawing on the community resources such as local cafes, eating out, theatre and cinema trips. Engagement is enhanced with pupil-friendly language such as work described as either hot, sizzling or scorching. There are 'stunning starters' and 'fantastic finishes.'

- ***Leadership and management of safeguarding-***Our continued determination to add strength to this area was not diminished by the pandemic. This is not due to the fact that we believe this is a weak area, but that we continue to value the importance of

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such procedures for all concerned. Our procedures for times when lock down or isolation become embedded (weekly/daily check ins via a variety of communication methods including Teams), and dedicated mental health support via Family Support Worker, with the option of door step visits/outside conversations to support where needed. We added a new member to the Safeguarding Team-Marcus Mackennie, and continued with weekly update meetings on Monday mornings. We maintained our own internal quality assurance check system by randomly selecting a case, and a write up/referral and then tracking the actions taken for that case.

IMPACT-A high degree of vigilance was maintained at all times for pupils no matter the circumstances as the year progressed.

- ***Leadership and management of personal development.*** A vast number of adaptations during the course of the year due to the pandemic and Covid bubbles. This included:
 - Continued focus on day-to-day wellbeing, with Circle Time and additional staff allocated for potential mental health fall out post first wave of the pandemic.
 - Skills afternoons (Thursdays) had to be 'bubble' based and therefore reduced choice of events
 - No Coaches and Rangers due to the pandemic (pupil opportunity to be taught how to coach and then have the opportunity to deliver this to other pupils)
 - Greater emphasis placed on personal safety throughout the year, and consistent use of language to support Covid safety
 - End of term trips had to be molded to on site only and within 'bubbles' however they were still delivered! The question posed to pupils remained the same-'are you safe and can you be trusted?'
 - Tracking of a range of personal development skills still took place via the Academic Mentoring process and delivered via class teams (see analysis and report for this area)

Impact-Autism Accreditation Report-May 2021 stated Larwood School had a very calm feeling across the whole school. Children were seen to be engaged in lessons, where pupils were identified as starting to struggle interventions were swiftly implemented to support pupils with their regulation and/or de-escalation.

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It also stated the following: It was observed on regular occasions throughout the observation day where staff would give pupils respect in being able to make decisions and providing them with positive and meaningful feedback which helps to boost the confidence and self-esteem of the pupils. One occasion where this was seen was where a staff member took time out to discuss specific worries that a pupil was expressing, taking it at his pace and establishing the reason for his worry as well as assuring him that a solution would be found.

- ***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, yet recognise the differences that took place due to the pandemic. Many of our very open and democratic processes either did not take place or were done differently. Examples included moving the School Council meeting to online and using Teams, and Friday Reward assemblies being stopped. The adaptation for the School Council resulted in all classes having access to the meeting at the same time so this method will continue! has taken place. The rule of law had a different flavour this year and of course this was related to rules around Covid, distance, masks etc. Respect and tolerance are encouraged via formal curriculum planning and via our rigorous behavior management policy, but the introduction of bubbles seemingly assisted this and helped with our reduced rate of incidents/no RPI's for the year. 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.

- ***Leadership and management of well-being pupils/staff.***

IMPACT-Attendance data indicating 95.8% attendance (UP BY 1% COMPARED TO LAST YEAR and with the pandemic running!), reduction in the use of RPI and incidents (See separate SEF reps), all indicate positively for general well-being of pupils and staff. The continuation of class led initiatives such as meditation and mindfulness seem to have been well received but need thorough review. Our approach to supportive therapies for certain pupils again had to be adapted and the role of our school based therapy dog (Buddy) really took off this year. Buddy has been really busy with drop in visits to help with self-regulation, exercise sessions with some and

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to promote reading with others, he has earned his treats! Externally sourced therapy dog, counselling, art therapy, school based family and pupil support worker were also deployed. Our lead for Mental Health and Family Support worker-Sian Ford deployed both internal resources and signposted to external resources in the most comprehensive manner. Our newly co-located counselling colleagues in the Butterfly Rooms saw over 20 pupils, 8 parents and a number of staff. ***We moved this year to be able to offer any pupil, parent or staff member dedicated and quick access to counselling when needed.***

Impact-Autism Accreditation Report-May 2021-'The provision for mental health for families is exceptional. They provide families with security and understanding in addition to access to professionals which may have previously proved difficult.'

- **Well-being for staff** has been enhanced by involving staff in continuous discussions and then acting accordingly when possible. Access to Medicash for all staff within the Trust allowed 24 hr. access to a Doctor when needed alongside physio or other medical support. It also 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. This has been thoroughly adapted due to the fluid nature of the pandemic and the emerging needs of pupils and staff during the course of the year.

IMPACT: Autism Accreditation Report-May 2021 stated 'A high-quality program of continuous Professional Development is in place. It ensures that staff have a robust specialist knowledge of autism specific best practice methods and approaches. It also provides staff with insight into the personal experiences of autistic people.'

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- **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 didn't go according to plan with reference to Improve/Start/Stop?

- We want to **start** a new way of assessing our progress with pupil behavior in mind. Our Challenge Partner Report highlighted the need to now use a different form of 'currency' that suits where we are now rather than reflects the journey we have taken.
- We want to **improve** the role of middle leaders in assessing their own areas of development, and being able to use lesson observations not hit by Covid outbreaks! This will allow for greater knowledge of delivery and will then feed directly into training programs for staff.
- We want to **continue to improve** the pedagogy of the curriculum as started in 2020 with Geography and History but then curtailed due to the pandemic.
- We want to **improve** the rewards system to reflect the bullet above
- We want to retain and **improve** the fluidity of skills developed in response to the pandemic and some of the aspects of practice that we had to impose during that time.

Next Steps for 2021-22.

Description	Desired impact	Indicators for success	Any cost?
Assessing Pupil Behaviour	A revamped approach to analysing and assessing where our pupils are at using reframed metrics, alongside older ones.	By Jan 2022, we will have built a new set of tools to use for measuring progress in this area, shared with staff and ready to use.	Adjustment on Behaviour Watch system-likely to be free?

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