

# SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT VISIT REPORT

**School:** (4159) Crookhorn College

**LA:** Hampshire

**Date:** 11/01/2022, 09:00

**Focus:** CONFIDENTIAL - LLPR

**Advisers:**

**Adviser:** Beverley Murtagh

**Reference:** Inspection & Advice LLPR2021-2022

**Attendees:** Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher,  
Assistant Headteacher, Literacy Co-ordinator, a group  
of middle leaders

## Actions

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### Assessment and feedback

To revisit the application of policy around written feedback and open a conversation about the role of class books for pupils and what expectations are alongside the increasing use of the IT platform.

**Assignee** Beverley Murtagh

**Due Date** 31/03/2022 **Status** Incomplete

## Summary of Main Findings

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Leaders are very proactive about keeping a close focus on the school improvement priorities. They know their pupils well and are constantly looking for the most effective way to support better outcomes for all through targeted strategies. They have done a great deal of work around literacy which is better supporting pupils to be more successful in their studies. They have high aspirations for all pupils. The continuing development of the school learning platform has really supported teachers to be much more accurate in their planning for delivery of consistently good lessons which address the needs of the pupils in front of them.

Continuing professional development is highlighted for all in this school and the headteacher remains expert in supporting the staff to absorb the messages of recent educational research in a planned and accessible way. Leaders know the task is never finished but they are making excellent inroads into better supporting pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs (SEN) through their forensic focus on planning high quality lessons. They are mindful of staff wellbeing and have ensured that the improvement focus is carefully woven into the performance management system for teachers and other staff who support them.

The school remains a **LOW PRIORITY** for the Local Authority.

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## Activity reason

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LLPR Review

## Activity focus

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Focus on the delivery of levers one and two in the school improvement plan.

## Context

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The last Ofsted visit took place in March 2019 and the school was rated GOOD in all categories (Section 5).

Areas for further improvement were:

- Raise the progress and attainment of all groups of pupils so that pupils achieve at least as well as other pupils nationally in all subjects
- Leaders and governors need to ensure those pupils who frequently miss school attend school regularly so that they can catch up with other pupils nationally
- Leaders should ensure that pupils are more accurate in their spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Leaders have continued to focus on improving literacy as there are a growing number of pupils who have disadvantaged backgrounds and a higher than average number of pupils who have SEN. The LLP has worked with a number of middle leaders this year and on the day a couple of middle leaders who have not previously had a lot of contact were included. The literacy leader also talked through her action plan.

Feedback was given to the headteacher and deputy at the end of the visit.

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## Commentary

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### Impact of Leadership

Leaders have refocused the performance management system to ensure it ties in directly to the key levers for school improvement in a very consistent way. They have also reviewed staff workload and supported the growth of staff expertise. A new directed time structure is now in place. There is a strong focus on coaching amongst the staff so that staff are well-supported to develop their areas of interest and to know their own strengths and areas for improvement. This all ties in nicely with the school aspiration for self-sustaining improvement.

Leaders are pleased that the results over the last few years have continued to show improvement although acknowledge that in some cases the teacher assessed grades may be a little higher in some places. However, the school had rigorous moderation procedures in place so feel that that the impact of better planning and teaching is showing dividends including for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN. For this year they are pleased that the GCSE predicted attainment is close to their FFT target. The grade percentages for 9-5 are currently down a bit as teachers are a bit wary this early. The November mocks focused on core subjects for examinations. The other subjects will have mock examinations this term. The Pupil Premium Gap is narrowing and there has been a good improvement in foundation subjects. Leaders have been proactive in moving on any poor performance and in certain cases staff have left where supportive measures have been exhausted without result. There is currently a strong focus on supporting Pupil Premium pupils in mathematics. A new member of staff who is primary trained is supporting this work. Leaders certainly know their data well and track all groups very carefully.

### Safeguarding

The pupils interviewed felt safe at school and felt they can approach the Heads of House or attached support staff if they had concerns. They had had recent updates around recognising sexual abuse/peer on peer abuse and how to get further advice if needed. They said it was built into Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) sessions as well. They also talked about whole school anti bullying week. They have sessions in a computing lesson about the ethics and responsibilities around using a computer. The Headteacher has a strong oversight on safeguarding and welcomes external validation. There is a large pastoral team who are well-trained and responsive. They have worked hard to refine systems and protocols. They have strong links to other agencies to support their work with individual pupils.

### Vulnerable Pupils

The Pupil Premium Strategy statement has been updated and reviewed. One of the key challenges is to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are accessing online learning. The data on entry shows that some pupils are well-below the national average in their reading ages. 50% of low ability pupils also have SEN needs identified. The work leaders have planned around the SEN friendly classroom is having an impact and in some lessons pupils do access the support provided automatically now which supports them in becoming more independent and resilient.

Compared to the same time last year the number of exclusions for vulnerable pupils has reduced. Leaders state that this is as a direct result of the quality of planning, coaching and better differentiation. The focus on mixed attainment teaching is gaining traction.

Improving literacy is a key focus to ensure continued improvement for all pupils and naturally support those pupils who have communication difficulties or who have fallen behind age related expectations. The literacy action plan is clear and for 2022/22 there have been three main areas of focus: increasing the enjoyment of reading; developing oracy; and looking in depth at the mechanics of writing. The school librarian is fully involved and supports reading in tutor time. Leaders are building up staff expertise around having more strategies for building in oracy opportunities more frequently. Subject specialists have also had further training on the development of tier two vocabulary.

The support for the mechanics of writing has been the biggest areas for improvement this year. Feedback from staff is still a little inconsistent. The literacy leader does do literacy walks to monitor progress. They keep one focus for staff each term. She is seeing some evidence of writing revolution techniques in lessons now on a more regular basis. They have basics mechanics to support the writing development following on from the opportunity to talk through answers as well. All of this is critical in giving pupils more confidence in accessing their learning.

### **Quality of education & personal development**

The pupils who were interviewed reflected that they thought that the teaching was better after the lessons from remote learning in lockdown during the Covid pandemic. They said that teachers were much more focussed on individual pupils and that lessons had improved as a result and were much more enjoyable. On the lesson visits examples were seen of small group intervention going on in the lesson for a small group or one to one feedback while the others were engaged in tasks. Pupils also felt that the lesson 7 extra time for interventions was really helpful. They could give a variety of examples of the way feedback is given across subjects in a range of ways. They liked the current report card which goes home to parents and the colour rating helps them see quickly where they are successful and where they need to improve. They were also keen to describe the student progress review days where they can talk to their tutors and agree future goals. They felt that targets were aspirational and liked the fact they can choose to increase a target grade if all felt it was manageable. They also talked proudly of the House events including sports activities. They felt there were a good range of extra-curricular activities. One pupil was very keen to talk about how the senior staff mentor pupils on a one to one basis. They reflected on the power of that relationship: "I have a mentor and it's the best thing that has ever happened to me".

A good range of lesson visits took place on the day across different subjects and year groups. Leaders had asked that the focus be around the key levers for improvement as noted in the school improvement plan (Literacy, SEND provision and the quality of teaching). Teachers generally were finding more ways to involve pupils in their learning and in many cases that led to better focus and response. Staff were also using very specific subject vocabulary to model to pupils. Retrieval practice was often highlighted and the teacher questioning was more open and extended the dialogue and involved a range of pupils in exploring answers. In some subjects written feedback was consistent but in others it was hard to see. It may be that some of that is recorded on the learning platform which is widely used now. Teachers also use this to reflect on lessons and think about how they might improve that lesson for the next time. This is beginning to evolve. Leaders might like to open the discussion with staff about what the expectations are around the use of class books which if not being used for feedback from time to time, are still a record of how a pupil has progressed over time and should be owned by all to ensure consistency. This is most essential for vulnerable pupils who may not have the literacy skills in place to note take etc and teachers need to be supporting those pupils who perhaps do not end up having good revision and models available in their books to refer back to for support.

The Performance Management tool used in the school is used to record development areas. There is a facility for running reports and an overview. Leaders are more prescriptive now about the areas for the performance objectives. There is a very robust monitoring process to ensure they are of the school standard required. This year leaders provided a suite of objectives to choose from for objectives one and two and they are strongly linked to the delivery of the levers in the performance plan. They have also moved to qualitative targets as opposed to the ones in the past linked to data outcomes. Staff have to provide evidence which builds towards completion of targets on a regular timetable and they are building a portfolio of evidence over the year. Leaders report to a governor on the monitoring process as it builds across the year. Support staff are using the same process for their appraisal and they are also tied in to the whole school levers to drive school improvement.

Middle leaders talked about the curriculum plans which are available to parents and pupils via the "Its learning" platform. The scheme of work is adapted according to cohort. Middle leaders have had to do a lot of revisiting skills with pupils post lockdown especially in practical subjects. Homework is linked into classwork. The Leader of Science recognised that in science there is a lot of abstract knowledge which needs to be remembered. He has used the precise learning model with HIAS support and adapted it. Middle leaders discussed how they revisited Key Stage 3 (KS3) pre lockdown and it was going really well. They have picked

this up again now and currently are working on catching up on skills. There has been a great deal of professional development and time invested in pedagogy. There is a strong drive to ensure that teachers have planned well. Some have moved away from power points and share "Its learning" pages before going straight to resources. Year 7s are a group who need more attention to train them in finding the resources. Literacy is a also a key component in supporting pupils to progress. Staff are currently working on improving extended writing as part of the literacy drive. There is now also much more live feedback as part of assessment to check understanding. Homework is also set up to encourage much more independence now as well and pupils can access it and submit it easily.

There is a dedicated team who deliver the PSHE programme and they have received update training to deliver new topics. They also work on strengths of the team and deliver the topics they are "expert" on so that the shared knowledge of the team is well-used.

## **Funding**

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LA funded

