

## **Vale of Evesham School**

### **Half Termly Monitoring Report by the Independent Care Standards Visitor (Standard 20)**

#### **1. Times & Date of Zoom “Virtual Visits”: Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2020, 8.30am-10.00am**

Following the conference call the school forwarded paperwork which was scrutinised and informed this report.

- 1.1. As the time and date of the conference call had to be agreed, the “visit” was an announced one. It is hoped to make an unannounced actual visit in the new school year in September when the residential provision will, hopefully, be functioning again. The residential provision has not been operating during the Covid-19 lockdown.
- 1.2. A telephone conversation was held with the Head prior to the Zoom conference call taking place. The Acting Head of Care and the two Residential Link Governors participated in the Zoom meeting.
- 1.3. The agenda for the “visit” was to review how the school has responded and interpreted the DfE Covid-19 guidance for schools and for special schools, how that has been implemented as well as to discuss how the school is preparing for opening in September based on the most recent DfE guidance published on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July. Time was also spent on discussing aspects relating to the staffing, accommodation and management of the residential provision and oversight of it by the Governors and the Trust.
- 1.4. The Head informed me that a process is taking place to re-broker the Trust of which the school is a part.
- 1.5. The Head of Care remains on sick leave.
- 1.6. The format of this report differs from previous ones given the day provision of the school has been operating but not the residential element. Paragraphs 2-5 of my last report of the 22<sup>nd</sup> May which updated the record on Behaviour Management, Physical Management Record and Bullying Record from the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to the 19<sup>th</sup> March when the school shut.

From the school’s reopening on the 25<sup>th</sup> March until the end of the Summer Term the residential provision has not functioned hence there is nothing to report under these headings.

#### **2. Complaints**

- 2.1. No complaints have been made since my “visit” on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

### 3. Staffing

- 3.1. The school has continued to respond and effectively manage the impact of Covid-19. The arrangements within the school day for those pupils attending which currently include approximately 50% of the residential pupil population and have been well thought through and operationalised. The DfE guidance has provided a helpful framework for the school and it has interpreted the guidance well in creating “bubbles” which reflect the very specialist individual nature of the provision and the wide-ranging needs of the pupils.
- 3.2. While implementing and reviewing the current arrangements the school has been busy planning for September. A decision has been made in light of the pandemic to restrict from September the number of residential pupils to ten as opposed to the previous fifteen. This will be kept under review in light of possible regional and national circumstances relating to the health crisis. Thought is being given to phasing the return of the residential pupils to help them adjust and understand the necessary changes to some of the previous routines in school and especially in the residential setting.
- 3.3. Very good regular contact with families has been maintained by the school and residential staff during and following the lockdown. Real efforts have been made to keep in touch with families and support them where appropriate and necessary which has included delivering food packages. The two Residential Link Governors both of whom have a child in the school, spoke very positively about the level and effectiveness of the school’s contact and support to families over the last three months.
- 3.4. The Residential Sub-Committee which reports to the Board met on the 11<sup>th</sup> June and their report was an agenda item at the subsequent Board meeting. The Sub-Committee reported on:
  - Staffing;
  - The recent and current progress on the Residential Action Plan;
  - The input of the CIP and the reporting of the Independent Care Standards Visitor (Standard 20);
  - Premises;
  - The plans in relation to the re-opening of the residential provision.
- 3.5. The school has been successful in appointing to the DSL and Pastoral Care role and the successful applicant will be in post in September. Advertisements will be going out in September to recruit a Care Officer and two Care Assistants. Sound and appropriate arrangements have been put in place in the interim. Two experienced TAs from school will each work two nights in the residential provision. They have completed an expanded induction programme and their potential input will have been enhanced by the education and care staff working very collaboratively in school over the last three months in meeting pupil needs which will assist the TAs in their temporary roles.
- 3.6. The school is in the process of sourcing a new NVQ provider as the previous LA arrangement is no longer available to the academy.

- 3.7. The recent appointed School Improvement Partner (SIP) has visited the school and is making a second visit on the 14<sup>th</sup> July. On her visit she met with the Acting Head of Care to discuss safeguarding and the residential facilities contribution to the 24-hour curriculum.
- 3.8. Twenty-three additional members of the total staff have completed training as first-aiders. Fire Marshal training is due to take place in late July and the School Nurse has carried out training in the administration of medication.
- 3.9. The progress in actioning the Residential Action Plan has been consistently and regularly monitored by the SLT and has been signed off by the Governing Body.
- 3.10. The Care Improvement Partner (CIP) has maintained contact with the school during the pandemic however given the temporary closure of the residential provision he has been stood down across the Summer Term. The intention is that he will be actively involved again in the Autumn Term.
- 3.11. Regular supervision for the Acting Head of Care is in place and up to date. The Head provides the management supervision and the external supervision is provided by a professional from “Safer Organisations”. The targets set by the Head for the Acting Head of Care are reviewed each half term. The Acting Head of Care attends SLT and at those meetings the residential provision is always included in the agenda. The three staff supervisions that were in progress when I last “visited” have been completed as has the appraisal of the new member of the Care Team.

#### **4. Children and Young People**

- 4.1. At the beginning of the lockdown seven of the residential pupils were attending school during the day on a regular basis. Latterly this has increased to ten.
- 4.2. The Care Team along with their school colleagues have kept very good, regular contact with pupils and their families. For example, the pupils were actively involved in choosing the colours for the repainting of the bedrooms in response to the colour charts being shared with them, which could be viewed as “the pupil voice” given the unprecedented circumstances arising from the pandemic!

#### **5. Accommodation**

- 5.1. A major concern, which is being very actively addressed, is the leaking roof in the residential facility. Previous efforts to rectify the problem have proved unsuccessful. There is active involvement of the contractor but the current repercussions of the Covid-19 in actively engaging contractors on-site is proving problematical. This may result in a delay in the work into the start of next term. The school has clear planning in place for the return of ten residential pupils. Given the school may need to review aspects of their current accommodation plan and may need to revert to a plan B which would provide appropriate temporary arrangements. The effect of the leakage from the roof has affected the sealing on windows, internal doors including a fire door and plastering in part of the dining room and other areas. The school fully appreciates the urgency and is working hard to ensure that the work will be completed during the Summer break while

the residential provision is shut but if that proves impossible they will revert to their alternative plan.

- 5.2. The school is planning to create a Premises Sub-Committee which will create and oversee a 5-year maintenance plan to avoid such occurrences in the future.

## **6. Recommendations**

- 6.1. The first of the three recommendations made in my last report has been fully addressed. The remaining two are being actively addressed.

- 6.2. As a result of this visit, there is a need to:

- Recognise and acknowledge the substantial work that has taken place since the Ofsted residential inspection, both before and during the lockdown, to address very effectively and robustly the identified shortcomings;
- Appreciate the need for the Head and the school leaders, the Acting Head of Care and the members of the Care Team to have a well-earned break across the summer for their wellbeing and that of the provision so they can return refreshed to their roles to continue the task.

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15<sup>th</sup> July 2020