



Head teachers & Chair of Governors Report

End of Academic Year 2016-2017

Autumn Term 2016

Even before my official start date in September, I worked alongside the Primary staff and Senior Leadership team (SLT) to make changes to the allocation of classrooms. This was a very positive change not just for last year but for the future needs of our pupils as we now have a smoother transition throughout the department, with Early Years having the space and facilities that they need, but not only that, the class that follows Early Years, also has these facilities available to them for changing and 'through' play which is what they also need as part of their development. We are now observing the positive impact of this move as our pupils move through the classes (from Sapling to Sycamore) as this cohort (new Sycamore class) still requires changing facilities and through play. The school started the academic year with 119 pupils on roll, which equated to 5 classes in Primary, 2 classes in Key Stage 3, 4 classes in Key Stage 4, and Post 16.

During the Autumn Term, as an SLT, we had to look at timetables as a matter of urgency as there were a few discrepancies at the start of the academic year. We looked at data and also the curriculum breadth across the school. It quickly became apparent that although things were in place, we needed more clarity around data in terms of target setting and tracking. Mrs Bastin and I attended a course in the latter part of the Autumn Term where we realised that too much emphasis had been placed on the Social and Emotional needs of the pupils and not their academic needs. As an SLT, we met again to readdress this balance and put better emphasis on educational interventions, whilst still being mindful of the social and emotional needs of our pupils.

The Local Authority had hit crisis point in terms of numbers of children requiring Special School places. I was being sent consultation papers on a daily basis with a huge amount of children requiring a place. In October, I was sent a letter detailing how we were going to be directed to take in 5 children. This would have had a significant impact on the current cohorts and class sizes. As an SLT, we decided that we needed to look at the 'bigger picture' with this issue. We couldn't safely accommodate these numbers and we needed to look to the future in terms of class sizes and what we did next. After careful consideration, we decided to forego the Art room (which on observation was only being utilised twice a week) and create a classroom here. This enabled us to move the classes 'along one' thus opening a new classroom in Primary. In January 2017, our 5 class Primary department became 6 classes. In January, the classes in Primary were renamed to help the pupils feel that they were not being 'put back' if their groups had changed. The school had a new set of timetables to accommodate this and the whole staff were involved with the class moves, new groups and timetables. This approach enabled this extraordinary move to take place successfully. The parents have all been very supportive and positive about this change.

I met with our Senior Management team regularly and enabled them to be a part of the Management structure at Rigby Hall School. They became part of the discussions around the change of numbers, classes and data targeting and tracking. These regular meetings enabled them to take more of a role as SMT within the school and helped us as SLT to get the support we needed throughout the whole school.

With our PSHE co-ordinator off on long term sick, myself and Mrs Hayward updated the curriculum for PSHE ensuring the breadth and balance across the school and including new legislations such as; FGM (Female Genital Mutilation), CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) as well as Modern British Values and Citizenship.

Building & Environment: 01/09/16 – 31/12/16

Completion of new Early Years Classroom
Windows replaced in the hall
Fencing around the playground
Art room changed Classroom
Rowan Class refurbished
Primary Classes renamed (during the move)
Colourful display boards throughout the corridors
Photo boards for staff, Governors and PTA

Spring Term 2017

We had our SMT meetings around data collection and input. There had been some significant discrepancies and the % increase had not made sense. We held a staff meeting to address this immediately. We started to look in greater detail about how we could target set. Giving different 'levels of learning' to our pupils so we could predict their targets more accurately (Ofsted also talked with us about the need for this style of target setting). SMT helped to populate the new target setting sheets for every child across the whole school.

A big focus in Spring 1 was to look at things that had been noticed during observations; inconsistencies in the colour of books being used for certain subjects (this made moderation difficult as you couldn't easily see a subject by its colour; something that also got mentioned as we did learning walks with the inspectors during our Ofsted, – it was decided this would be a change we could implement to the whole school from September 2017), but more urgently, the building needed some further thought as we moved forwards, due to the rise in numbers we had just taken in and our current numbers needing post 16 provision.

We invited representatives from the County in to discuss our thoughts around Nursery provision and extending post 16 and KS4 within the school to accommodate a rise in numbers. We were told to put together a proposal and send in to County before the end of March where they would consider our needs and ideas.

Our lesson observations showed a difference in standards from September 2016. With more lessons being observed the majority of the lessons were judged to be at least good or better.

At the end of February we went through our eagerly awaited Ofsted. This was a very positive experience for us and we felt that the inspectors were very supportive towards what we already had in place and where we were going next in terms of improvements and progression for the school. We had several discussions throughout the day with both of the inspectors and they gave us lots of things to consider. The inspector really liked the SEF and I'd begun to write it showing greater detail than our existing one, but also working as a document that highlighted ALL we had achieved and not just focus on the things we needed to develop. The SDP was picked up on as a document that didn't have a particular focus. As previously stated, picking up an SDP in the year of an expected Ofsted, I wasn't going to disregard anything that had originally been put in, but also, I wasn't going to leave anything out that I felt needed to be a focus for development (which was communicated to me as a

reason why we got a 'good' rating because we had detailed everything that needed developing and we were aware of these areas).

For the remainder of Spring term 2 we worked on the data tracking sheets and also the 'expansion' proposal to County with costings, plans and feasibility. With Mrs Bastin's resignation accepted, I spoke with SLT/SMT about my vision for the management structure of the school. I decided not to replace this Assistant Head role, but to increase more Key Stage leaders across the school. I spent time going through contracts and having these looked at by relevant people.

Building & Environment: 01/01/17 – 23/04/17

Painted corridor to Primary

Painted wooden panel around the hall

Fob system on external doors

Pupils

In total we took on 15 new pupils to the school.

Summer Term 2017

Put into process the new management structure. Timeline for advertising these positions, applying for posts and interviewing.

Looked at the roles of our Teaching Assistants. To get more support throughout the day and to help with after school clubs, we looked at the length of day for the TAs and increased these to take into account classroom support and after school club support. This also enabled us to increase some of our TA Level 2's to TA Level 3's.

Post 16 curriculum was clarified and the students started running the Café at St. Godwalds Church every Monday afternoon from 1.00-2.30. This has been a big success and the students have been able to put into practice their English and maths skills.

Report writing plans were put into place in early May. The staff were part of discussion for new formats and given a tight schedule of when to write them by, getting them checked by their professional partners, before coming to SLT for a read before I read each one and wrote a comment on them. This was a smooth process and staff feedback saying they appreciated the timescales as it kept them on target and reports all went out on the day we had set.

D of E was completed after a practice then an assessed expedition. I attended both of these and the pupils and staff were a huge credit. You could see the progress and confidence within the students increase during the days. Each child that took part gained their D of E Bronze Award.

Pupils completed their coursework and exams throughout Summer Term 2. GCSEs were collected by pupils on Thursday 24th August. I sent out invitations to each pupil who had taken a GCSE to come in and collect. The 4 students who took GCSE PE all gained a 'D' grade (which is absolutely fantastic!!), the boys who took GCSE Maths had the new grading system and they achieved between them an equivalent D, E, E, F. Two who got an E and an F, were only a point or two off of the next grade above! The pupil who got the D was also incredibly close to a C. Fantastic results and it was so lovely to see the pupils and their parents collect these.

Building & Environment: 24/04/17 – 31/08/17

Floor sealed in hall and gym

Gate to lower car park

Playground installed
Refurbishment of Post 16
ICT bar – to enable 7 more computers to be used and the option to split whole classes
Meeting room decorated and air con installed

During the year we have been very well supported by our parents at events we have put on. The school 'won' the two 'token' competitions that it entered by an overwhelming majority in both cases.

I feel that this first year has been very successful. There have been LOTS of changes. Some we expected and some that we had to work with as and when they arose!

I'd like to thank each and every one of you for your support throughout my first year as Head teacher.

Mrs Tracey Smith
Head teacher

Chair of Governors' annual report - Summer 2017

Governance arrangements

The following the resignation of two governors at the end of the school year the arrangements for the governing Board of Rigby Hall Special School were discussed and agreed that it should consist of:

Four Parent Governors
Four Community Governors
One Local Authority Governor
One Staff Governor
The Headteacher

A review of skills was undertaken to ensure that the Governing Body comprises of people who have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. The full Governing Body has met each term and held an additional meeting to discuss and agree the school budget.

Discussions had been held towards the end of the previous school year with regard to the governing body sub-committee arrangements and it was agreed at the AGM in September 2016 to rationalise the committee structure by combining the Sites & Buildings and the Finance & Staffing Sub-Committees into a new Resources committee to work alongside the existing Curriculum committee.

There are also governors with designated responsibilities who act on behalf of the full governing board but with particular knowledge or expertise for Safeguarding and Health & Safety.

Attendance record of governors

Governors' attendance at full governing body meetings this year was 86.7%.

Effectiveness of Governors

Over the course of the academic year the governors have focussed on their evaluation of the effectiveness of the school and gradually refined their requirements with regard to evidence and data they need to do this. Governors agreed with the Headteacher an amended school improvement plan during the autumn term and have been regularly updated with the progress made against the priorities identified in this plan. In addition, the Headteacher has maintained a school evaluation form which summarises the school's position with regard to the school's own priorities and the key themes outlined in the Ofsted School Inspection Handbook. Whilst these reports have enabled governors to have a better idea of the progress the school is making, the lack of academic data has hindered our ability to garner the whole picture. This deficit is being addressed and we should be better able to judge the progress of the children and young people at the school. Once a more thorough data set has been collated the school should consider what options are available for benchmark comparisons with similar schools to support senior leadership and governor evaluation.

During the summer term of the previous year (2015/16), the governing body had completed the National Governors' Association questionnaire that is designed to support governing bodies in challenging themselves as to how well they are carrying out their key functions. The collated responses indicated that there were a number of areas where we collectively felt we were not as strong or effective as we would wish, particularly with regard to: are we as effective as we could be?; does the school have a clear vision and strategic priorities?; and are we properly engaged with our school community, the wider school sector and the outside world?

Governors repeated this exercise during the summer term 2017 and this indicated that whilst some progress had been made in our collective effectiveness, there were still concerns with regard to the school's vision and strategic priorities and that we were not engaging with our community and stakeholders as effectively as we would like.

Governors have subsequently devoted some additional meeting time to discussing our views on the vision for the school with the intention of reaching an agreement at the next AGM which can then be circulated and consulted upon with our stakeholders.

Governors have also discussed and completed the new Competency Framework for Governance published by the Department for Education in January 2017. This is designed to help governing bodies assess what knowledge, skills and behaviour are needed to govern the school effectively. This demonstrated that, whilst there were some aspects indicating there is development work to be done, particularly around succession planning and aspects of the chair's role and responsibilities, as a governing body as a whole we have covered our responsibilities and are operating effectively. This conclusion was mirrored by the brief comments made by the Ofsted team following their inspection in February 2017 and their judgement that the school remains good in all aspects of its management and provision.

Future of the School

During the course of the year there has been much discussion on the future of the school in terms of both the number of pupils it has and the age range, with a particular focus on the pressure post 16 numbers are making on their accommodation and on the possibility and advisability of establishing nursery provision on the site.

There is growing pressure on special school pupil numbers and, after positive conversations with the Local Authority, it was agreed that we would accept an increase in the pupil roll. Both the local and the national picture of special school numbers suggest that this increased funding number will be the capacity of the school for the foreseeable future. Indeed, it is possible the Local Authority will

wish to discuss the school's capacity again during the course of the next academic year. Whilst this has had the benefit of ensuring the school's viability and financial health remains sound, it will be important for the governors to ensure that any changes in the school's pupil population are not to the detriment of the school's ethos, or that it adversely impacts on the school's core function of providing good quality education for its pupils.

Mr Huw Powell
Chair of Governors