

Southampton School Improvement Officer annual visit report 2020-21

School	Redbridge Community School	
Headteacher	Jason Ashley / head@redbridgeschool.co.uk	
Chair of Governors	David Whalley / dwhalley@redbridgeschool.co.uk	
School Improvement Officer	Alan Taylor-Bennett	Date of visit: 8 & 9 Oct 2020
Other attendees	nil	
Last Ofsted inspection grade / date	Good, and good in all key judgement areas, in s5 inspection January 2018	
2019/20 SMG category	Cat A in Autumn 2019	
Information about the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26.2% of pupils have SEND in school of which 2.1% have an EHCP • 12.1% of pupils have EAL • 48.7 % are eligible for PP • 40.8% take FSM • +1.05% change in FSM since academic year 2019/20 as an overall % of NoR • 92.05% attendance 2019/20 • 94.0% attendance since Sep 20 • 22% of those offered on-site F2F teaching during closure in 2019/20 actually attended • 16% persistent absence 2019/20 • 2.9% pupils had 1 or more exclusion(s) in 2019/20 • 2.1% pupils were in-year leavers EHE/left school 2019/20 • 0 pupils had reduced timetables in 2019/20 	

Second visit recommended

No

Area to develop	Timescale and intended impact
Consider the impact of recent events on Year 8 given the 2-year KS3 model used by the school.	By December Ensure that KS3 NC coverage is secure given the 6-month partial setback in learning in some subjects that may not be pursued by some students at KS4, and that decisions about KS4 courses are taken in an informed and rational manner.
Finalise plans to respond to any need to move to a partial closure.	By half term All subject leaders will have clear plans in place to make the most of the live learning systems planned.
Maintain pupil and parent contact details up to date through frequent checking.	Ongoing In the event of any future partial closure be able to contact all students and parents reliably.

How evidence was obtained

Meetings were held with:

- the headteacher – both to set the scene at the beginning and to round up at the end
- curriculum leaders in English, mathematics, science, business, music, MFL, Geography and dance
- 3 students in each of Years 9 and 10
- all heads of year and the AHT inclusion
- the DSL re safeguarding
- the chair of governors (the week before the main body of meetings)
- SLT to discuss academic recovery strategies.

Documentation reviewed included:

- a full analysis of current attendance and details of attendance at out-of-termtime provision and for specific groups over the period March-August
- an overview/analysis of the 'extended access' provision
- minutes of the last three full GB meetings
- the risk assessment for the full reopening
- the recovery plan for September onwards
- IIP Platinum report
- 19 short video clips to illustrate life in school currently
- the SEF.

Summary of key findings

(school's strengths and aspects requiring attention)

- The school continues to benefit from visionary and innovative leadership from the headteacher. There is a well-established culture of continual self-review; this strong institutional capacity to re-evaluate and adapt positioned the school well to respond to the many new, and different kinds of, challenges since March. This is a school used to 'thinking out of the box' and this has been a distinct advantage recently.
- The recovery plan addresses a wide range of issues. It is being used to generate timely and effective responses across all aspects of the work of the school.
- As a result of good systems around welfare and the provision of education during partial closure, the great majority of students returned to school in September happily, and ready to get back to work.
- Students and staff say they feel safe in school and they are glad of the strategies put in place to bubble students and the generally very high level of adherence to safety procedures.
- Leaders place high priority on maintaining students' positive outlooks to school and learning. The quality of pastoral support continues to be strong, and provision innovative and responsive to the high level of social need in the area.
- The school was awarded the IIP National Leadership and Management Award last academic year. It was also awarded the NACE Challenge Award to recognise the high-quality provision for its most able.
- Leaders recognise that special consideration is appropriate of the position of Year 8 with respect to their options choice process being undertaken next term, and the impact of the partial closure on their already shorter KS3.
- Middle leaders value the clear direction given by the headteacher and senior leaders. They are aware of the need to finalise plans around the impact of any partial closure.

The quality of education

- Senior leaders and governors are pleased that the start of the school year was a positive and successful one. Major factors in this were the online learning provided over March to July, the systems put in place over that time to maintain high levels of care for students (proportionate to their needs), the school's rapid provision of laptops in March, and several activities aimed at preparing students for their reintroduction to school, including a summer school.
- There are now 1037 students on roll, with a 50/50 gender split. There was little staff turnover at the end of the last academic year and the school is currently fully staffed. A new (internally promoted) AHT took up post in September. There are 16 trainees.
- Teaching and learning over the period of partial closure was undertaken mainly via recorded, rather than live, lessons (over 1000 YouTube videos have been posted) and Google classroom to receive and submit written work. This was a strategic decision taken early on in recognition of the fact that many local households have larger-than-average families and fewer IT resources than average, and a consequently greater need for flexibility in what can be achieved at various times of the day.
- All teachers were equipped with visualisers and graphics pads, to assist them in the production of learning resources. Over 120 laptops were issued to families prior to the government initiative making more available.
- The impact of this teaching was monitored, and adjustments were made over the course of the partial lockdown. One particularly simple but effective change was to implement low-impact assessments on Mondays (multiple choice 'quizzes') in some subjects; this improved engagement from 60% to 80%. Students spoke of some subjects using mini-competitions and rewards very effectively to motivate students.
- Students appreciated the chance to submit work on Google classroom during the summer term, and to have it back marked and with feedback.
- A range of school-based activities was provided during March-August including the opportunity for regular attendance by the children of key workers and vulnerable students, whole-day activities for specific year groups, and out-of-term-time study opportunities. Leaders feel that these served to maintain 'the habit of learning' for many students.
- Most students responded well to the work set and the work patterns expected of them. The year groups felt to have been hit hardest by the challenges of the pandemic are Years 7 and 8.
- Year 10 students in particular said they had had 'lots to do' in the summer term, and felt that the stress of returning to school was significantly less due to being required to maintain the momentum of their learning. Concerns over continuity in many of their examination courses were reduced by their having begun them in Year 9.
- 'By invitation only' Easter schools were necessarily cancelled but summer schools ran for Year 10 students over 15 days in late July and early August. Leaders were pleased with the attendance at these opportunities and feel that many Year 11 students made a much more confident start in September as a result.
- The school has extensive experience of running this kind of provision. The extended access to school grant was used to run 9 four-hour sessions for students over half term in February. The average attendance per session was around 13 students but numbers involved varied from 69 in mathematics to single figure attendance in option subjects such as art and drama.
- There are plans in place to repeat these opportunities in 2020/21 for a total of 25 days enrichment over all three half terms and the Easter break.
- A whole-school curriculum recovery plan has been put in place. This covers/includes:
 - the assessment of reading skills to enable appropriate responses to be put in place quickly
 - MidYIS and Yellis testing to inform senior staff of the balance of need across and within year groups
 - an evaluation of arrangements around the provision of practical work in affected subjects
 - coherent messages around the role of homework over this term and this year

- details of blended learning opportunities for any students who can't attend school for a period of time
- some reformulation of catch up literacy and numeracy provision in Years 7 and 8
- careful consideration of provision for students with EHCPs in line with their plans.
- There is dedicated after-school provision currently in place for Year 11 (brought forward from its usual timing later in the year), and there are plans to switch this provision to other year groups at appropriate times. The number of extra support days for Year 11 this year has been increased from 15 to 25.
- The school is expecting to receive approximately £80k catch up premium. This funding will cover the cost of staffing required for the additional classes needed for the recovery plan.
- All subject areas have made adaptations to their curriculum provision. Many have reduced the content weight, not the rigour or the breadth, and some, such as mathematics, were able to take advantage of the spiral nature of the curriculum to avoid gaps opening up. Practical subjects have faced the biggest challenges. Each has found its own way to cope, with music delivering online instrumental lessons, and lending instruments to students during the partial closure, and dance resequencing the delivery of units.
- Subject leaders are conscious of the need to respond to differences in the extent of gaps between key groups. They agreed that the progress of some of those with SEN had been affected more than that of others and said that they were beginning to determine the extent of gaps.
- The uptake of online learning by students in the EduK8 facility was low, despite teachers' best efforts. Many families didn't possess desk-top or laptop computers and were provided with appropriate resources. Leaders sensibly concentrated on keeping in regular contact with these students so that they experienced some sense of structure and routine, and maintaining some degree of parental engagement. Despite this good provision some of these students posed significant challenges in September because they had become unused to boundaries in their social interactions, dealing with authority figures, routines and consistency. Relationships with many are now becoming more secure and stable but there remains a niche group (mainly in Year 9) who are causing serious concern.
- Leaders were pleased with outcomes in 2020, despite the many challenges they and students faced around the national implementation of the process.
 - The modelled P8 (contextualised by the school) was around zero and so in line with the national average. The impact of students educated in EduK8 on this overall figure was greater this year than is usually the case.
 - Overall CAGs were very close to the algorithm values. 57% achieved Basics at G4+ and 31% did so at G5+.
 - 39.6% were entered for subjects that satisfied Ebacc requirements. The provisional figures for future years are 2021 = 31.9%, 2022 = 31.7% and 2023 = 33.5%.
 - Using non-contextualised data, 42% of departments are achieving progress to G4+ at or above the national average. Using contextualised value-added approaches, this figure is 67%.
 - The modelled P8 of students eligible for the pupil premium improved by 0.3 points. This reflects a continuation of a closing of the gap with non-disadvantaged pupils in English state-funded schools.
- Curriculum developments continue despite all of these challenges. The new netball courts are impressive, and the accent on outdoor education continues with endeavour pathways provided in Years 9 and 10 now, linked with DofE qualifications.
- Under the circumstances we agreed not to follow-up on developments in science and the personalisation of CPD raised in the last AV report. These can be tackled at the next opportunity.

Behaviour and attitudes

- Students returned slightly nervously in September but settled in quickly. Many enjoy being back in a routine. A few struggle still, often due to their challenging individual circumstances, but they are well cared for and the impact of their occasional outbursts is minimised.

- The great majority of students comply with the necessary safety routines reliably; they gel their hands frequently and are happy to clean desks with anti-viral wipes before they begin work. For many, these routines have been very reassuring. Students appreciated the way that teachers had taken the time to explain the reasons behind the measures being taken.
- Year 7 were less settled over September than is usually the case, but they are now calmer and the great majority have adopted good routines and understand what is expected of them.
- Attendance since the start of term has been predictably variable across groups, but is good overall. The overall figure of 94% to the end of September includes 89.5% by students with SEN, 91.6% by students entitled to FSM and 96.6% for students with EAL. The additional targeted support for existing poor attenders over the summer helped to support the continuity of many students' commitment to school despite the challenges of partial closure.
- The muster station organisation is operating well. One station is a specially erected marquee. It maintains strong bubbling within year groups and the great majority of students respond to the new routines sensibly. The minutes lost in mustering between lessons is minimised by the use of double lessons, and the more efficient starts to lessons obtained is felt to more than make up for the time spent in this movement.

Personal development

- Assemblies are being held this term in year groups which conform to the 270 limit allowed in schools. Muster stations are being used to provide some sense of tutor identify and provision in Year 7 and 8.
- Whole-school recovery planning includes a concentration on tutor programmes in all years, including the provision of appropriate training for staff, the use of extra remote tutor sessions/bulletins via Google Classroom, wellbeing and cultural capital sessions at least once per week in tutor time, and a more proactive stance on parental engagement.
- PSHE is now delivered in muster times, via online resources and in English time in KS3 and the assembly programme has been adapted to ensure essential coverage in KS4. Tutor time based literacy support in KS3 continues via the regular weekly reading session. Pastoral leaders are pleased that these new mechanisms deliver the SMSC/PSHE programme to a good standard.
- Pastoral leaders are confident that, in the event of a partial closure, they are ready to deliver live lessons to enable SMSC and PSHE delivery.
- A family support worker is now employed, who has replaced the EWO in order to provide the right level of support for students and their families. A lead attendance manager post has also been established to take strategic oversight across all year groups of responses to unreliable attendance.
- Pastoral staff are proud that the triage system for SEMH issues operates quickly and effectively. By this means students are able to be supported as soon as practically possible through one of a range of special group interventions in place.
- A wide range of opportunities have been identified to help students to enjoy being back in school. Early in the first week there was a sports afternoon. A 'Party in the Park' was provided for all students at the end of September as a welcome back for everyone.
- Preparations for the induction of the new Year 6 were changed to ensure that they arrived as happy and confident as possible in September. Many (76%) enjoyed the Year 6 transition day which was forest-school based. Year 6 pupils were asked to complete a wellbeing survey before they arrived to enable senior staff to gauge the extent and type of extra provision needed, extra wellbeing opportunities have been built into tutor times, and there has been a greater use of rewards and incentives to help make school more fun for these students. The additional needs of some were identified early on and extra support was provided to minimise the adverse impact of not being in school regularly during the summer term.
- Prior to September, heads of year identified students who would benefit from an earlier reintroduction to school for specific reasons. Individual plans were put in place to meet their needs. ELSA (general, plus bespoke Year 6 provision as part of transition arrangements), NHE Solent and MHST sessions were used to support those with such additional needs.

- Communications with home were good over the period of partial closure. One initial week of immediate contact with more vulnerable students was undertaken, which then became contact matched to those individuals' needs (this averaged out to weekly contact with around one quarter of the student population). Two phone calls per tutee over the term was the baseline, but many students received one or more per week to help them to cope and the gauge their welfare and safety - this included 1:1 Zoom provision and the offer of in-school support.
- Contact with those in EduK8 was at least weekly and was carefully managed. The delivery of food packages enabled some face-to-face interaction.
- An astonishing 5.5 tons of food was distributed to families, provided by the school through the Fareshare initiative. At one time this was supporting around 100 families. The school has since agreed to be a base for the local Fareshare van to enable more efficient distribution locally.

Leadership and management

- Leaders' strong tradition of questioning their own practice and continually re-evaluating provision means that they were well placed to respond to and to learn from the many challenges posed over the last 6 months. During the conversations there were many examples of staff reflecting on how they felt that they had learned more about 'what works' and gained insights into the nature of teaching and learning. The headteacher referred to the last 6 months as being 'an opportunity to reassess everything'.
- A full risk assessment was in place ready for the school to reopen to all students and staff in September. This followed the standard analysis of potential impact weighed against the likelihood of specific events, and details responses to the subsequent RAGed risk factors.
- Only two teachers left at the end of the summer term, and the school is fully staffed from 1 September. All staff are currently in school. A few have needed to isolate due to family situations but they tested negative and returned promptly. A few needed extra support and reassurance but they returned to school more confident due to leaders showing them understanding and support.
- This provision for staff matches the very high standards reflected in the school holding the Investors in People Platinum accreditation and the Health and Wellbeing Award.
- The school self evaluation was updated in early September. It remains a thorough and useful document to steer the issues in a development plan, although the formal development plan process has temporarily been replaced by a recovery plan.
- Some curriculum-based primary liaison has been undertaken via Google Docs despite the challenges of the last few months.
- The budget continues to be well managed. The main impact was the £200k claw-back by SCC. Governors have monitored the impact of Covid-19 expenditure carefully. Reserves are around £650k and there is currently expected to be a very small in-year positive balance.
- Safeguarding systems continue to operate reliably and effectively.
 - There were no significant s/g issues over the period of partial closure. Some existing cases became more complex and were elevated to a higher level of concern.
 - The school experienced the city-wide PPN communication problem with the police but the flow of information is more reliable now.
 - There are 18 trained DSLs. This means that there is a lot of expertise in the school around safeguarding and CP.
 - Experience in the use of CPOMS was a significant advantage over the period March-August. Staff working both on- and off-site were able to relay and obtain essential information about students immediately via the secure connections established.
 - The SCR process continued to be overseen by senior staff, and the designated s/g governor via Zoom in her termly meetings.
 - All staff have received up-to-date s/g training this term via a recorded presentation watched in subject based groups, each of which was supported by a DSL. Additional safeguarding guidelines were issued to all staff around online learning early in the period of partial closure.

- Regular Friday mini-training sessions continue. The current emphasis is on local CCE concerns in Years 9 and 10; staff have noticed some students using burner phones and have responded appropriately.
- The s/g policy is up to date and was approved by governors at the end of September.
- Safeguarding procedures were audited by SCC in December 2019 and were found to be operating well.
- Governors continue to exercise close and constructive oversight of the work of senior leaders.
 - Scheduled meetings continued, but often virtually. Two in-school meetings have been held, one at the end of the summer and one at the start of the autumn term. The former was to learn about the arrangements in place ready for September and the latter was to allow governors to see them for themselves.
 - There is clear evidence in FGB meeting minutes that governors played a significant role in overseeing safety and welfare arrangements put in place over the period March-August and the preparations for the reinduction of all students from September. This includes a close scrutiny of the risk assessment – including a request that it be submitted to the office of the director of public health in Southampton for their views.
 - Safeguarding procedures have been overseen online during the period of partial closure and the governor responsible is looking forward to resuming her regular visits into school this term.
 - Governors have not formally gathered parental views around the response of the school to the pandemic, but their strong informal links suggest high levels of satisfaction. A trickle of complaints has been handled well.
 - Governors feel that the headteacher and his team have done everything possible to maintain the operational stability of the school during this difficult time, and to preserve the significant gains made over the last ten years.