

December 2018

## **External review of the SEN Additional Resourced Provision (ARP) at Poverest Primary School**

### **Evidence considered as part of the review:**

The latest SEN/D monitoring audit, conducted in November 2017 by LBB, was considered. The latest Ofsted report was read. A visit was made on 4 December 2018 to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision, commissioned by LBB leaders. A tour of the ARP and mainstream classrooms was made. Time was spent observing teaching and learning in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classrooms, accompanied by the assistant headteacher in charge of the ARP/ SENCo. Pupils and teachers were spoken to and pupils' books were looked at and their work discussed. A meeting was held with a group of four parents whose children attend the ARP. Further meetings were held with leaders, including the governor responsible for SEN, to discuss current pupil progress information, school evaluations and action plans. At the end of the day, informal feedback was provided to leaders.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

The ARP is managed well by the assistant headteacher responsible for overseeing SEN/D provision across the school. She is passionate about her role and inspires others to work with her to make the ARP as effective as possible. She is suitably qualified and knowledgeable about the needs of pupils who have ASD. Her leadership responsibilities span across the mainstream school which allows her to share her specialist knowledge more widely. Together with the headteacher, she has ensured that there is a whole-school focus on meeting the needs of pupils who have SEN/D in an inclusive and integrated manner. This was recognised and reported on during the recent Ofsted inspection.

Concerns about the stability of staffing and the disruption caused by the challenging behaviours of some pupils, have reduced. Further work to avoid future staffing gaps by succession planning and developing stronger links across professional partnerships are on-going. Leaders recognise the effective support received from the LBB complex needs team and now work more closely with the local authority when agreeing pupil placements. Consequently, pupils' needs are understood better and appropriate support is in place as soon as pupils start at the school. This avoids requests for additional funding or staffing adjustments having to be made after a period of disruption.

The Inclusion Action Plan is detailed and reviewed annually by the governing body and termly by senior leaders. It identifies what training and professional development is needed to ensure the whole school maintains its focus on inclusive practices and meets its equalities obligations. Leaders use a range of assessment tracking tools to check that pupils within the ARP are making good or better

progress from their individual starting points. Although this provides a wealth of information, leaders struggle to monitor how cohorts, groups and classes perform over time to inform their strategic decision making. Wider, holistic measures of progress are sometimes not captured, or tracking is too focused on attainment and unhelpful comparisons with age-related expectations. School leaders have recognised that improvements should be made to how they gather and use assessment information. They are working with the new SEN governor and leaders from similar schools to agree how progress information can be shared and evaluated to demonstrate that the ARP is a strength of the school.

Leaders and teachers know pupils and their families well. They are firmly committed to making a strong contribution to the wider community. For example, they are working with parents and pupils to develop plans for holiday clubs to be based at the school. When safeguarding or care concerns are raised, they take appropriate action and work as part of wider professional teams to offer support. Parents are extremely complimentary about the care their children receive. They recognise how inclusive the school is and say that their children are never made to feel unwelcome. All pupils are taught to respect everyone's differences and act as good role models. Some parents agreed to accept a placement within the ARP reluctantly after a special school place was unavailable. However, they have been convinced that the needs of their child are being met very well and can recognise the good progress their child has made. All parents were appreciative of the support they get from leaders and staff. They say they are never blamed when things are difficult but are encouraged to work with the school to support their child's needs.

### **Quality of the provision offered**

The ARP is situated in an accessible and self-contained area of the school. Outside play areas are attractive and offer socialisation and practical play opportunities for all pupils who need additional support. The provision is well resourced with sensory and calming spaces that are attractively presented and used well by staff and pupils. A careful record is kept if pupils need to spend time in the calming rooms or require physical interventions from adults. However, tracking information could be improved by logging exactly how much time is spent in the calming rooms as well as the number of visits made. This would allow leaders to evaluate how effective the rooms are for individual pupils over time.

ARP pupils can integrate with mainstream classrooms and extra-curricular opportunities as appropriate. They are well supported by mainstream classroom teachers and their peers. Integration timetables are continually reviewed so that every pupil attending the ARP can spend as much time as possible in mainstream classes. When concerns are raised or pupils become unsettled, an immediate adjustment is made to their timetable. Increasingly successful periods of integration allow ARP pupils to flourish and become more confident. Equally, some mainstream pupils access the specialist provision for more intensive support for identified specific

needs. For example, some complete sensory circuits or Lego therapy to help reduce their anxiety.

Classrooms within the ARP are attractive and well-resourced. Displays provide clear evidence of achievement but could be extended to show how individuals have made good progress over time. Teaching and learning activities are carefully differentiated to meet the individual and wide-ranging needs of pupils. For example, some more able pupils are challenged by appropriately demanding tasks. Teachers plan carefully and constantly adjust their approach to ensure that engagement levels remain high. For example, some good quality creative writing was stimulated by a writing café that allowed pupils to choose their own ink colour and method of presentation. Interruptions to learning are kept to a minimum and pupils are set aspirational targets to meet. Consequently, most work in pupils' books is well presented and demonstrates very good progress over time.

Current pupils are benefitting from under occupancy in both classrooms as new referrals take time to be agreed or alternative placements are sought. This has allowed teachers to develop strategies to manage challenging behaviours more successfully. Positive relationships and effective de-escalation strategies are used well to ensure a calm and productive learning environment is maintained. Visual timelines and clear rewards systems help pupils to understand what is expected of them. Most attend regularly and start to make good progress after previous periods of disruption to their education.

**Recommendations for further actions:**

- Use displays of pupils' work to demonstrate their progress over time and allow everyone to appreciate the improvements they have made.
- Ensure a record is kept of the time spent in calming rooms to evaluate how quickly pupils return to classrooms and minimise interruptions to their learning.
- Devise a clear and simple system to capture overall academic and holistic measures of progress throughout the ARP. Use the governing body to evaluate its usefulness and moderate against similar information from other school ARPs. Share this information with parents and inspectors on the school website to demonstrate the quality of education provided by the provision.

**Lesley Cox**

Independent education consultant/ SEN and Disability specialist