

School:	Penistone Grammar School		
Date of visit:	16 th March 2022	Duration of visit:	Full day
Date of next planned visit:	28 th April 2022		

Headteacher:	Paul Crook
Improvement Adviser:	Christine Schofield

Agenda:	There was one focus for the day: the impact of pupil premium funding and support for the disadvantaged. To facilitate this, the IA met with a sample of senior leaders, pastoral leaders, curriculum seconds in department, as well as the staff from '1392'. A small sample of lessons was also visited.
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Status:	CONFIDENTIAL to the senior leadership team and governors
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Notes of visit

Key points:

- There is no doubt that senior leaders recognise the crucial importance of the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and are doing everything possible to prioritise this and raise the profile across the school. An associate senior leader has been appointed with a focus on the disadvantaged strategy, and seconds in department have been tasked with championing the needs of disadvantaged pupils in their areas. A common approach to line management has been adopted so that the disadvantaged are a common thread running through curriculum line management meetings at all levels. A considerable amount of good work is going on, but more robust systems to measure impact would sharpen things up still further.
- The pupil premium strategy statement on the website meets requirements and is carefully planned as a three-year strategy in line with best practice. Leaders have also surveyed disadvantaged pupils and their parents alongside a control group of other pupils. They found that, overall, disadvantaged pupils are more ambivalent in their attitudes to learning than others. A number of challenges and barriers to disadvantaged pupils' well-being and progress are identified. It emerged through conversation though that there is less clarity about how many pupils fall into which category and what support they are all getting. Discussion took place about whether a clearer provision map of who needed and was accessing what would enable leaders to better identify impact and refine spending to where it was most needed and having the most impact.
- That the school cares deeply for the welfare of its disadvantaged pupils is beyond a doubt. Considerable work has taken place, not just during lockdown, to liaise with families to ensure that their basic needs are met, and the school provides Tesco vouchers during holidays and hampers at Christmas. They take care to ensure that all students have access to extracurricular activities and support with payment, and disadvantaged pupils are targeted for extracurricular visits to promote cultural capital (Theatre trip to see 'Gangsta Granny') as well as curriculum related visits, including for science. A planned whole school entitlement programme (the Penistone Roadmap) is in the early stages of development, but will map out what all pupils, including the disadvantaged should be expected to experience during their school life. Cameron Parker, an external provider, works with disadvantaged

pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 on a programme designed to raise aspirations, spread across four days throughout the academic year. Leaders are not fully convinced that it is having the desired outcome. Further discussion showed that the focus and expected impact of his work had not been scoped out with him at the beginning: there is no plan and success criteria. In effect, he monitors his own impact through discussions with pupils. However, opportunities are missed to align his work with what goes on in the rest of the curriculum or to keep teachers informed of the strategies that work best with particular pupils. This is an area which could be sharpened up considerably if leaders choose to continue his work next year – and could be refocused for the remaining activity in the summer term.

- Curriculum seconds in department are given an additional hour each week for work linked to the disadvantaged. They are absolutely on message that the curriculum is intended to be ambitious for all pupils and that expectations must be as high for disadvantaged as for others. The only difference is in terms of support for access. It was very interesting that, of the three leaders with whom the IA spoke, all were very committed and had good ideas, but all were doing slightly different things. In history, for example, there is considerable emphasis on ensuring that cultural capital is explicit through the schemes of learning and that these are then reflected in the disadvantaged pupils' books. The PE department has a tracker which identifies not just those who are disadvantaged, but their specific barriers in PE, along with some suggested strategies for addressing them. Between them, these leaders have some potentially powerful tools for supporting pupils. Time now needs to be built in for them to collaborate, share best practice, and so increase the impact.
- Lesson visits confirmed that teachers are aware of who the disadvantaged pupils are, and that most are consciously taking steps to support them in lessons. There is some variation in quality but, not surprisingly, this is linked to individual teachers' overall understanding of subject and teaching pedagogy. In a maths lesson, for example, it was clear that the teacher was checking for pupils' understanding, making sure that those who were disadvantaged were targeted with appropriate questions, and reinforcing messages about quality of presentation. However, in another maths lesson, the sequencing of learning was confusing which meant that all pupils had misconceptions and were not able to apply what they knew from previous lessons. Science was typically positive. It was very clear that there were no surprises for senior leaders and that their judgements about the strengths and areas for development are very accurate.
- There are differentiated protocols around behaviour and attendance for disadvantaged pupils to ensure that support-based interventions start slightly earlier to try to limit the need for future sanctions. There is an attendance meeting every week during which the attendance of every disadvantaged pupil is checked. Attendance has declined since the pandemic and there is a stepped plan in place to ensure that it goes back to at least 2018/19 levels. Leaders have a wealth of data about behaviour and attendance and believe that both are going in the right direction. However, the need now is to analyse the data more closely to use it as a means of checking impact against precise targets. Discussion also took place about using gap closure as a measure. Given that the attendance of all pupils has declined as a result of Covid, targets set based on gaps do not necessarily provide the level of aspiration needed.
- 1392 (name taken from the year that the school was founded) was set up in September to provide a safe space for disadvantaged pupils. It is open to all, staffed by an HLTA and a Student Engagement Officer and designed to get help to close barriers whether they are behavioural, personal or academic. Pupils can also get breakfast there. There are two aspects to the provision. Some pupils are identified by achievement leaders as in need of additional learning interventions, and one of the two members of staff will provide one to one or very small group support. Impact is tracked on entry and exit. Pupils are taken out of non-core subjects. It would be worth leaders reflecting on two points. What, if any, is the potential risk of taking pupils out of other curriculum areas to promote catch-up and how is this mitigated? Secondly, some pupils could be identified for intervention for non-core

subjects. How do leaders know that intervention from a non-specialist member of staff is more effective than they would get from a specialist member of the teaching department? Other aspects of the provisions work could be seen as more social. Pupils can access it as a time-out during lessons or as a place to socialise during breaks and lunchtimes. Leaders are aware that this is an expensive provision and there needs to be impact linked to value for money. There is no tracking system to check who accesses it on a regular basis and, at the point of the visit, it was not well attended. There is inconsistency in the way that achievement leaders and student support officers promote or guide pupil access to the provision. An example was given of an achievement leader who works very closely with the 1392 coordinator, including a weekly meeting, but this is not consistent. No targets appear to be set around attendance, impact, footfall etc. so, though there are skilled staff in there, it is difficult to see how accountability is measured or equity of access ensured.

- The designated teacher for looked after children has been in post for three years and is organised and knowledgeable. She explained that she had provided training for senior leaders to reinforce an understanding that these are amongst the most vulnerable pupils in school. She is providing training for the rest of the school broken down into groups so that at least one member of each department or area has detailed knowledge and can champion support for LAC. She knows the pupils well and is developing an action plan to ensure that high-quality provision for this group leads to improved outcomes. Discussion took place about success criteria and the need to ensure that they are specifically focused on impact rather than completion of actions or monitoring activities. A couple of case studies were provided and showed that pupils are making good progress.
- There is some work to do to enable achievement leaders to articulate their roles and expectations with regard to disadvantaged pupils more clearly. They identify pupils who are not where they need to be based on falling behind in three or more subjects at each assessment review point. They were unable to provide clarity about whether disadvantaged pupils were making good progress or whether the gaps in attainment are closing. Most disadvantaged pupils seem to fall into the mid to high prior attaining groups on entry, but it is not clear whether this widens or closes as they progress through school. Achievement leaders seem to get information about pupils from a range of sources. Are lines of communication always clear enough and would a formalised RAP based on a centralised input be more helpful? It is also clear that achievement leaders (like the seconds in department) are operating in different ways and therefore potentially missing opportunities to share powerful practice.

Points to consider:

The school is passionate about supporting disadvantaged pupils and some high-quality work is taking place, but leaders are missing opportunities to check impact and therefore credit the work that has been done. Consider ensuring that:

- Each piece of work, group of staff, or aspect of provision has clear parameters and scope, linked to expectations around success criteria and impact.
- There is a simple method of checking which pupils are accessing what provision and to what effect.
- That lines of communication are clear and that staff who are working on the same remit (e.g., seconds in department or achievement leaders) are working to common expectations and having opportunities to share good practice.
- The wealth of data is closely analysed to set precise targets and check impact.

