

DIOCESAN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PARTNER VISIT RECORD (25/26)



School:	Queen Mary Avenue Infant school
Date:	22.1.26
Purpose of the visit:	SIP visit 2
Participants:	Mel Castle (HT) Sophie Todd (DHT) Donna Neilson (EYFS lead) Paula Debnam (Attendance lead)

Planned activities

e.g. work scrutiny, pupil interview, lesson visits, discussions with leaders and governors

Discussion about IDSR and Ofsted SEF
Visits to EYFS – continuous provision/ interactions/ next steps
Discussion about EYFS continuous provision
Discussion about attendance

Key findings

IDSR and SEF

We highlighted the following from the IDSR

Number on roll is generally stable

Pupils supported at special needs support is average and 'in-line with the LA'. However, the number of pupils with an EHCP is well above average and well above the LA

The number of pupils supported at Child in Need is above average but not quite as high as the whole local area.

We explored the instability in 2024 there was no real pattern tot his. We are aware that this year may show instability in school population too. Leaders understand the reasons for this.

As we know the school serves a highly deprived community which is reflected in IDSR.

We discussed the limited number of categories in the SEND section. This had also been highlighted and explored by the last SEND audit. Identification was accurate.

Leaders further highlighted the new potty-training programme which has been effective. The BUS programme continues to run, and

Next steps

Leaders note that since Jan 25 (date of census information in IDSR) there have been some changes to the number on roll. Leaders and governors should monitor these for patterns.

The IDSR shows the school is inclusive (taking a higher proportion of pupils with EHCP than in the catchment of the school). Governors should continue to monitor this data, understand the reasons for it and question it.

Continue to monitor imports/ exports to and from the school and note the reasons to help ascertain any patterns.

Continue rigorous monitoring for all groups of pupils.

Continue to identify pupils who are SENS as well as those with higher need.

leaders have tightened the tracking of interventions. We noted that complex needs impact on the readiness for toileting too. Because of the high level of disadvantage, leaders prioritise strategies that work for all pupils. We discussed the increasing number of pupils with English as an Additional language. We discussed training for staff and how communication with parents is supported. Data about the staff team is positive. There is a high ratio of support staff to teachers, but this reflects the need of pupils. Attendance data reflects Y1 and Y2 only. It shows an improving trend over the last 3 years although data is not yet at National. This reflects the schools intensive work in this area. The group of pupils who are persistently absent show less improvement. We noted that there are very low numbers of pupils who are suspended or excluded. This reflects the schools' efforts to keep children at school. We discussed the phonic trend which shows a 3-year picture of below National. I know leaders are frustrated by this. Leaders continue to work closely with RWInc advisors and previous monitoring has shown practice to be consistent. We also know that attendance impacts on outcomes. RWInc have given some recent advice to bring the learning of some sounds forward. Leaders are exploring this to check it is right for the pupils at QMA. There is an additional phonic session taking place in Reception this year. This was started earlier than in 23-24. Pupils who fall behind in phonics acquisition have additional phonics. This includes an intervention group, more speed sound work and 1-1 intervention where needed.	Revisit support for pupils with EAL. Leaders and governors should monitor this group e.g. for attendance, behaviour and attainment. Continue the strong work in a challenging context to maintain staff well-being. Further focus efforts on pupils who are persistently absent. Please check IDSR later in the school year when the final term's attendance data for 24/25 has been added. We noted that the school has been invited to attend RISE briefings for attendance and has a 10-page audit to complete too. We noted a need to further refresh training on trauma informed approaches. Continue to sustain the high-quality phonic programme. Continue to ensure that staff access refresher training as needed. Continue to ensure that rigorous assessments are made by a consistent person. We noted that it would be helpful if the RWInc consultant were to note strengths as well as areas for development. Continue to monitor the impact of the additional session of phonics. Monitor the quality of the phonic intervention sessions and 1-1 interventions too. Phonic leader to rigorously monitor the quality of phonics teaching (weekly) providing coaching and support as required.
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All staff are trained. The school has access to the RWInc pathways to provide refresher training. We noted that 49% of Y2s have completed the phonic programme already this year. 69% of the cohort are on track with their reading. Leaders commented on the positive impact of echo reading. SEF & DfE GLD report We noted that the WellComm assessment and programme for speech and language is used across the school. All staff are trained The EYFS team are engaging in 'Interacting not interfering' training We looked briefly at the DfE 'Compare your good level of development (GLD)' report. Leaders had also analysed attainment across the areas of development over 3 years. There are not significant trends in that data. The 'Compare you GLD data' report shows a lower attainment compared to the LA and National. However, when compared to schools in a similar context the GLD is higher than would have been predicted. The report sets out areas to focus on. Word reading/ phonics being a priority. We discussed the pupils with SENS which is a priority area. We noted that the capacity of the staff team is often pulled to the highest needs. Children who speak English as their first language are also a priority.	Continue to strive for consistency in delivery of phonics and echo reading. Continue the intense focus on high quality talk and interactions including use of songs and rhymes. Continue to use the WellComm toolkit robustly. Implement learning from this training consistently There have been significant changes in EYFS since the children in this DfE report completed their EYFS assessment. Governors should closely monitor the impact of these changes as cohorts are assessed later this year. One of the biggest challenges is regular attendance of pupils in EYFS. This is not helped because attendance cannot be enforced in these year groups. Phonics is a priority. All teachers are teachers of SEND. Support for the SENDCO to identify pupils at SENS may be helpful. All staff do make adaptations that include ALL children as a matter of course. Governors should monitor this pupil group as well as the pupils with EHCPs. Monitoring EAL leaders is increasingly important for leaders and governors. Consider revisiting training for staff and possibly produce a guide so that everyone knows what to do when an EAL learner joins the school. include in this the strategies to communicate with parents.
EYFS The environment in EYFS continues to improve since the wall was built. Teachers say that they know their children better as a result.	Further embed consistency of provision including in the outdoors.

Relationships with key staff also appear stronger. Considerable work has taken place to link continuous provision to the planned learning. Areas of provision were inviting today. In Reception, pupils were sustaining engagement in pairs and some larger groups. Pupils do struggle to explain what they are doing – this emphasises the need for a rich environment of talk. Adults were all engaged in areas of provision. There was rich talk taking place in most classrooms. All adults could identify pupils who were vulnerable and needed to be targeted for support. Pupils with high needs were supported in personalised spaces on a 1-1 basis but integrate with the rest of the class group as they are able. Leaders noted that where TAs have been involved in developing continuous provision this has been supportive. Leaders have attended the RISE Early Years conference. Further RISE videos have also been shared to support development. The schools work to develop staff interactions is paying off. There is still some work to further improve this. In the best practice TAs work quietly alongside pupils, extending their vocabulary, recasting sentences or describing what they are doing in play. Pupils at QMA need a lot of this support. Where practice is not strong, the TA is the loudest voice in the room. This distracts from pupils learning, hinders their concentration and that of other adults, it is also quite intimidating to young and vulnerable children. We spent some time observing routines and expectations in EYFS. At times, children don't all stop when an adult gives an instruction. This hampers their listening.	Further extend the work started to create a high-quality language environment. Sustain and embed the work started to improve continuous provision. Support pupils to talk about their play, model interactions with one another e.g. sharing etc. Continue to expect pupils to respond when adults are talking to them – give them choices as models if needed Continue planned training for staff on interactions. Continue to monitor and provide individual feedback to keep raising the standard of talk Continue strategies to identify children's vulnerabilities. The reports from Insight are really helpful in supporting monitoring in classes. Further work with TAs on understanding the scaffolding triangle which helps them understand how to build children's independence. Support them to give the least support first. The recently updated guidance from the EEF TA deployment may be helpful Deployment of Teaching Assistants EEF  Where practice is weak, provide coaching or carry out joint observation of effective practice. If this is not successful, then staff will need to be held to account. Explore behaviour expectations for routines with the staff team. Agree these and monitor for consistent application. Challenge staff where they do not follow these expectations. You may want to consider developing and teaching a 'behaviour curriculum' to the whole school through assemblies with a weekly or
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We talked later about what are the school's expectations for stopping and listening to the teacher? What are the schools' expectations for how we line up? What are the school's expectations for how children tidy up. We also noted that at tidy-up time adults often did the work rather than asking children, 'What do we need to do?' and encouraging them to do it.	fortnightly focus on a particular behaviour e.g. walking down the corridor, lining up, saying please and thank you, eating politely at dinner etc.
EYFS continuous provision planning We spent some time working through the continuous plans in detail. A good start has been made in mapping the milestone and expectations for pupils in a range of provision areas. These show progression in learning from N1 to N2 and Rec. It reduces any overlap or unnecessary repetition and smooths the learning journey. Plans for marking making, painting and sculpture were helpfully cross referenced to pre-writing strategies and the Squiggle programme. This is important as it underpins the transcriptional skill of handwriting.	In some areas there is a need to further cross reference the continuous provision plans with the subject leader plans for the KS1 curriculum. This is to ensure there is a smooth journey in each curriculum area. At times plans drift into 'tasks' or 'activities' rather than the key learning. Keep checking these as they are developed.
Attendance Leaders have received their AI generated attendance target from government (94%). Leaders feel very challenged in this area and frustrated about the time, money and effort it takes for little gain. We noted that the report is based on primary not infant schools. We celebrated the improvements in overall attendance which the IDSR does show. We noted that the persistent absence category is the most difficult to move. The school continues the strategies we have noted in previous reports. I reassured leaders that they are doing the right things and making a difference. We noted that the school was hit with a diarrhoea and sickness bug in December which	Governors should continue their rigorous work and communication with families in this area. They should also ensure there is supervision for staff involved in the most challenging of cases. Keep positive case studies to hand. Continue to work with the youngest pupils to challenge and set expectations as they join nursery and school.

has deflated attendance from a stronger position in the first half of the autumn term. Leaders know individual pupils and families well. We identified some positive stories where there are significant improvements in attendance. We explored a number of cases of pupils who are persistently absent. Of significance were the family circumstances of PA pupils e.g. family moving abroad and then back, prison visiting, changes in family relationships which impact on who the child is living with etc. In all cases, leaders can talk in detail about the actions they have taken including working with the EWO, attendance team in the LA and social workers. The work is rigorous and demanding. We highlighted the need for all teachers to maintain conversations with parents about attendance. Attendance forms part of plans for pupils with SEND. Leaders again express frustrations that there is no legal support to ensure that pupils in Nursery and Reception attend school. RISE support has now been offered to the school. Leaders are currently completing a 10-page audit. This connection is with Willows Attendance hub whom the Head has already had connection.	Continue to focus on the things that you can control. Ensure that attendance is prioritised by every member of staff. Next steps – attend the RISE conference and review practice against further advice given.
Summary	
I am pleased that the RISE teams are offering support around attendance. I know the staff team work incredibly hard to secure pupils attendance and that this is back breaking work. I also know that governors have focused on this diligently for the past 3 years. We also know that the school's work in this area was recognised at the last Ofsted. “The school supports parents and carers well to ensure that pupils attend school. Most pupils attend school regularly. However, a small but significant group of pupils miss too much school. These pupils do not do as well in their learning. They have gaps in their knowledge. Some find it difficult to build strong relationships with their peers. Pupils with high levels of attendance, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.” Ofsted July 24 Priorities for development were identified as: Sustain work on Phonics	

Attendance

Key focus on:

Developing the strength of Early Years practice – interactions, role of the adult, quality environments, curriculum expectations, routines, foundational skills e.g. handwriting, phonics, oracy, love of books, early maths etc.

Future priorities include:

TA development

The development of independence in pupils

My thanks once again to the welcome that the team at QMA give. They always engage thoughtfully in discussions, and I hope conversations are helpful to them. Keep Dreaming Big and Shining Bright!

Agreed Actions

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Action	Who	When	✓
Further refine continuous provision plans in EYFS. Align these to wider curriculum plans to ensure a clear progression	EYFS lead		
Ensure there are well known consistent routines and expectations e.g. for moving to tables from the carpet, lining up, moving through school etc and that all staff explicitly teach these. Consider developing a behaviour curriculum which is explicitly taught.	SLT		
Support all TAs to engage in high quality interactions with EYFS pupils	SLT		
Further review the feedback from RWInc and trial to ensure it works for QMA pupils	Phonics lead		
Maintain the rigorous focus on attendance	HT and attendance lead		
Check all staff are up to date with training to support EAL pupils and trauma informed practice too	HT		
Ensure all teachers hold conversations with parents about attendance	All		
Plan to develop TAs understanding of the scaffolding triangle	SLT		
Focus for subsequent school improvement visits		Date	
No further visits booked – please let me know asap if you need a summer visit – thank you.			
Diocesan School Effectiveness Advisor		Date	
June Richardson		28.1.26	
Executive/ Head Teacher comments			
Signature		Date	