

## Investors in Pupils

### Bell Lane Academy Assessment Report

<b>Investors in Pupils coordinator:</b>	Kathryn Haddon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Louise Ward
<b>Investors in Pupil Assessor:</b>	Malcolm Lister
<b>Date of the assessment:</b>	20.07.2017
<b>Investors in Pupils coordinator email:</b>	khaddon@belllaneacademy.org
<b>Headteacher email:</b>	headteacher@belllaneacademy.org
<b>School contact telephone number:</b>	01977 613304
<b>MAT:</b>	WCAT
<b>Name of School:</b>	Bell Lane Academy

#### Context of the school

The school website indicates that at Bell Lane Academy *'we aim to provide your child with an excitement and enjoyment for learning that will offer a secure basis for their future'*. Evidence from this assessment suggests that progress towards this ambitious aim is excellent. *'Developing resilience and a strong sense of community is key to the ethos of our academy'* (Coordinator). Other important themes that were immediately evident were the promotion of independence and effective teamwork and collaboration. The warm, friendly atmosphere was especially impressive, particularly on an inauspiciously wet Thursday prior to the school closing for the summer holidays on the following day.

Feedback from parents confirmed that the school has a good reputation. This was endorsed by Ofsted in 2014, when the school was judged as good in all areas by inspectors. Ofsted described the school as follows. *'This is an average sized primary school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be entitled to free school meals, is below average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. With very few exceptions, pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils supported through school action....and school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.'* This description remains broadly accurate (Pupil Premium 4%, Pupils first language not English 1%). Bell Lane became an academy in August 2015 and the school is part of the WCAT MAT which comprises of 21 schools. The pupil population is growing and there are now 317 pupils. Building developments and the reconfiguration of internal space are planned to take account of this.

The standard is used successfully as a key driver for improvement and the culture underpinning Investors in Pupils is central to the school's character. Investors in Pupils is therefore clearly identified as a key success criteria in the school's 'Areas for Improvement' (*in the Action Plan*).



## INVESTORS IN PUPILS

Principled leadership from the headteacher sets the tone and ethos for the school and she is ably supported by an enthusiastic, dedicated and loyal staff team. The school also benefits from a highly motivated and well organised Investors in Pupils coordinator. Key areas of the standard are clearly exemplified through focused displays, links with school priorities and in confident feedback during interviews with a wide range of stakeholders. Every classroom has a specific display section where the class vision statement, target, induction book and classroom equipment posters are presented. Vision statements have been developed by the pupils and define their class aims.

Communications between the school and its many stakeholders are a strength. Parent feedback is very important to the school and they clearly have a high regard for its work and appreciate the support they receive: *'I have a really good relationship with the head and staff'* (parent). Ofsted's comment that *'Parents are very positive about all aspects of school life'* therefore remains entirely appropriate. Parents are informed about aspects of Investors in Pupils through the regular communication channels, such as the newsletters, information on the website and a range of direct contacts including texts, meetings and informal discussions.

Ofsted judged that *'Governors are extremely ambitious to see the school improve further'*. Interviews confirmed that they continue to be regular visitors to the school and demonstrated a good understanding of the school's strengths. An assembly identified who the governors are and detailed their roles and responsibilities. A governor has also visited each class to discuss their roles and responsibilities and to answer any questions the pupils might have. Governors actively promote the school's work and provide additional support by conducting learning walks, volunteering to go on trips as well as attending meetings and events such as school assemblies. There is a genuine desire to both support and challenge the school.

Relationships are a significant strength and the supportive culture is school-wide. Staff like the children and they like them. Teamwork is effective and CPD remains a major commitment, with staff reflecting positively on its impact. Staff share some of their training experiences with pupils, some of whom could describe how adults in school continually undergo professional development. They understood how this benefits their class.

The school sensibly uses several external awards and accreditations to moderate and validate its performance. They include Investors in People, West Yorkshire Sport Award and the Parliamentary Review.

### **Strengths of the school which support the principles of 'Investors in Pupils'**

#### **Learning**

- *'Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards are rising, and differences in achievement between groups of pupils are closing'*. (Ofsted 2014). Feedback and observations confirm that pupils are keen to learn and enjoy the wide range of learning experiences that are provided for them. They know how to seek help and that the staff are there to support them: *'There's always an adult to help you'* (pupil). Learning behaviours were particularly impressive. Observations also showed that pupils' attitudes to learning were very positive: *'I really like the homework'* (pupil).
- Class targets are displayed in the classroom and referenced to by staff regularly. Each class target is developed and updated half termly. They are linked to academy values which change every half term. Each classroom also has a 'Behaviours for Learning' target board. Pupils receive personalised daily and weekly 'next steps' in all subjects and they are supported to achieve these. Every half term pupils review then choose a new individual learning target. Staff feedback confirmed that pupils enjoy being challenged and working together towards whole class targets and rewards. This



## INVESTORS IN PUPILS

systematic approach to target setting remains a key factor in supporting learning. Children who were interviewed knew their targets and why they had them.

- Success is consistently and appropriately rewarded. Pupils who have been especially successful (e.g. in their effort, achievement or behaviour) receive a certificate and special mention in Friday's Superstar Assembly. Feedback confirmed that pupils value and enjoy their rewards.
- The school provides a wide range of enrichment opportunities for its pupils, as evidenced through club activities such as netball, drama, cooking, choir and kickboxing. A wide range of trips further enrich the curriculum.
- Display in the school is high quality and there are abundant impressive examples of imaginative presentation. Display is used effectively to celebrate success and demonstrate high expectations.

### Behaviour and Safety

- 'Behaviour is good, and at times exemplary' (Ofsted 2014). Feedback from pupils, staff and parents indicates that this judgement continues to be accurate: *'Any problems are dealt with quickly and efficiently... My friend couldn't believe how well it was dealt with... They're very polite'* ( parents ).
- During the assessment there was abundant evidence of excellent relationships within a safe, well organised and positive working environment. Pupils' attitudes and relationships confirmed that they feel safe in school and respond well to the positive feedback, encouragement and rewards they receive. Care of the pupils is a genuine strength: *'I feel very confident about safety'* ( parent )..... *'The whole building is secure'* ( parent )..... *'We all feel safe'* ( pupil ).
- Feedback from pupils, staff and parents confirms that bullying is not tolerated, instances are very rare and action is taken promptly to address any issues: *'The head is involved straight away'* ( parent ). This finding is in line with Ofsted's judgement that *'bullying is rare.... and any incidents are quickly addressed'* ( 2014 ).

### School and Class Management including knowledge of school finance

- Bell Lane has a democratically elected School Council and members take their responsibilities seriously. To make it as fair as possible, pupils have the opportunity to be a School Councillor once during Key Stage 1 and once during Key Stage 2. There is a dedicated and informative School Council area on the school website as well as the School Council noticeboard with its accompanying suggestions box: *'My daughter puts something in every day!'* (parent).
- School Council representatives feed back the outcomes from their meetings or provide classes with opportunities to discuss and decide for themselves how they might respond to Council suggestions. All pupils have access to School Council and Top Team minutes. The Council has been involved in everything from meeting Wakefield Council representatives about a new housing development to naming the new school mascots.
- Pupils' independence is encouraged and some pupils have specific leadership roles such as Top Team (Year 5 & 6), Eco Council (all year groups) and House captains and Vice-captains (Year 6). These jobs are taken very seriously by the pupils: *'We try to do things properly'* (pupil).
- Developing financial understanding is an important focus but is, understandably, a difficult concept for many younger pupils to learn. A poster detailing the cost of basis classroom equipment is therefore displayed in every classroom. Year 6 then use this information to make personalised classroom equipment posters for each class. Older pupils were aware of several other financial factors.



## INVESTORS IN PUPILS

- The School Council is also responsible for deciding how to spend any monies raised by School Council events. Funds have been used to purchase indoor playtime games and playground equipment. The Top Team is responsible for the budget for the playground equipment. Each half term the class who achieved the top attendance received £20 to spend on classroom games. The children have been supported by their class teacher to price up and decide what to spend their money on. This includes selecting charities to donate to.
- The school is committed to fundraising for various charities such as Operation Christmas Child, when gifts are provided for children in some of the poorest communities around the world.
- Lunchtime was calm, purposeful and obviously enjoyable for the pupils.

### Attendance

- Although attendance is not an issue for the school (currently above 96%) the promotion of good attendance and punctuality is taken very seriously. Awards encourage pupils to achieve 100% attendance for a term and success merits a certificate and small prize. Pupils who achieve 100% attendance for the whole academic year receive a £5 W H Smith's voucher. Every half term the class with the best attendance receives £20 to spend on a classroom game.
- Staff are rigorous in all aspects of their approach to sustaining high levels of attendance.
- Pupils clearly enjoy coming to Bell Lane because of the wide range of exciting learning and fun activities the school provides for them. Pupil interviews indicate that they clearly appreciate what the staff do for them: *'They give us some fun work to do'* (pupil).

### Induction

- There is a full induction programme for all new Bell Lane pupils and staff. New pupils receive a tour of the school and their induction is a carefully managed process: *'We'd welcome you' .... 'I couldn't speak the language and people comforted me'* (pupils).
- Every class has developed their own age appropriate 'Welcome to our class' booklet that they share with any new members and visitors. These booklets contain a list detailing the roles and responsibilities of all staff. Pupils use this to help them understand what each member of staff does to support their learning.

### **Areas for Development (*n.b. these areas are compulsory and must be implemented in order to retain the standard at the next assessment*)**

- The principle areas of Investors in Pupils are immediately evident throughout the school. These should now be more explicitly badged with specific reference to the standard.
- Pupils would benefit from a greater knowledge of finance, perhaps through reflecting on the relevance of economic understanding for young people.

### Note

Although the school website is adequate and the parents indicated that it served their needs, it has been severely limited in scope by the MAT. This means that Bell Lane cannot fully showcase much of the excellent work and opportunities offered by the school. This issue should be addressed as a matter of urgency.