

Head of School: Report to Governors

October 2021

New Students

The new transition programme for new students was extremely successful – comprehensive Transition materials and programmes were shared early in the summer term. Teaching teams worked with feeder schools and families to establish personalised transition pathways for each students according to need and the Year 7 transition activities in the summer holidays were a great introduction to Cedars. To date, we have welcomed 33 new students into the school.

- 7 in EYFS
- 5 at Key Stage 1,
- 6 at Key Stage 2,
- 14 at Year 7
- 1 at Year 8.

Our Year group distribution is now:

Reception	7
Year 1	9
Year 2	8
Year 3	12
Year 4	8
Year 5	20
Year 6	20
Year 7	31
Year 8	19
Year 9	26
Total	160

Achievement and Progress 2020-21

End of year assessments were completed and moderated in June. Please see attached ***Progress and Achievement Report*** for a summary of 2020-21.

Baseline assessments for new students are nearly finished and all students have a Personal Learning Plan in place.

Curriculum Leads have all of the assessment data and will use it to inform their CPD and development action plans.

Monitoring

Curriculum Leads have begun monitoring the curriculum implementation by examining Medium Term Planning, checking for curriculum coverage and sequencing. They have identified areas to focus on to support colleagues in their curriculum delivery and will be following a calendar of coaching activities throughout the term to assist teacher development.

HoS and DHoS have begun daily walks to gather information on the strengths and areas for development within school. We have been pleased to see how settled and purposeful the classes are in light of the challenges we have faced with staffing in current weeks.

Our Leadership triad with Sunningdale and Columbia Grange schools to begin again this term – in addition to other QoE projects, we will be working together across the three schools to carry out Progress Interviews with colleagues to allow for moderation and quality assurance.

The B Squared Regional Group (Sunningdale School, Gibside Schools, Cedars School, Columbia Grange School, Woodlawn School, KTS Academy) continue to work together to moderate and improve practice – we met on Friday 25th June to moderate English work and we will meet again on Wed 6th October at Gibside School to look at maths.

The Academy Development Teams are headed by our middle leaders and linked to a member of the SLG and Governing body. Please see the attached document for new teams.

Team leads will be contacting their link Governor this half term to begin discussions around plans for the coming year.

Overcoming Barriers to Learning.

The Therapy Update from Services explains how we are using the new Therapy Centre currently. The children are excited to use these new spaces and teachers are reporting how helpful it has been in supporting our children to regulate themselves.

The Pupil Progress Reports (see Appendix 2 from Progress and Achievement Report) highlight the key barriers for each student. Services and the School Leadership Team will now work together to map these barriers against our provision to ensure that those in need are prioritised for therapeutic and intervention work.

The tighter assessment arrangements across the curriculum, including Emotional and Social Wellbeing, will help us to measure the impact of these therapies so that we know what is working well.

Nasim Ali's HLTA role as 'Reading Intervention Specialist' has developed to support the Communication Development team's aims to improve the language and oracy provision at Cedars.

A large number of our children struggle to comprehend verbal and written language because of significant language deficits (see Expressive and Receptive progress levels in the progress report). We want to be proactive in identifying and addressing these deficits, so Nasim has assessed all children from Year 4 upwards to look at their suitability for the Talk Boost Intervention Programme. Talk Boost is a targeted intervention for children with language that is delayed. The programme will be delivered by Nasim and provides a structured approach that will boost children's progress in language and communication. The initial assessments will help us to prioritise individuals and small

groups to take part in a ten-week trial of the intervention with Nasim. In mainstream it has shown to increase understanding by an average of 9 - 18 months after a ten week intervention. We know that this level of progress may not be the same in a Specialist setting and that the programme will need to be adapted to meet the complex needs of our students, however, we have seen good practice where other Specialist settings have used it, so we are hopeful that our exit assessments will show promising results.

This means that Nasim, for the time being, will no longer be focussed taking groups and individuals for reading. Class teams will be leading on assessing children's reading and listening to them read regularly as part of their daily curriculum.



Professional Development

Professional Development in Cedars will be driven by our Re:SEND team as we work to develop Cedars into a research engaged learning community. Please see attached document for more information about Re:SEND.

Teacher's 'performance management' will support them to engage with evidenced-based practice, identifying areas for development in their classrooms and implementing relevant, action research that is meaningful for them and their students. Teachers and support staff will be encouraged to become 'experts' in their areas of interest and share best practice with colleagues in and out of school, across the Re:SEND network. Schools such as Huntington School in York have led the way with this approach to CPD and performance management with extraordinary success.

Staffing

The effects of Covid are still very much being felt across school and college. In the month of September, we have lost **100 days of work** across the Academy. College has lost **49 days** with **10 staff** taking sick leave and School has lost **51 days** with **15 staff** taking sick leave. Not all of the sickness is Covid related, some staff have been affected by other viruses that are inevitably spread when people come together. These absences cannot be helped, but it has meant that we have had to rely heavily on the goodwill and flexibility of our teaching teams. Many staff have not been able to receive their full allocation of PPA time or have adequate breaks during the day. Senior Leaders cover where possible, meaning that, understandably, other areas of school development or monitoring must go on hold. We have also taken on two Kick Start employees in the School and two in College who have helped to provide a level of supervision. It has been a difficult few weeks, however, our teams have been amazingly resilient and professional, doing whatever they can to help us keep running and providing our students with an uninterrupted education. We are very lucky to have them!

Other schools locally and nationally are reporting that they are under the same pressures with staffing levels. We continue to wait for clear guidance from the Local Authority and the DfE on how we will keep our Academy working for our children over the difficult winter months predicted.