

Torfield And Saxon Mount Academy Trust



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Torfield and Saxon Mount Schools External Advisor Annual Report Summary 2018/19

The External Advisor review visits this year have again been completed across both schools in the MAT.

The pupils at Saxon Mount and Torfield exhibit excellent behaviour and attitude, to their school, the staff, and their work.

At both schools it would be easy for visitors to assume that this is a reflection on the pupils themselves, something which is undoubtedly true.

However, a closer analysis of the prior experience and records of these pupils in their previous placement's points to a wide range of serious issues:

- **Exceptionally poor attendance**
- **Very poor attitude to work**
- **Poor relationships with other pupils and staff**
- **Parents who in many aspects have given up hope of anything like a normal educational experience for their child.**

Overview

The reviews, and assessment of performance this year have delivered opportunities to "observe, explore and discuss" with the executive headteacher and the heads of school. It continues to be particularly important to capitalize on the "outstanding" judgment at Torfield and the "good" with outstanding features judgement at Saxon Mount.

As mentioned every year, but worth restating, shaped by the executive headteacher, there is a well-developed underpinning set of core values at both schools.

These values are demonstrated in the interactions between all staff and pupils. There is a clear acknowledgement of an outstanding culture and the manifestation of this is clear to all visitors, embracing the lofty heights of OfSTED, the needs of concerned pupils, parents and carers as well as the more prosaic needs of external advisors.

Pupils have an excellent experience within the Tasmac Academy structure. All staff grasp the opportunity to develop, to become more skilled and more able to be formative within a developing and improving school structure. This persistence of both pupils and staff to be the best that they can be is now deeply entrenched in the DNA of the TaSMAT Academy.

What the visitor, parents, pupils themselves as well as their teachers see, is pupils who are now within an outstanding educational culture of support and development. This is one where pupils are able and encouraged, with support of their teachers and parents, to take ownership of their future. They enjoy a culture of care, commitment and a relentless pursuit to be the best they possibly can.

Outcomes data for both schools has been examined rigorously. Over the years' curriculum changes make it potentially easier to marginalise year on year changes and growth. However, the culture in the schools is predicated on the need to review outcomes in depth, including comparisons with other similar schools and pupils nationally. It provides the opportunity for an external advisor to categorically state the outcomes of progression and attainment at both schools are excellent.

The curriculum offered is flexible enough to be personal and rigid enough to ensure that the core studies in numeracy and literacy underpin significant progress in a wide range of subjects. At 16+ pupils are confident to take on further study and / or employment and only a very small minority, if any at all, are identified as NEET.

At Saxon Mount – 2018 analysis of outcomes

- Analysis of data in special schools is not as straightforward as in mainstream. The school has compared outcomes to those from similar schools as well as with all pupils in secondary education nationally. This is a challenging comparison for the school to make and yet outcomes are excellent.
- There are no significant differences in performance considering gender or those pupils described as disadvantaged: CLA, FSM, ever6
- All year 11 pupils achieved at least 3 level 1 qualifications in 2018 the school is committed to ensure all pupils have access to meaningful qualifications to reflect their abilities and interests and enable progression in KS5.
- The % of pupils gaining 5+ GCSEs 9-1 (or equivalent), including English and Maths, has increased significantly from 8% in 2016, 20% in 2017 and **58.8% in 2018**. This represents outstanding outcomes and reflects our aim to provide a broad and relevant curriculum that allows pupils to achieve and be well prepared for progression into college, employment or training.
- Outcomes for all pupils continue to improve year on year with the overall attainment 8 figure increasing from 6.29 in 2016, 8.49 in 2017 and **11.96 in 2018**.
- Some qualifications offered at Saxon Mount do not contribute to national performance measures: ELC Science; Functional Skills and some of the vocational courses, e.g. Land Based Studies and Skills for Independence and Work. The school continues to offer these qualifications as they provide excellent progression opportunities for pupils and it is their best interests to achieve them. This list will increase as the DfE have reviewed level 1 qualifications contributing towards headline measures.
- The curriculum offer for pupils is outstanding with 19 qualifications, including 9 GCSEs that include: English Literature, English Language, Maths and Combined Science. In addition, Functional Skills are offered in English, Maths and IT. The curriculum offer continues to be flexible as the school responds to both pupil needs / interests and to school performance indicators such as Progress 8, by providing a curriculum that can be equated to and is often broader than a mainstream school accreditation offer. This is aspirational and reflects an ambition for all pupils have access to the type of curriculum and progression opportunities offered in mainstream provision, with appropriate additional support to overcome barriers to learning.
- 95% of teaching was good or better with 47.5% outstanding. This represents outstanding teaching and learning and is a strength over time.
- Progress in KS3 and 4 continues to show that 85+% of pupils make expected or aspirational progress across the school. This is validated by KS4 outcomes. The provisional Progress 8 score for pupils leaving in 2018 was -0.74. This shows exceptional progress and significant improvements on previous years
- Since 2008 the number of fixed term exclusions has fallen significantly year-on-year from over 75 half days. In 2015 2016 and in 2016 17 there were **ZERO** exclusions for two years. In 2017 18, one pupil was excluded for one day.

- Attendance in 2017 18 was 95.4%, this is broadly in line with that for mainstream secondary schools nationally and higher than that for local secondary schools and significantly higher than that for special schools nationally and locally. This is Outstanding and the school is to be commended on this sustained achievement.
- All pupils from last year's cohort had a September guarantee, continuing the trend of very high engagement in education, employment or training post 16

At Torfield – 2018 analysis of outcomes

- Pupil outcomes are compared with all pupils nationally but comparison with pupils with similar profiles is a more useful and realistic data group for analysis of strengths and areas of potential weakness.
- There is very little variation in outcomes over the past three years and this indicates that, with consistently strong teaching, excellent facilities and effective systems for tracking, pupils make outstanding progress. Comparisons can be very difficult year on year as stated above however there appears to be a trend developing of very slightly lower attainment for pupils who are disadvantaged. Detailed pupil analysis indicates that the disadvantaged group has, year on year, a higher proportion of higher need pupils and this may explain the apparent difference. The school will nevertheless be addressing this possible gap by targeting family learning, family support and holiday provision to support communication skills and Personal, social and emotional development.
- Some pupils with a higher level of need have very low starting points and lower rates of progress; these pupils have realistically challenging targets that allow progress to be recognised and celebrated. Pupils in the SLD group account for approximately 20% of the school population.
- Progress for the SLD group of pupils is carefully monitored through MAPPM, work scrutiny and observation to ensure aspirations are high and support is effectively in place to address barriers such as communication. In some more complex cases progress is affected by complex home circumstances and whereas the school is relentless in pursuing support for such pupils, thresholds for support from social services are very high.
- At the end of KS1 all pupils are allocated a prior attainment group (PAG) which predicts their outcome at the end of KS2. This group will comprise of pupils with similar levels of SEN but also pupils with higher potential such as pupils with EAL. At the end of KS 2 pupils are given a progress score. Their progress score is the difference between their KS2 score and the national average for all pupils in their PAG. Some pupils have achieved a positive (+) score meaning they scored higher than those in their group. Others have a minus score.
- There is an ongoing focus on supporting the development of communication skills for all pupils and progress from year R to year 6 is good and in many cases outstanding. All class teams are fully supported to implement the programme across the curriculum.
- The school continues to apply rigorous measures including national expectations when setting annual and KS targets in order to maintain the highest aspirations for all pupils regardless of low starting points which can in themselves be misleading. Baselines for new pupils joining mid key stage are rigorous and evidence based in order to, where necessary, challenge prior data that indicates higher levels of prior attainment. Pupils transferring from mainstream school often demonstrate adult dependency and therefore a limited ability to independently demonstrate or apply skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Progress scores at KS2 that are published, indicate that pupils included in the data set at Torfield do very well. Within the ESCC list of schools, KS2 progress at Torfield was shown to be higher than many mainstream schools.

Lesson Observations, Torfield and Saxon Mount

Joint lesson observations with the heads of school are conducted to ensure that judgements in school are triangulated and externally evaluated. On every occasion at both schools the judgements were in line. From that review criteria and analysis trustees can be

confident that the lesson observations and judgements are accurately scrutinised and agreed.

- ◆ The lessons observed were excellent.
- ◆ There is significant evidence at both schools of outstanding teaching and learning.
- ◆ As mentioned earlier, it is easy to fall into the trap of assuming that the children in both schools are somehow:
 - A select, well-motivated, caring and sociable group of pupils.
 - A group who, along with their parents, have high expectations for their future.
- The reality is that there is exceptional work at both school to create this outstanding environment, and:
- That, outcomes and quality of teaching and learning is so high reflects the environment created by the executive headteacher and the heads of school.

Conclusion

It is quite clear that both schools provide outstanding opportunities for pupils. Staff, equally, through what they bring to the schools and through focussed training and development continue to have the opportunity to become the best that they can be and likewise provide through their teaching, a framework of education, matched to the needs and aspirations of pupils and their families.

The growth in the capacity of pupils to meet the challenges that the world provides is outstanding. The academy continues to excel in what it does.

This has been another excellent year and the heads of school have performed outstandingly. None of this would be possible without the total engagement of all staff, teaching and non-teaching and the persistent support of the governing body in the shaping and development of the young people.

Governors can rightly be proud of the outstanding provision and the outstanding response by parents and pupils.

The school has the capacity and resilience to support the reconstruction of an educational provision to ensure that is “fit for purpose” at a nearby Non Maintained residential special school. Richard is uniquely involved but, inevitably, by association so are many members of staff.

There is a moral imperative here which overrides all others. The provision at this school will become outstanding, drawing as it does on the energy and expertise at the TASMAT Academy.

As executive headteacher Richard has again confirmed that his values and clear focus on the engagement and development of staff and pupils are of the highest calibre.

I can only congratulate him once more for the excellence of his leadership and management underpinning all that is done at TASMAT.

