

June 2017 update !

What have we done since our last Ofsted Inspection?

Heathlands was graded “good” in all categories during its Ofsted inspection of 13-14th March 2013. At the time we were very pleased that Ofsted endorsed our assessment of what the school needed to do to improve further. Since then we have been continuing to use strong self-evaluation as the basis for driving forward further improvements and have addressed the three areas identified by Ofsted. The update below will give you some information about the progress thus far and what we have identified as next steps within the current school development plan.

“Not all teaching is consistently good. A few staff do not use sign language fluently, which affects the rate of learning, and not all learning support assistants are wholly effective.” *Ofsted March 2013*

This recommendation has been addressed in several ways:

- The minimum expected level of BSL qualification of staff was raised from level 2 to level 3. Staff willingly attended additional after school training offered by our own BSL centre to achieve this and several have continued to progress to level 4 or 6. Now, 83% of classroom based staff have a minimum of BSL 3. 17% are just completing their level 3 training so we aim for 100% of current classroom staff to have level 3 by autumn 2017. In addition our own BSL Centre has offered more advanced qualifications. We offered the new level 4 course from its inception and expect to deliver level 6 from September 2017.
- We have reviewed our staffing structure and built a stronger teaching team. This includes the creating of curriculum lead positions to strengthen teaching and learning and the appointment of a designated SENCO who has nearly completed statutory training. We have retained key staff with valuable expertise and added specialists in PE, Design Technology and Modern Foreign Language. Looking to the longer term we have addressed the issue of specialist staff recruitment by developing in service training routes for achieving QTS.
- LSAs have had a range of training focusing on Teaching and Learning. We have increased LSA hours so that they have time for liaison with teachers thus ensuring they are clear about learning objectives and expectations. The introduction of learning frameworks for both lower and upper schools means there are consistent classroom expectations wherever and with whomever the support staff work. Evidence has shown that children benefit most when classroom support staff are used in a targeted way. For this reason we are increasingly deploying classroom support staff to address specific needs or purposes matched to their individual skills set.
- Monitoring of Teaching and Learning has been strengthened through the introduction of a consistent framework, classroom observations and learning walks by senior staff and curriculum leads. The school is participating in the Achievement for All strategy which has been helpful in guiding improvements in targeting, monitoring and feedback.

Next Steps:

- Continued focus on language and literacy improvements as essential to other learning with a focus on writing
- Continued emphasis on the importance of BSL skills for both staff and pupils
- Embed target setting, assessment and feedback procedures
- Ongoing review and development of the curriculum to ensure it is matched to current pupils' needs.

“The school was not designed for secondary-aged pupils. The accommodation and resources for design and technology (resistant materials) and physical education are just adequate.” Ofsted March 2013

The 2013 inspection came only six months after the school was re-organised in September 2012 and became a single site, all age school on what had previously been the site of the primary department. At that time considerable work had been done to remodel the premises e.g. the installation of a science lab, ICT suite and food technology room. Since then further improvements have been made thus ensuring the facilities are suited to the delivery of a KS3/4 curriculum:

- Improved facilities for Physical Education with the installation of high fencing round the main playground and the provision of a fenced and floodlit “astro-turf” sportsfield.
- The building and equipping of a Dance and Drama Studio
- Improved Design Technology (resistant materials) provision with re-modelling of a non-teaching area to create a specialist teaching room and building an extension for a designated workshop space thus providing for both design and realisation.
- A first floor extension which offers improved Art and Design facilities.
- A designated room for media/film work and the introduction of creative computing.
- The installation of a kiln for pottery thus broadening the 3D work offered
- Refurbishment of the old Art room as a library learning centre combining library facilities and computer based research.

Though the Ofsted recommendation was aimed at secondary aged pupils these improved facilities have benefited all children on roll as younger pupils can also use the specialist rooms.

Other projects have included;

- Refurbishment of lower school classrooms with improved acoustics, lighting and technical resources to suite modern teaching requirements.
- Refurbishment of lower school toilet facilities
- Improvements to the science prep room
- The provision of a “focus room” for students needing mentoring and individual support
- Improvements to site security with the installation of a locked gate with both intercom and video connection to the school office and extension of the mag lock system into key areas of lower school

Next Steps:

- The school has aspirations to build a small sports hall/ gymnasium which could be shared with other local schools and be available for some community use. Potential locations and funding for this are being investigated.

- Further develop the use of outside space for learning

“The procedures for checking, analysing, interpreting and presenting pupils’ assessment information are not robust enough for leaders to make detailed and precise judgements about how well pupils do in comparison with pupils in other schools.” *Ofsted March 2013*

A substantial amount of work has been done on data tracking in school and understanding the data sources outside school. In addition the school has kept on top of the new national changes regarding assessment of pupils’ progress.

- Senior staff attended training courses to ensure full understanding of the data sources available.
- A consistent approach across the whole school was established for the in-year tracking of pupils’ progress using the National Curriculum levels.
- Data was analysed and issues translated into school improvement plans
- Fisher Family Trust data and the national performance tables shows Heathlands value added to be strong in comparison to other special schools for Deaf children.
- Pupil progress and achievement information is regularly shared with Governors in the Curriculum and Pupil Welfare committee meetings.
- Moderation within school and externally with other local schools and schools for deaf children in the sign bilingual consortium continues to be an area for development
- Heathlands has created its own system “The Heathlands Tracker” to track pupils’ progress across the curriculum.
- The Heathlands Tracker has been shared with other schools locally and with other schools for deaf children in the sign bilingual consortium in order to support moderation of achievement
- The school is using the “Continuum of Skills Development” as a means of targeting and monitoring the progress of pupils in other important areas e.g. independence skills, social skills or for very small steps of learning.
- Termly pupil progress meetings monitor the progress of individuals and groups. This allows for early identification of any concerns so that supportive intervention can be planned.
- Improved use of management information systems to collect and analyse data e.g. in relation to behaviour and attendance
- A new behaviour review strategy and regular team meetings monitoring impact of this.

Next Steps:

- Strengthen baseline assessments of pupils on entry so we can accurately show progress in this school
- Examine the impact of all interventions so that we can understand what works best and build on good practice