

CALLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report on commencing school in November 2020. Virtual discussions held with the headteacher, senior staff and some pupils.

Summary (points are not in any priority order)

- ✓ The school takes its safeguarding and care role very seriously. It monitored vulnerable pupils rigorously during and after lockdown and put into place actions if needed. It has gone the 'extra mile' on several occasions.
- ✓ Due to the clear leadership of the HT and senior staff, changes to policies and procedures meant that pupils were able to make a full return safely and confidently.
- ✓ The leadership has targeted its Covid funding on its priorities as assessed on pupils return to school.
- ✓ Analysis and evaluation of pupils' knowledge and skills has been quick and is leading to changes in provision to meet pupils' needs.
- ✓ Particularly, the school is highly cognisant of any changes in pupils' well being and mental health, and has altered its provision accordingly to meet these needs.
- ✓ The curriculum is full. Although some changes have been made to accommodate 'gaps' in knowledge (and the 'catch up' continues to be done), the schools' philosophy to provide a broad curriculum is being lived out.
- ✓ The school is capitalising on benefits due to lockdown and new routines e.g. changes in behaviour policy. Pupils say they like what is being done for them.
- ✓ Underpinning all that the school has done to achieve a smooth full return has been involvement of staff and efficient, regular communication that has alleviated concerns.
- ✓ Support for pupils with SEND pupils has been very positive both during and since lockdown.

Details

1. As all schools in the country, Callands closed in March 2020 for lockdown except to admit children of key workers etc in line with government regulations at the time. It opened to admit more children during June/July 2020 and fully in September.
2. The school has followed local and national guidelines during lockdown and in preparation for full return of pupils. During the lockdown period and since full return to pupils, parents and carers have been kept informed very regularly via online information, newsletters, phone calls, personal calls to homes etc.

3. The evidence from the school's leadership and staff shows that from the outset of lockdown, and indeed prior to that, clear communication to all staff and other stakeholders has been paramount in ensuring safety and high quality learning experiences.
4. Constant and clear communication has enabled TAs to know their pupils even more. Indeed, although relationships within the school were already strong, they have been enhanced even further as all have been involved in planning and risk assessing. This has been led well.
5. The school already has the Silver School Mental Health Award and has clearly used this basis to focus on pupils' mental health from week one of the full return: well-being exercises, use of more fresh air, PE have all contributed, and continue to contribute, to strong relationships and improved health of pupils.
6. The leadership has taken into account professional association and staff views and guidance in drawing up and revising its risk assessments for return. As a result of this consultation, involvement and implementation pupils and staff have made a full return feeling secure, eager to continue learning with their friends and which has been successful.
7. From careful observations and other assessments, the school has identified the following main priorities: early reading; learning for 'greater depth' pupils; learning behaviours e.g. 'stickability' in writing. Interestingly, these have been identified by several schools and Ofsted in their visits made to a sample of schools (particularly pupils' resilience in writing at length).
8. As part of preparation for full return, the school has considered its various policies and practices. In particular, the material produced to aid transition into reception appears extremely useful – it gives photos of the classroom arrangements with minimal print and easily accessible by pupils.
9. Training of staff in changes to the arrangements, additional cleaning, staggered entry times etc have been organised well. The schools' leadership reports that pupils have adapted very well to the revised arrangements. This demonstrates the excellent thought that went into the preparations.
10. Briefings and newsletters have taken place each day.
11. Callands takes pupils' safeguarding very seriously. During lockdown there were daily phone calls to particular homes, especially those of vulnerable pupils, to hear pupils' voices/see pupils etc. The number of the vulnerable list increased during partial lockdown but this is now being reduced on full return. Examples of actions taken with vulnerable pupils shows that these pupils have been well monitored and cared for by school. Vulnerable pupils came into school for a day with staff in August.

12. The school has always monitored attendance closely. Current attendance is 96% which is above local and national averages (autumn 1). Absence due to Covid related issues is tracked (currently 4% in autumn 1). Actions, in line with the school's policy, are being taken in a few cases.
13. The school is making full use of the Covid funding released by the government. For instance, there is a HLTA undertaking interventions in maths; a reading support teacher is with Y1; smaller Y6 classes are being supported; catch up is facilitated by additional staff. Some funding was also used to release staff to make assessments/observations of pupils' knowledge and skills.
14. As a result, timetable variations have been made to accommodate pupils' requirements. The school is offering a full curriculum except for sand play in EYFS and singing in all Music lessons. It made the decision to continue to offer its full curriculum and, within it, focus on the areas that pupils missed/lacked during lockdown – it has changed, where necessary, its OTIs. Current comments from staff and pupils would suggest this is working well.
15. The school has a comprehensive package for home learning that it has developed during and after lockdown. Various web-based learning e.g. DBPrimary; Purple Mash; NCETM etc) are used together with school produced material on the schools VLE. Live webinars are also under consideration. Pupils spoke of the training they had in Teams when they 'dialled in'. They feel confident in accessing and using it (more secure than Zoom). They spoke knowingly of the work they had accessed during lockdown and felt it was suitable and generally challenging.
16. The provision for remote learning has altered as the school was aware from its evaluations that it is no real replacement for 'live' learning. As a consequence, cameras are used to send 'live' lessons home.
17. As previously mentioned, the curriculum is full. As a result of examining pupils' skills in phonics the school has doubled the amount of phonics in Y1. Rates of progress have now improved, and pupils are more confident. Lexia is used by some pupils which need it, at home.
18. The new SENCo has already changed some SEND provision with those who require it having 1-1 provision to improve phonics – this is being successful. The school also noticed that EAL pupils' knowledge and skills had somewhat diminished in phonics and these pupils now have additional tuition time to compensate.
19. Similarly, some pupils in KS2 have 'forgotten' to use consistently basic grammar and punctuation. This forms the basis of focussed planning. However, the love of books which always has been a hallmark of the

school, continues. The school asserts this is due to the involvement of parents with reading during lockdown. The school is aware it can build upon the love of books being shown by reception pupils who are already choosing books from the reading corner.

20. Maths has been analysed in depth. Plans have been effected to plug the major gaps in knowledge. School data indicates that progress is being made e.g. in geometry. (Interestingly, many schools have noted that shape/space, knowledge of shapes etc has been identified as an area of focus across a school as a result of lockdown).
21. The school became quickly aware during partial return that many pupils had gained weight as a result of being less active. Thus, the school put into effect an increased amount of PE related exercise including 'Fresh Air Fitness'. Staff CPD on the revised PE curriculum has also been put into effect to enable adults to assist pupils.
22. There appears to have been reduced external support for SEND pupils during lockdown and a backlog of referrals and for OT exists. The school has examined the national tutoring programme and academic mentoring and considers that its own provision is sufficient. I would agree.
23. Staff were very positive about the consistency and camaraderie that exists within the school. "Everything is lived out in practice" was one such comment. All staff, including new members of staff act as one. This is a hallmark of the communication, involvement and expectations of the school's leadership.
24. The staff relate that behaviour of pupils is excellent, indeed due in no small part to the clear communications and routines. Pupils have adapted to revised expectations well. For example, following input from a behaviour consultant last academic year, pupils were required to turn to face a speaker in their class a tenet of good behaviour: this has now had to be changed due to Covid issues with pupils. This has been taken on board by pupils well. Sitting in rows and not crossing other pupils in the corridors, to limit contact and maintain distancing, has also been adopted well. 'Pupil voice' has played an integral part in the changes made.
25. Pupils interviewed spoke very positively of all the changes the school has had to make: they feel fully informed about all the changes to ensure their safety; they were pleased to get back to school with their teachers and friends and with learning; they said that remote learning worked but "it's not the same as school!"

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