

Investors in Pupils

Reassessment Report

Name of School	Mowbray School
Headteacher:	Mr Jonathan Tearle
Investors in Pupils Coordinator:	Mrs Karen Pickles
Investors in Pupil Assessor:	Malcolm Lister
Date of the assessment:	Monday 10th June 2019
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Context of the school:

Mowbray School is a co-educational special school situated in a rural setting in Bedale, North Yorkshire. The school serves a very large catchment area covering 1,400 sq miles. Currently 222 pupils attend from both rural and urban locations as well as military bases. The school educates and cares for pupils aged three to sixteen years who have an Education Health Care Plan and a wide range of learning difficulties. 26% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Pupil numbers have risen significantly since the previous assessment and there are plans to establish satellite provision in Ripon from January 2020 in order to meet the needs of 20 primary aged pupils, rising to 60 over 3 years. The school has also experienced a commensurate increase in new staff. There have been significant building developments as part of a planned programme that includes the establishment of additional secondary classrooms and specialist rooms. Ofsted (2017) commented on how the school had successfully expanded facilities and learning resources. This has continued apace since then and Mowbray provides excellent facilities for its pupils.

A helpful, user friendly, informative website provides useful additional background about the school with links to video clips and Mowbray School TV.

Ofsted (2017) judged the school to be 'good' and it was immediately evident during this reassessment that most areas would now justifiably be judged as outstanding. The obvious success of the school is perhaps best exemplified through the overwhelmingly positive and inclusive ethos that is firmly embedded in the Mowbray's approach to pupils' personal development, wellbeing and future prospects. The school ethos is reflected through the SURE approach – Success, Understanding, Respect, Endeavour. This mission statement is differentiated for different cohorts of pupils to meet their own comprehension levels.

School leaders are ambitious and highly motivated. They continue to believe that Investors in Pupils is unquestionably making a difference and there is clearly pride in holding the standard, which continues to be used effectively as a vehicle for further stages of school development. Mowbray School sensibly and confidently subjects its work to external scrutiny and has amassed an impressive number of awards and accreditations to celebrate its performance. These include the Optimus Well-Being Award, Attachment Aware School status, Emotion Coaching School status (one of only 3 in the UK), re-accreditation by the

National Autistic Society, a commendation for work in Outdoor Learning and on the school farm, ECO Schools status and the Sports Mark Gold award.

Although Investors in Pupils is by now firmly embedded within the structure and practice of the school, all relevant stakeholders systematically receive appropriate information and updates about the 5 key areas. Investors in Pupils is included in both the SEF and SIP and has its own action plan. Staff remain confident that Investors in Pupils principles are firmly embedded in daily school life. They fully support and obviously adhere to the principles of the award, which are underpinned by the school's core values.

Parents praised the school's extensive communication systems including e-mails, texts, newsletters, personal contacts and website information. There are also regular consultation opportunities such as through the annual survey. They appreciate the way that pupils' achievements are celebrated in school and value the commitment and dedication of the staff; *'We love it. We bought a house to be near Mowbray'*.

Parents feel that their children are listened to, supported and their individual needs are met; *'There is a wonderful atmosphere in school'*. The parents who were interviewed were unstinting in their praise for the school, thus echoing Ofsted's positive comments that *'The vast majority of parents were highly complimentary about all aspects of the school'*. This is further reflected in the plethora of supportive Facebook posts from parents who particularly value the additional opportunities provided for their children. Feedback from parents also confirmed that the school continues to have an excellent reputation based on its continuing success and the simple fact that the pupils enjoy and benefit from what Mowbray offers.

Governance is another major strength and discussions confirmed that governors continue to be active, knowledgeable and very well informed about all areas of school life including the impact of Investors in Pupils. Governors have their own web presence and clearly support the standard and appreciate its value for the school; *'We have a culture of getting the best for everyone, including staff'*. Some governors are able to come into school to support in classrooms and attend School Council meetings. Pupils are aware of who some of the governors are, and their photographs are on a display in the school entrance.

Other important themes that were immediately evident were excellent teamwork and relationships (*'strong relationships between pupils and staff continue to be at the core of the school's work'*; Ofsted). The welcoming, friendly atmosphere was especially impressive and the inclusive culture instantly apparent, even on a reassessment morning full of offsite events. Staff members confirmed that they enjoyed working at Mowbray and were totally dedicated to pupils in both their attitudes and behaviours; *'It's a great place to work and so different from my last school'*. Staff like the pupils and they like them. Staff welfare is taken seriously, teamwork is effective and CPD remains a major commitment, with staff reflecting positively on both its value and impact; *'I've had so much training since I've joined the school I've had to write it all down'*.

Focused and principled leadership from the headteacher and deputy set the tone and ethos for the school and there was extensive evidence of productive links with the wider community. The school also benefits from an experienced, skilled, highly motivated and well organised Investors in Pupils coordinator (and deputy head) who has ensured that the standard remains embedded and sustainable. 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.

Areas for development identified in the previous report

There was one area of development from 2016 review; *'Review communication of Investors in Pupils to ensure a high profile awareness across the whole school community of the benefits and how the programme is effectively implemented in school.'* This recommendation has been **successfully met**.

Significant effort has been invested in communications and Mowbray School has, for example, achieved a community award for the town of Bedale which is now recognised as only the second Makaton friendly town in the world. Teaching Makaton sign language to a large number of staff from organisations based in Bedale has created an excellent local resource for both the school and town residents. The website also demonstrates the school's scope and ambition in broader areas of communication. A particular highlight of the reassessment was the choir's visit to the retirement home, where excellent links have been established.

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

Pupil voice and participation

- The pupil powerpoint presentation was very helpful and focused on the School Council's work on acquiring new benches for the school. When questioned afterwards, answers and explanations were clear and enthusiastically volunteered.
- The tour of the school was impressively supported by confident and knowledgeable pupils who were keen to both help a visitor and also celebrate the work of the school. The pupils were excellent ambassadors for their school.
- Throughout the reassessment pupils and staff confirmed that pupils take responsibility for their environment and fully appreciate the value of learning in a clean, tidy and well organised school. This included Mowbray's excellent grounds, farm and nature reserve. During the tour one of the excellent guides said; *'It's taken me 7 years to get here'*.
- Throughout the day pupils confirmed that there are a number of ways they can voice their feelings and opinions and that they are always listened to and supported.
- The democratically elected School Council is an additional strength. Councillors take their role seriously and obviously feel that they are making a difference. They are able to put forward ideas or issues of concern and are fully aware of the attributes they need to carry out their role effectively. They know they have to explain their views and sometimes persuade others that an idea or suggestion is beneficial. They are also confident that they have had an impact, for example through choosing the new benches; *'We did a survey around school asking which kind of bench people would like and came up with 4 different designs'*. As well as costing the enterprise there was a visit to the Council Offices to engage in a debate about the project. The School Council has a budget of £500 from the governors for projects and a further £1,000 from completing School Democracy Ambassador questionnaires through the London School of Economics. There is also a School Council web page that includes minutes of meetings.
- Differentiated surveys are carried out at regular intervals to ensure that there is a good understanding of pupils' opinions and ideas.
- Pupils are always involved in the recruitment process and attend the interviews of new staff: *'I asked if they'd worked in a Special School before'*.
- Pupils also enjoy the various jobs and responsibilities that are available to them within school, such as light monitors, compost monitors, register monitors, class leaders, timetable monitors and watering plants. In the Secondary Department students look after the farm animals, sell eggs, act as chair monitors in the hall and organise the Green Scheme free food from the Co-op.

Learning

- From the outset pupils commented positively about their favourite subjects and topics. They valued their learning and talked confidently about the things they enjoy and appreciate at school; *'I like English, maths and science'*.
- Facebook and Twitter accounts enable the school to post individual or school achievements as they occur.
- Target setting continues to be used effectively with targets and rewards evident in each classroom. There is a clear and sensible rationale to support target setting procedures and link them to ECHPs.



INVESTORS IN PUPILS

- Targets for each class group are differentiated to a 'Challenge' (such as the daily mile or a recycling focus) generated throughout the year. They are reviewed and renewed systematically. Rewards for achieving the targets at both class and individual levels are discussed with, and much appreciated by the pupils. Class groups now work towards bronze, silver and gold awards They enjoy receiving a wide variety of awards including medals which are accumulated over the year and result in, for example, trips to Lightwater Valley theme park or even an ice cream parlour. The 'Class Dojo' has been very motivating in the primary department. A parent said that *'The rewards work, especially the golden ticket'*.
- Some pupils could identify various adults' roles and a display inspired by the standard is evident in a corridor, highlighting the roles and responsibilities of many staff members. Many pupils were also aware that staff attend courses and training.
- Ofsted judged enrichment activities to be a particular strength and there are numerous extra-curricular clubs. These include Farm, Art, Homework, Lego, Mindfulness, Book, Computer, Make and Mend, Football, Archery, Rebound, Sci-Fi Film, Fuse Theatre, Bike, Golf and Dance.
- Residential opportunities are much appreciated with, for example, Year 5 pupils able to visit the Jonas Centre for a 2 night stay and Year 6 pupils invited to visit Cober Hill near Scarborough for a 5 day trip. *'This is not a school where they just sit...he wants to do all sorts of things at school'* (parent).
- There is also an extensive planned programme of visits which are enjoyed by pupils. Activities include canoeing, kayaking and raft building, rock climbing and the use of climbing walls, as well as mountain biking.
- 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. When asked if someone would help them, one reply was *'Everybody supports each other'*.
- Display is of a high quality and there are abundant impressive examples of imaginative presentation, including an excellent art room. Display is used effectively to celebrate success and demonstrate high expectations.

Behaviour

- Ofsted said that *'Behaviour in lessons and around school is managed consistently well'*. Pupils, parents and staff all believe that behaviour is consistently of a high standard. A parent said that *'behaviour is dealt with sensitively'*. On the reassessment day behaviour was genuinely impressive both inside and outside school. Using the new Ofsted criteria it would be judged as 'outstanding'.
- Pupils were uniformly friendly, welcoming and confident with staff confirming encouraging levels of independence.
- There is a consistent approach to behaviour management throughout the school that has been firmly embedded over time. The school's approach was expertly demonstrated on two separate occasions during the reassessment.
- There was abundant evidence of excellent relationships within a safe, well organised and positive working environment. Pupils' attitudes and relationships confirmed that they feel very safe in school and respond well to the positive feedback, encouragement and rewards they receive. Ofsted said that *'pupils know how to keep themselves safe'*. This is unquestionably the case.
- Feedback from pupils, staff and parents confirms that bullying is not tolerated, infrequent and action is taken promptly to address any issues.

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School and Class Management including knowledge of school finance

- The school has successfully established high levels of trust in its pupils within the prevailing safe, secure and supportive environment. They are given many opportunities to take on responsibilities. They value these responsibilities and enjoy completing the various tasks.
- Developing financial understanding is an important focus but is, understandably, a difficult concept for many Mowbray pupils to learn and understand. Pupils who were interviewed had a reasonable understanding of school finances at an appropriate level and financial awareness is also encouraged through various fund raising and charity events.
- Some pupils were recently enrolled on a 'B Tech in Finance' to prepare them for adulthood.
- On the farm, the most able pupils are involved in ordering food and costing out profits and losses.
- As well as the Co-op recycling food scheme the school is also signed up to Tesco's Freeshare Scheme whereby food is collected twice a week for use in food technology.
- Mowbray School also operates a Savings Bank in conjunction with the NatWest Bank.

Attendance

- Most pupils travel to school by bus and taxi and attendance is currently 92.3%. A small number of pupils adversely affect attendance data and Parent Liaison Officers work closely with these families.
- Pupils recognised the importance of attendance during the various interviews.
- Ofsted noted that '*pupils are confident, happy and enjoy coming to school.*' The reassessment clearly confirmed this judgement, with attendance awards highly appreciated by the pupils.
- Attendance is rigorously monitored and there is a consistent, targeted approach to supporting families for whom attendance is an issue.
- A key factor in maintaining good levels of attendance, despite the very extensive catchment area, is that the pupils obviously enjoy coming to school. They appreciate the wide range of exciting learning and fun activities that are provided for them. Pupil interviews indicate that they clearly appreciate what the staff do for them.

Induction

- Induction has been further developed since the last assessment and there is now a video of school life on the website for new pupils to view at their leisure. A personalised photo booklet is distributed with familiar staff who will work closely with the young person when they arrive at Mowbray School.
- Bespoke transition meetings take place to ensure that there is a smooth transition for pupils with more complex additional needs.
- Pupils explained the importance of welcoming new pupils and staff into school. They are very clear about the support that they can provide one another in their classroom.
- The school has a well-established induction strategy that includes induction booklets in every class.
- Induction is taken very seriously and there is a full induction programme for all new pupils and staff. A staff member said '*I had fantastic induction training*'.

Areas for development

No areas for development were identified.