

EQUALITY OBJECTIVES PROGRESS REPORT – OCTOBER 2023

To: Local Governing Body
From: Natalie Hancock
Date: October 2023
Review date: October 2024
cc. River Learning Trust Central Team



Introduction:

We have identified the following 5 objectives as priorities for CNS as we are passionate about all our students and staff feeling a strong sense of belonging to our school and achieving strong outcomes regardless of background, heritage or religion. Overcoming barriers through high quality teaching, with an ethos that reinforces aspiration and attainment for all is what we strive to achieve. We realise the importance of getting the basics right, like attendance and behaviour, because we know that disadvantage has a big influence on pupils' life chances. We know that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are twice as likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) and at higher risk of ending up in poverty as adults. With a relentless focus on our objectives, we hope to avoid that for our students, and instead celebrate students who are able to make choices and enjoy successful, fulfilling and happy lives.

The following report draws on the most recent data within the School Self-Evaluation (SEF) and recent reports to the Local Governing Body.

(1) To raise standards, narrow the achievement gap and strive to advance equality of opportunity for those who are socio-economically disadvantaged and those with protected characteristics.

We have seen a rapid year on year rise in the progress and attainment of disadvantaged learners since 2018.

GCSE Results	2018	2019	2022	2023
Attainment 8 DA	26.9	36.1	45.71	39.4
Progress 8 DA	-0.98	-0.58	-0.15	+0.21

Our disadvantaged /vulnerable students are benefiting most from recent improvements in teaching and learning, through adaptations and high-TEMPO teaching and strong classroom behaviour across all areas of the school. The emphasis in the next two years will continue to be the hardwiring of adaptations in all lessons and across all subjects. Thinking deeper and harder for longer is also critical and will be embedded over the next 24 months. In our student survey in May 2023, 74.5% of students with SEND and 77% of students eligible for the PP strongly agreed that 'my school explains to me how to learn' – both higher than the average for all students.

Conclusion: Strong progress.

(2) To improve the attendance of disadvantaged students.

Although our overall attendance at CNS has remained above national average for all year groups, post pandemic, our attendance for disadvantaged students remains a concern.

Attendance amongst disadvantaged students:

2021-22	2022-23					
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
84.82%	86.97%	83.72%	85.67%	85.70%	86.23%	85.04%

Persistent absence amongst disadvantaged students:

2021-22	2022-23						2023-24 Term 1
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6	
48.57 (68)	40.27% (60)	54.73% (81)	49.30% (70)	50.00% (71)	47.92% (69)	45.83% (66)	50.69% (73)

Pastoral leaders and our attendance officer execute a daily fast action response to student absence prioritising our PPG, SEN, and our most vulnerable students. This involves calling parents/carers on the morning of absence to carry out checks and establishing reasons for absence.

Our family support worker and vulnerable students' coordinator make home visits, often to our hardest to reach families. Outside agencies such as MASH/LCSS/Early Help and other professionals are engaged swiftly to provide additional support. Our attendance officer worked closely with the Oxfordshire County Council Attendance and Engagement team to offer support and challenge to families, ensuring legal requirements were met. In term 2 the Leadership Team will be meeting with many of our disadvantaged students and their parents to establish and better understand the reasons for poor attendance to school and lessons. We will consider our curriculum carefully to try to motivate and engage our most vulnerable students.

Conclusion: Limited progress.

(3) To improve outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers.

All students including CFC (cared for children) are exposed to high standards of teaching and learning with a focus on our high-TEMPO model. Strong adaptations in lessons, together with high quality profiles and PEPs (personal education plans), results in strong engagement from those students. Daily monitoring of CFC/PCFC attendance takes place and regular contact with the carer is made by our dedicated Vulnerable Learners Coordinator. Weekly mentoring takes place to ensure they are comfortable and content in lessons and social time. Our Vulnerable Learners Coordinator has attended PACE training (trauma informed care) and implemented this in her work with children, supporting them in different ways to avoid suspension. Regular contact with parents and carers occurs to work together to foster a better understanding of the child and current routines and needs. Cared for children are prioritised in terms of activities and trips. The Vulnerable Learners Coordinator is informed of opportunities in order to encourage participation and support parents and carers to

facilitate this in terms of times, transport and funding. Termly round robins are carried out to ensure that teacher and student are working well together to support best possible outcomes for the child in all subjects.

The names of CFC and PCFC (previously cared for children) are shared in the weekly staff bulletin and discussed weekly in our Guidance Team Meetings, to keep the profile of these students high on our agenda. Staff that are not directly working with CFC but have interactions are offered the chance to have access to more information about them. Any member of the staff team could encounter our CFC and we want them to interact with them with knowledge about them.

The Vulnerable Learners Coordinator meets with the social worker and virtual school case holder for each CFC/PCFC to ensure good awareness and understanding of how the child came into care, the impact this has had on them and their current circumstances.

Conclusion: Very strong provision in place.

(4) To reduce the number of exclusions for disadvantaged students.

Suspensions over time compared (all CNS versus disadvantaged only):

	2021-22	2022-23						2023-24 Term 1
		Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6	
All	103	5	6	5	13	15	17	7
Disadvantaged	46	2	3	1	4	7	8	3

We have seen a significant reduction in suspensions amongst disadvantaged students, all students, boys, girls and children with special educational needs. There is a recognition that due to COVID, where possible, we will avoid suspensions due to the importance of students needing to re-engage with their studies in school and further avoiding the isolation that comes with a suspension, particularly for our cared for children and more vulnerable students. Alternative sanctions are sought which enables students continued engagement with us and foster a sense of belonging. Our repair and rebuild (R&R) process is often much more impactful than a suspension in terms of students acknowledging, reflecting upon, and then owning their unacceptable behaviours. Tied to school value of belonging, we recognise that all negative behaviours reflect an unmet need, so there is a desire to understand that need and address it. We expect to further reduce our suspension rate by building upon our character education and meeting with many of our disadvantaged students and their parents to establish and understand the reasons for poor engagement and our concerns long term about suspending their children. We will also be considering our curriculum carefully in the next year or two to try and motivate and engage our most vulnerable students.

Ofsted reported in May 2023: “Low-level disruptive behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes is very rare. Pupils’ understanding of the school’s behaviour policy is strong. They appreciate that staff apply the policy consistently and fairly.” We hope to build on this positive reflection.

Conclusion: Strong progress.

(5) To ensure that Chipping Norton School is an inclusive workplace, with equality of opportunity for all staff

We continue to strive to make CNS a welcoming inclusive, diverse place in which to work. In the RLT's annual stakeholder survey (May 2023), 95% of staff said they enjoyed working at the school, and 90% would recommend the school to others. We offer staff an annual invitation to review contracts and hours, being fully supportive of all flexible working arrangements (15 undertaken in the past two years).

We always try to support generous compassionate leave requests, with a non-judgmental approach to supporting staff on long-term sick leave.

We take the mental health of our staff seriously. We currently have six fully trained mental health first aiders, including teachers and associate staff. WE have had no bullying / harassment claims in the past four plus years and we have an assertive response when a student embarrasses, humiliates, harasses or attempts to bully staff. Students and staff know that this is not tolerated and always results in a firm response.

Staff turnover is very low and 94% strongly agreed or agreed that the school is well led and managed (May 2023).

In October 2023 we launched our survey to all staff, offering opportunities to share their Wellbeing Experiences & coping strategies. Their responses were displayed around the school to show students that we share their experiences at times and they are not alone. We continue to review our EDI policy which was put in place as a result of our work with EqualITeach.

Conclusion: Strong progress.

This report will be updated in twelve months' time (October 2024)