

Governor's learning walk

Name and role of governor	Louise Thornley SEND Lead Governor Pupil Development, Wellbeing & Safeguarding Committee member
Name and role of staff member(s)	Cathy Bach DHT Jason Bach - SENDCo Anne Davidson – Assistant SENDCo Sarah Kershaw - SEND & Pastoral liaison Toni Lomax - L4 TA, Hannah Weaver - L3 TA Tracey Newton - L2 TA
Date and time of visit	15 December 2023 9.00am - 11.00am
Agreed focus <i>Make sure you focus on this agreed reason for the visit. Avoid getting distracted by other issues that haven't been agreed with the member of staff.</i>	Getting to know the SEND Department and finding out about the department due to becoming the SEND Lead Governor from December 2023.

Relevant school objective or priority

This might be taken from the school improvement plan (SIP) objectives or the school's overarching vision.

Turton School is committed to meeting the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and is supported by the Local Authority to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their specific needs, make the best possible progress in school.

The school caters for a wide variety of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities with support from outside agencies. There is no special unit attached to the school.

Learning Walk Findings

The SEND Department is a warm, safe space for a number of pupils at Turton.

There are currently over 20 TA's (L4 - L2) in the department who are all well trained in various courses, which are updated throughout the year and are monitored and logged.

The L4 and L3's all have their specialist areas: Foundation Learning, Literacy Interventions, ASD/Communication & Interaction interventions, PD support, Dyspraxia/VI/HI programme provision, 1-1 support for INA (International New Arrivals) & EAL pupils, SEMH and keyworkers. These specialist areas cover KS3 to KS5.

For Y12/13 students, there are Bespoke PSHE lessons and Independence Skills. These lessons give these students life skills in both a practical and emotional wellbeing sense. Areas cover include cleaning and tidying, to communicating effectively and acting professionally at work.

The office is a busy and active room where the pupils can knock for assistance in regards to any enquiries. From the pupils who visited whilst I was there, it is obvious that there is an excellent rapport between the staff and the students. The students obviously feel safe and comfortable enough to be able to approach staff in the office.

Jason Bach regularly receives been positive feedback from potential parents/guardians.

I observed a lesson where 2 students were designing their own computer game character. The two students were focused, engaged, calm and polite. I noted how one of the students said they did not have any breakfast that morning, nor did they have any money on their dinner card. Toni Lomax reassured the student they could have some toast at break from the kitchen which is part of the SEND department. Albeit a seemingly a small gesture, I found this to be an enormous positive. The student may have been worrying/distracted about food and not having anything to eat or money, distracting him from his school work or causing anxiety and a simple gesture like "We'll get you some

toast at break.” can reduce so many stresses and go such a long way. This shows how kind and compassionate the SEND staff are, but also aware of the pupil’s additional needs.

I then observed a KS5 lesson led by two teaching assistants. This lesson was about ‘Healthy Eating’. The class was made up of 4 students, all of whom were once again calm, polite and engaged with the lesson. Staff kept the students involved by asking them various questions about what choices they would make when choosing food and drink they like to eat on a day-to-day basis and showing physical examples of foodstuffs and their nutritional values, therefore assisting visual learners.

In this classroom there are 2 support guinea pigs. The support guinea pigs seem to bring different guises to the department. Not only are they there as emotional support animals, but having animals to care for ties in with the school curriculum of emotional and social needs- empathy, care, love, compassion, understanding, commitment, and building confidence.

Pets can encourage a child’s learning needs, especially in reading, communication, observation and speaking. This is a useful tool when teaching all children but can be particularly helpful for those with special educational needs (SEN).

The foundation learning group for the KS5 is an excellent small group of lovely young adults. They all seem to have an excellent relationship with the teaching staff.

There are various handouts for parents/guardians which may help them understand their child’s needs. SEND is a complex area and Turton has acknowledged this in the handouts. The handouts cover; communication and interaction, cognitive and learning, SEMH and sensory and physical. These have links about the various conditions/disabilities, and a brief understanding. The leaflets also give some strategies to assist the students at home.

Overall, there is a good relationship between parents/guardians and the school.

Summary

The staff I spoke with feel well supported by the SLT and Sam Gorse. They are a happy department, which is obvious from the short time I spent with them. The pupils are a priority and they are doing everything they can in the current climate. For example, it is currently approximately an 18 month wait for a student to go through the diagnosis process with the Local Authority, and the bar is constantly changing due to

costs. This must be extremely frustrating for the staff, but they still treat these students as if they have been officially diagnosed with autism even when they are borderline, therefore increasing the potential of those students.

In future visits I would like to discuss how staff awareness of SEND students is increased and to look at the benefits the learning support building gives to the department.