



Assessment Report

Elmwood School

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Assessment conducted by: Howard Jones





Official assessment of Elmwood School conducted by Howard Jones, operating on behalf of:

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Acknowledgements

It has been a privilege to undertake the Investors in People assessment of Elmwood School against the 6th Generation Framework.

Sincere thanks for the excellent work that went into preparing, organising and coordinating this assessment; and particularly to Dawn Canham, Simon Hubbard and Lee Cross for their patience in dealing with requests for information and clarification.

The co-operation and openness of everyone who contributed is appreciated; people were very happy to share their experiences and to describe what it's like to work at the school.

Executive Summary

Elmwood School is a special school for students, all of whom have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school works in the heart of the Walsall community to provide a happy, safe and specialist environment where staff, pupils and their families are treated with dignity and respect. It enables pupils to achieve their full potential through a nurturing environment that at the same time has high expectations for individual pupil achievement.

Elmwood School was assessed against the 6th Generation Investors in People (IIP) Standard between May and July 2017. The assessment involved an initial discovery session and the agreement of an Assessment Plan. The IIP40 online assessment was deployed to all 37 employees - 24 people (65%) completed the questionnaire.

Following a context meeting involving the school's senior leadership team, confidential interviews were carried out with 10 leaders and people from across the organisation. They were selected by the practitioner and drawn from across the school's bases, functions and managerial levels. The practitioner also reviewed relevant policies, inspection reports and metrics as well as accessing the school's website and observing a full staff briefing.

As a result, **Elmwood School is awarded Investors in People Gold re-accreditation.**

The assessment revealed a number of excellent practices against the Themes of the Standard. The heat map overleaf confirms the school's current status against each of the nine Indicators.

Strengths include how well leaders:

- Motivate and engage the whole team in support of the achievement of the school's purpose, vision and goals by defining each clearly and ensuring people understand how they contribute to their achievement
- Have developed and shared a set of clear values which resonate with people and underpin how they work together in pursuit of school priorities
- Manage performance effectively and consistently – ensuring everybody has a clear role, agrees challenging goals and receives constructive feedback both formally and informally
- Build people's capabilities and encourage each to achieve school objectives and fulfil their potential
- Recognise and reward high performance through a range of formal and informal strategies
- Encourage people to suggest ideas, make decisions and get involved in short and long term planning

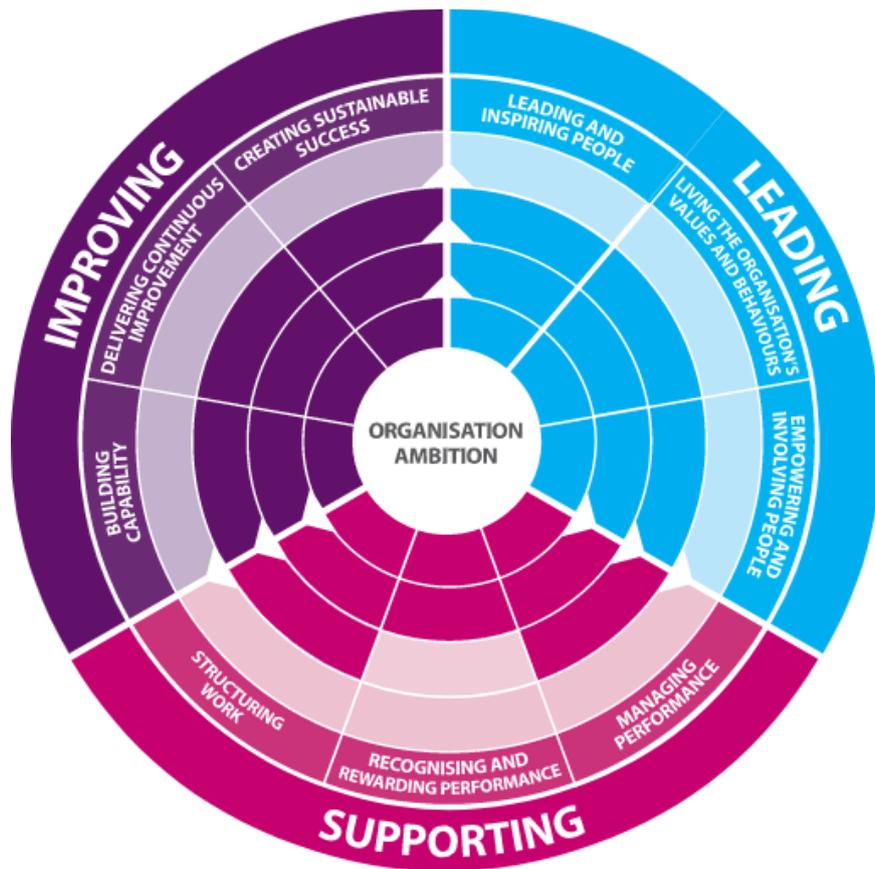
The assessment also identified opportunities for improvement including:

- Identifying and developing the strategic leadership capabilities required to meet the school's growth ambitions
- Encouraging everybody in the school community to challenge behaviours not in line with the school's ethos and values
- Enhancing reward and recognition strategies so they are flexible and tailored to meet individual motivations

- Providing staff with the opportunity to look to the outside world for innovative ideas to make the school even more efficient and effective

The leadership team at Elmwood School has confirmed its commitment to continue to use the IIP Standard to develop the school's people management practices by exploring the findings and recommendations in this report.

Elmwood School Assessment Outcome:



Elmwood School Final Award Outcome:



Introduction and Context

Elmwood School sought re-assessment against the Investors in People standard in May 2017, having achieved Gold accreditation for the previous 3 years. The school is Walsall's only secondary 11 - 16 SEMHSEBD (MSE) school. Walsall is a deprived area and Elmwood is the school for its most challenging pupils, many of whom are very vulnerable. It is currently Local Authority maintained although it has been DFEDfE cleared for Academy status.

All pupils have either EHCPs or Statements of Special Need and most have been excluded from mainstream school(s) for behavioural issues; some caused by learning needs e.g. speech and language issues, dyslexia etc. but most due to needs around attachment and other conditions.

The majority of pupils arrive at Elmwood School on below age expected attainment levels according to initial baseline assessment and standardised assessments. The school is structured in three separate bases - Nurture Zone for Years 7/8, Transition for Year 9 and Pathways for Years 10/11.

The school is a member of two Teaching School Alliances and employs two family support workers; it has LPPA status and works closely with parents and the local community. The Deputy Headteacher has been working for the past 18 months as a Seconded Leader at the Local Authority for one day a week assisting with the SEND reforms.

The school delivers SEND and Team Teach training to other local schools and has been involved in advising on behaviour management strategies as well as developing links to other larger mainstream schools in the region.

Organisations that meet the world-recognised Investors in People Standard reflect the very best in people management excellence. Underpinning the Standard is the Investors in People Framework. Based on 25 years of leading practice, the latest research and workplace trends, the Investors in People Framework is organised around nine key indicators of high performance each with three underpinning themes.

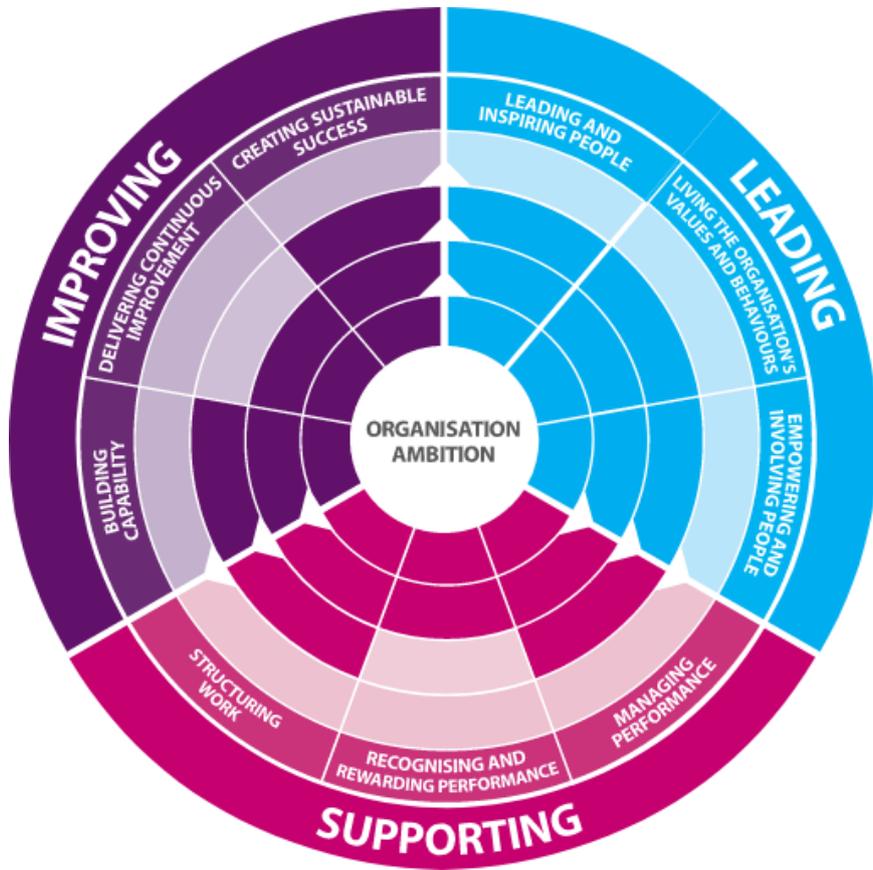
To achieve accreditation, organisations are assessed against these themes and indicators, leading to an Award level of Standard, Silver, Gold or Platinum that represents the level of performance achieved, or the level of 'performance', from a fundamental 'developed' level to 'high performing'. Assessment is carried out using an online assessment, interviews, meetings and observation. The approach taken in the assessment of Elmwood School is summarised in a later section of the report. The accreditation awarded represents the current level achieved and the Standard can be used to facilitate ongoing development of people management practices.

The school, which achieved Gold IIP Accreditation in 2014, is undertaking its first assessment against the Sixth Generation Investors in People Standard; it has been used to benchmark current people management strategies, highlight strengths and identify potential development opportunities.

Having carefully considered the IIP Framework, **Elmwood School** believes that it is Established for all nine indicators and Advanced for seven.

The heat map overleaf summarises where Elmwood School believes it currently sits against each of the nine IIP indicators. The shaded cells represent the performance level against each indicator.

Elmwood School 'As Is' heat map:



Assessment Approach

Following the discovery session and an initial context meeting with the senior leadership team at Elmwood School from which details for the organisational analysis were elicited; the school was assessed primarily using the IIP40 online assessment, desk review, observations and interviews. People were informed of the IIP assessment and accreditation process in May 2017, when they were asked to take part in completing the online assessment and a possible interview. This gave time to deal with any questions or issues that staff raised. There were no material issues and people were more than happy to be involved. As a small organisation employing 37 people, everyone in the team was asked to complete the IIP40 online assessment. 24 completed questionnaires were returned (65%) indicating a high level of engagement.

Responses were analysed to determine key themes or issues and these were used as one basis on which interviews were designed and administered. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 10 people from all functions and levels selected purposively, as they were ideally placed to discuss IIP related issues. Each was interviewed one-to-one and confidentiality was assured. All 10 interviews were held in a private office and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes each. Respondents willingly shared their experiences and perceptions.

In addition to observing a morning staff briefing, general movement around the school allowed effective observation of activities and interactions between staff, between staff and leaders and pupils.

Data on which the assessment was based included that elicited from the online assessment interviews, observations and documents provided by School. Documents were freely provided and included Elmwood School's Raising Achievement Plan (RAP), OFSTED Inspection Reports, a full suite of HR policies and key performance metrics.

How Elmwood School was assessed



The online assessment was deployed to all 37 employees. A response rate of 24 (65%) was achieved. This was above the international Investors in People guidelines and therefore the sample is considered statistically significant.



Based on the findings from the online assessment, 10 employees and leaders from across the organisation were interviewed.



The practitioner observed a morning staff briefing.

General movement around the school allowed effective observation of activities and interactions between staff, between staff, leaders and pupils.

Sources of information accessed included:

- Vision, Values and Strategic Objectives
- Job Descriptions/Specifications of leaders, managers and employees
- School website
- HR and general policies and processes
- Employee handbook
- Performance management policies and documentation
- Raising Achievement Plan including Key Performance Indicators, evaluation reports and reviews
- HR metrics
- Parents/Carer Survey Results
- Staff Survey Results
- OFSTED Report
- Self-Evaluation Form

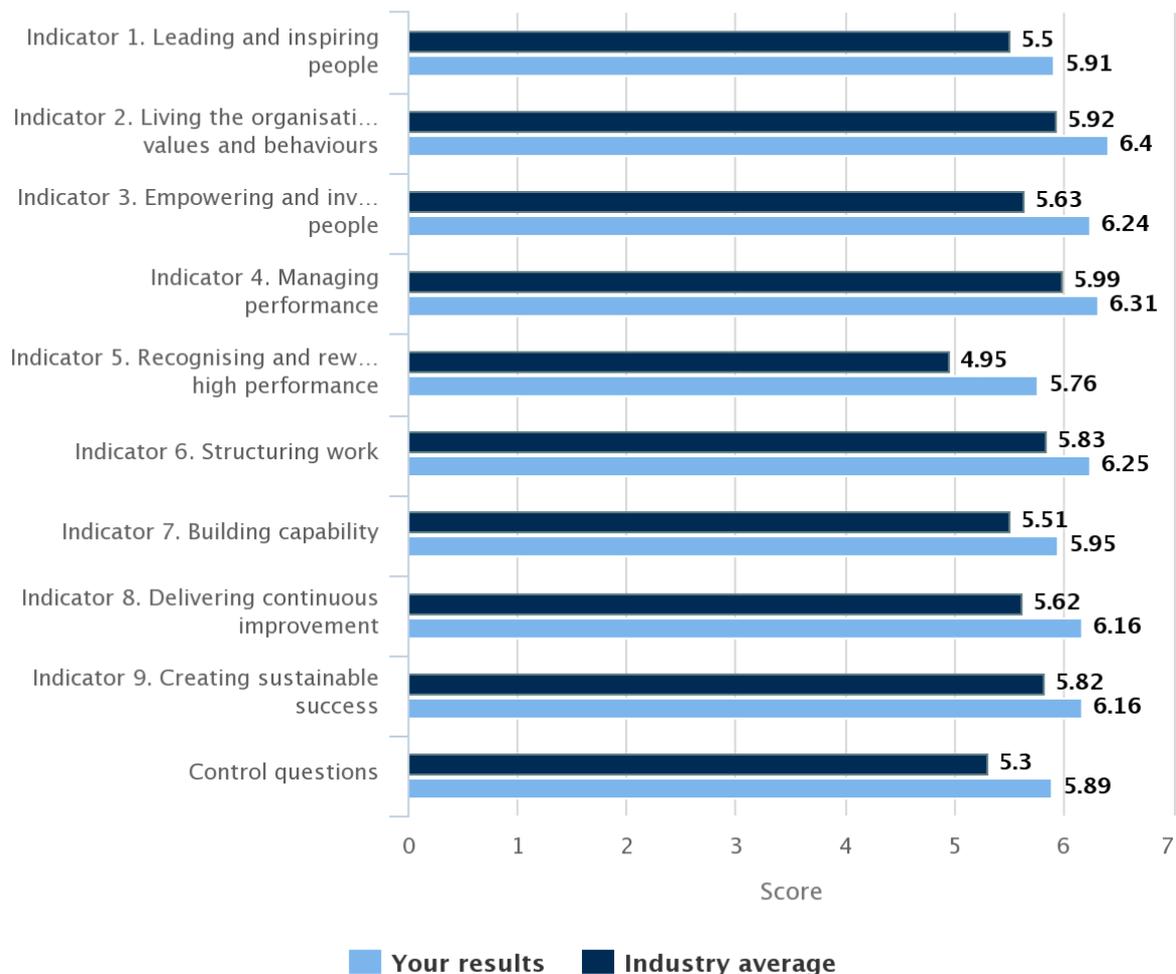


Detailed Assessment Outcome

This section provides a detailed analysis of Elmwood School’s assessment against the IIP framework.

An overview of the results from Elmwood School’s online assessment can be found below and are discussed in more detail on the following pages.

Alignment summary



KEY: AGREEMENT SCALE						
1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat disagree	4 Neither agree nor disagree	5 Somewhat agree	6 Agree	7 Strongly agree

Data collected from the Education sector has been used and is illustrated above. The school demonstrates a benchmarked performance significantly higher than the sector average for each of the nine indicators.

Online assessment results were explored during interviews and the results combined with people’s perceptions to provide feedback. Responses for *strongly agree*, *agree* and *somewhat agree* were considered positive.

Principle 1: Leading – the Indicators in this Principle explore the clarity of vision and purpose and how well leaders inspire employees to perform

Online assessment results for the three Indicators in this Principle were very positive. 96% of respondents (23) agree school leaders make its purpose, vision and objectives clear and motivate them to achieve high performance whilst operating in line with the school's ethos and values. The same number agrees they are empowered to make decisions and to act on them. Interviews with teaching and support staff found real clarity of understanding, not only of the school's purpose, vision and objectives but also of how each contributes to their achievement.

Everybody at Elmwood School is committed to work as a team to identify and meet the educational and emotional needs of pupils in a safe positive environment. They appreciate the importance of working together and supporting each other in what can be a challenging but rewarding workplace. Governors, senior leadership team members and lead teachers ensure the school's purpose and objectives are reinforced regularly at every level – they hold daily and weekly whole team briefings/meetings, visit each of the three bases regularly and spend time with everyone in the team. Termly State of the Nation (SON) presentations and visual management (posters and whiteboards) and infographics are used effectively to share and reinforce key messages graphically. As a result, everyone in the school community is engaged and motivated to make their contribution to the achievement of the priorities outlined in the school's Raising Achievement Plan.

Leaders and senior staff understand their roles and responsibilities for managing and developing people. During interviews they shared a range of examples of how they encourage and support people to achieve high levels of performance through agreeing clear objectives, supporting them to achieve and recognising and rewarding achievement. All (100%) of leaders and managers agree a clear goal related to their leadership effectiveness and all (100%) receive feedback from the people they lead during formal performance management discussions. Staff comments included:

'Really great line manager – I'm very confident in her ability to lead and motivate us'

'My line manager is very good - really supportive'

The school is committed to providing a personalised learning experience allowing young people to develop physically and mentally in a happy, calm, structured and supportive environment. Everyone who completed the online assessment agrees (100%) they trust the school's leaders. In its own Staff Survey conducted in January 2017, 94% agree *they trust their colleagues in this school*, (the corresponding result in 2016 was 93%). Nine out of ten (86%) *have faith in the integrity of the leadership team* whilst 93% *believe in the school's Governing Body* (this result is up from 77% in 2016).

A member of staff said at interview:

'I trust the senior team and everyone else in the school. There is lots of confidence that they know what they're doing'

The desk review confirmed that the roles and responsibilities of those who lead and manage people at the school are clearly defined in job descriptions and person specifications. Everybody interviewed knows what to expect from leaders and agree they consistently meet their expectations. Formal opportunities are in place to encourage staff to provide leaders with feedback on their performance as part of the school's performance management process. In addition, those participating in leadership qualifications (4/7) have requested 360 degree feedback from colleagues during the last year. All staff interviewed confirmed they are

comfortable giving leaders feedback and confident that they use it to enhance their capabilities. As one explained:

'I give my appraiser honest and open feedback at my annual performance management session'

92% of online assessment respondents agree *the school develops great leaders.*

All (100% -10) those interviewed described how the school's ethos and values influence their own and their colleagues' behaviour on a day-to-day basis; they described the importance of respect, honesty and mutual support and gave examples of how they are brought to life. 96% of online assessment respondents agree they share the school's values whilst all (100%) agree their day-to-day behaviour reflects them. Observations and interview feedback confirm people adopt a highly professional approach, work positively with pupils and place great emphasis on ensuring their needs at the heart of everything they do. As one Teaching Assistant observed:

'Our core values are based on doing everything in the best interests of young people; we develop positive relationships and look out for each other. I fully appreciate how I need to behave'

Staff behaviours are assessed during performance management appraisals, classroom observations and pupil trails; all (100%) appointments are made following values based assessments and interviews. People shared examples of when they and their colleagues have done the right thing in line with the values – these included visiting a pupil's home to provide support to parents and giving time on weekends to participate in community activities with pupils.

All those who responded to the online assessment (100%) agree/strongly agree their *day to day behaviour reflects the school's values* and that *they challenge behaviours not in line with them*.

Interviews confirmed that information and knowledge is openly shared, enabling people to confidently participate in decision making. 96% agree *they feel empowered to make decisions and act on them*. Desk review, observations and interview feedback revealed that people are encouraged to take ownership of their work and to act independently when working with pupils and colleagues. They are comfortable to take the lead and encouraged to develop leadership skills through experience and by achieving formal NPQ leadership qualifications.

'Even though I'm not in a management role I've been encouraged and supported to achieve the NPQL qualification'

Examples were shared of people championing whole school initiatives including Team Teach, Big Write and Mental Health.

All interviewees (100%) confirm they are encouraged and supported to identify better ways to do their job, saying that if an idea will positively impact on pupil welfare, or the quality of teaching and learning it will be acted on quickly.

'I have lots of opportunities to change things - we have confidence in leaders and them in us. We're always working together to find better ways to achieve pupil outcomes'

96% of employees who completed the online assessment agree they participate in decision making whilst everyone interviewed agrees their contributions make a real difference when decisions are made in their teams and at school level. All (100%) agree they are *encouraged to take the initiative in their role.*

Examples of participating and acting on decisions cited by staff included:

'We were all consulted about length and covering of lunchtimes - options were explored and the final decision was made by staff - SLT took on board our views'

'Timetabling for 2017 – 18 is out for two weeks staff consultation - everyone is encouraged to contribute and their ideas are taken on board'

A high level of trust and mutual respect is evident between leaders and staff across the school. Information is shared openly using a variety of methods and people are consulted when decisions are made that affect them. People are given the authority to make decisions and are confident to do so knowing they will be supported – all online assessment respondents (100%) agree they are trusted to make decisions in their role.

People who demonstrate enthusiasm are given opportunities to lead whole school programmes and everyone is encouraged and supported to develop their leadership skills by achieving appropriate and valuable formal qualifications. Feedback indicated this development is having a positive impact on the planning and implementation of key initiatives as people at all levels have enhanced their planning, communication and negotiations skills. The approach is also helping identify and grow talented future leaders in support of the school's growth ambitions.

29 staff (78%) completed the school's Staff Attitude Survey in January 2017. This represented an increase of 3% on the year before and is significantly higher than the UK average for this type of survey. All interviewees (100%) agree they would recommend the school to a friend or acquaintance as an employer.

Metrics and other sources of evidence:

Online assessment results:

92% combined agreement in Leading and inspiring people.

98% combined agreement in Living the organisation's values and behaviours and rated the highest indicator overall.

98% combined agreement in Empowering and involving people and rated equal highest indicator overall.

2017 Staff survey results (2016 results in brackets):

78% completion rate (75%)

94% agree *they trust their colleagues in this school*, (93%).

86% *have faith in the integrity of the leadership team* (84%).

100% would recommend the school as an employer to friends and family (94%)

93% *believe in the school's Governing Body* (77%).

Pupil outcomes:

Key Stage Three Pupils 2014-2015 Summer Term Assessment 56% - 2015 -2016 Summer Term Assessment 80% - % improvement +24%.

Key Stage Four Pupils 2014-2015 Summer Term Assessment 25% - 2015 -2016 Summer Term Assessment 50% - % improvement +25%.

Engagement with Progress and achievement events:

Spring Term 2016 – 45 appointments made, 24 attended (53.3%), 53% Nurture group, 54.5% Transition, 53% Pathways.

Summer Term 2016 – 41 appointments made, 31 attended (75.6%), 88.8% Nurture group, 63.6% Transition, 66.6% Pathways.

Coffee morning participation by families and carers:

2015 – 10%

2016 – 20.5%

Increase of more than +100%.

Ofsted Inspection Results:

Overall Effectiveness – 2011 – Satisfactory (3)

Overall Effectiveness 2014 – Good (2)

- Achievement of pupils – Good (2)
- Quality of teaching – Good (2)
- Behaviour and safety of children – Good (2)
- Leadership and management – Good (2)

100% of leaders and managers agree a clear goal related to their leadership effectiveness.

100% receive feedback from the people they lead during formal performance management discussions.

In recognition of the good practice in place the school meets **ADVANCED** level for each of the Themes in this Principle. Development points to achieve **HIGH PERFORMING** status should focus on defining and addressing future leadership capabilities, encouraging everyone to challenge behaviours not in line with school values and continuing to encourage everyone to take ownership of school priorities.

Principle 2: Supporting - this Principle explores how jobs are designed, people are recognised and rewarded and performance is managed

Online assessment results against the three indicators in this Principle are also extremely positive and well above the Education sector benchmark. All (100%) of respondents agree they set objectives with their manager, that job roles are structured to allow them responsibility and that their work is interesting and uses their skills and capabilities.

Everybody interviewed knows what is expected of them and all (100%) agree clear goals and targets with a member of the senior leadership team. Individual objectives are aligned with the school priorities in its RAP. 100% of online assessment respondents agree the school's success is reliant on everyone achieving their individual objectives. All staff take part in regular formal performance management reviews where their performance and behaviour are discussed and assessed, objectives are set and CPD needs are agreed.

'I have a formal appraisal every year – we review results on Perspective software and set objectives for the next year'

All interviewees feel their personal and professional targets are stretching and that they are fully supported to achieve high performance. 96% of those who completed the online assessment agree they are encouraged to achieve high performance.

The increased use of computer software enables people and teams to monitor their own performance in relation to critical outcomes including pupil achievement, attendance and behaviour. Formal processes are also used to measure pupil self-esteem, perceptions of school and of staff. The data is available to everyone in the team.

'Objectives set are challenging - we keep on top of our own performance using Perspective and Tracking Folders for each pupil'

Leaders invest time with people in each of the three bases at the school and ensure everyone understands how their performance is monitored and managed. All of those interviewed agree leaders consistently support the achievement of high performance and deal with underperformance quickly and constructively. As one member of the support team commented:

'SLT certainly encourage high performance and deal quickly with underperformance by offering support and help'

Performance data gathered through performance management processes, observations and evaluations, pupil trails and external inspections is captured and used to improve performance. Results and trends are openly shared with staff and the school's overall performance is benchmarked against comparator institutions. Since 2015 Elmwood School has consistently outperformed other SEN schools - achieving higher GCSE Passes and more positive pupil progress and attainment results.

The school has developed a positive approach to recognition and reward which includes paying salaries in line with, or slightly above, the regional average for SEN schools, supporting staff to develop their skills and qualifications and organising regular social events. A culture of appreciation has been nurtured with leaders giving praise, positive feedback and thanks to people consistently. Almost all (92%) of online assessment respondents agree they are consistently recognised when they exceed expectations whilst 96% feel appreciated for the work they do.

'We benchmark salary levels against comparator schools and try to pay a little higher if we can'

Leaders review the school's approach to recognition and reward as part of its annual formal Self-Evaluation process and often discuss the topic during weekly leadership team meetings. Given its status as a Local Authority maintained school and the current financial constraints it faces there is not a great deal of room for changes to financial reward.

A decision made in 2015 to invest heavily in CPD and to give all staff opportunities to achieve leadership and other qualifications as an integral part of its strategy to recruit and retain skilled, qualified and committed people. The strategy appears to be working:

'I feel appreciated and am doing more as a result'.

'It's great that we get so much CPD and are able to achieve leadership qualifications – it's one reason I stay at the school'

At the staff briefing observed by the practitioner, members of the team were thanked and praised for their behaviour and support at a coffee morning for parents and the community held the day before.

Everyone (100%) in the team has an up to date job description and person specification which clarify their responsibilities and identify the capabilities they need to demonstrate. These are reviewed during performance management reviews to ensure they remain current and reflect the jobs people do. Almost everyone (97%) agrees their roles are structured to deliver whole school priorities whilst providing interesting work, opportunities to take responsibility and to enhance their skills. The school's organisational design is an extremely flat one with only three levels of hierarchy defined – this enables people to work collaboratively and to make decisions quickly.

'My role is totally clear and defined – there is no duplication'

Almost all online assessment respondents (92%) agree their role allows them to develop the skills needed to progress. Those interviewed shared examples of Teaching Assistants becoming teachers, unqualified teachers achieving qualified status and teachers becoming mentors and subject matter experts in areas like Team Teach.

As well as individual authority and autonomy being outlined in job descriptions, discussions take place at the start of each academic year, and when people change roles, to ensure individuals and teams are aware of their responsibilities. 100% of online assessment respondents agree/strongly agree their roles are structured to allow them responsibility.

'When I moved to work with a different teacher we discussed our roles and responsibilities so there's clarity and consistency for pupils'

The school constantly reviews its policies and procedures to ensure they are clear and practical. A major exercise was undertaken in 2016 to remove superfluous policies, amalgamate others and ensure those that remain are easy to access and understand. The desk review revealed each is written and presented in a straightforward way, enabling people to make decisions in light of changing circumstances or pupil needs. Everybody interviewed agreed leaders consistently support decisions they make when working with pupils giving them the confidence to take ownership and to act quickly.

People agree they are encouraged to work with others across the school; formal and informal networks are active including project teams looking at the Prevent agenda, mental health and Team Teach. Almost all online assessment respondents (96%) agree their roles are structured to enable them to work together well. All those interviewed agree there is excellent team working at Elmwood School with everyone being fully committed to ensuring individual pupil development needs are identified and consistently met.

'Team Teach definitely encourages people to work together and support each other'

'The caretaker was involved in mentoring two pupils last academic year'

'We're all totally committed to developing the whole child - not just Grades - we work together well to achieve it'

Learning and development activities, including internal courses and outdoor education activities provide useful opportunities for people to work together and to share information and expertise.

Daily whole staff briefings, the weekly de-brief and the use of radios to communicate across the school ensure communication is open and make collaboration easy and effective.

Metrics and other sources of evidence:

Online assessment results:

98% combined agreement in Managing performance

75% combined agreement in Recognising and rewarding high performance and rated the lowest indicator overall

97% combined agreement in Structuring work and is the third highest rated indicator.

Staff survey results:

52% question the competence of their colleagues (58%)

86% agree they can depend on the leadership team in difficult situations (90%)

86% confirm colleagues look out for each other (97%)

100% of school employees have agreed up to date Job Descriptions and Employee Specifications since 2015-2016.

Pupil attendance trends:

2014/15		
Attendance	Persistent Absence	
75.30%	31.20%	Midlands
85.77%	30.76%	Elmwood
10.47%	0.44%	Sway

2015/16		
Attendance	Persistent Absence	
82.70%	45.90%	Midlands
86.40%	30.90%	Elmwood
3.70%	15.00%	Sway

Pupil progress data/trends:

English progress:

2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• KS3 49%• KS4 76%• Overall 63%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• KS3 90%• KS4 90%• Overall 90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• KS3 92%• KS4 82%• Overall 87%

Maths progress:

2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS3 50% • KS4 69% • Overall 60% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS3 91% • KS4 85% • Overall 88% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS3 80% • KS4 82% • Overall 81%

Science progress:

2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS3 63% • KS4 49% • Overall 56% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS3 56% • KS4 25% • Overall 40% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KS3 80% • KS4 50% • Overall 65%

The school is a member of two Teaching school consortia and employs two family support workers one of whom was partially funded by Wolves Aid a charity. The school has LPPA status and works closely with parents and the local community.

The Deputy Headteacher has worked for the past 18 months as an advisor/consultant at the Local Authority, assisting with SEND reforms.

Elmwood School also delivers Team Teach training to other local schools and has been involved in advising on behaviour management strategies as well as developing links to other larger mainstream schools.

The school meets ADVANCED performance level for Indicators 4 and 6 – *Managing performance* and *Structuring work*. Indicator 5 – *Recognising and rewarding high performance* meets the ESTABLISHED criteria for each theme. Areas for development include encouraging people to take the lead in setting challenging objectives, enhancing the school's approach to recognition and reward so it is flexible and tailored to meet individual motivations and designing roles to meet the changing needs of pupils and stakeholders.

Principle 3: Improving – this Principle is focused on developing capabilities, resources and plans and fostering innovation to find new ways to achieve the school's ambition

Overall online assessment ratings for the three Indicators making up this Principle are extremely positive. 95% agree/strongly agree they are encouraged to develop their capability to realise their potential in a culture of continuous improvement which is future focused and embraces change.

Everyone interviewed confirmed that development conversations are part of their formal appraisal discussion. Nine out of ten online assessment respondents (92%) agree the school believes it is important people learn and develop their capability whilst 96% agree they are developing to reach their full potential. Everyone interviewed (100%) concurred that the approach taken to learning and development supports the achievement of school objectives and pupil attainment as well as encouraging personal and professional development. Advice is available from leaders, internal subject matter experts and external specialist agencies including the Local Authority. Formal CPD is primarily delivered through a combination of school-organised events, held on and off-site, formal qualifications, some of which is accessed via e.learning. During interviews a number of people described how they take ownership for their own development and are involved in self-directed reading and research. A number belong to specialist networks, for example, focusing on Autism and ADHD. Examples were also shared of staff being involved in formal coaching, mentoring, experiential learning, peer review and reflective practice. All school staff have participated in at least six days of formal learning to build their capability during the 2016-17 academic year. Everyone interviewed takes ownership of their personal and professional development and is committed to achieving their full potential. Feedback from staff included:

'CPD has been outstanding - outdoor, up to date qualifications, e-learning etc'

'Learning superb both personally and professionally - Team Teach really useful - using the learning all the time'

'Mentoring re Behavioural Therapy – really effective'

When CPD at Elmwood School is planned, implemented and evaluated, emphasis is placed on aligning it with school RAP priorities and to ensuring it impacts positively on individual and team performance. A variety of examples were shared of how staff put new skills and knowledge into practice. These included the implementation of Team Teach and Outdoor Education across the school, the revision of schemes of work and revised curriculums as well as the impact of project based research on school policies and processes.

'I'm already developing plans to link with schemes of work re scything training this term'

'As part of my qualification I'm doing a project to link outdoor learning and XXX teaching'

The school's recruitment policy is based on Local Authority and CIPD good practice guidance and is consistently used by leaders when filling vacancies. 83% of online assessment respondents agree people are selected for roles at Elmwood School based on their proven capability. Interviews and HR records confirm opportunities are advertised internally and externally and that candidates are assessed fairly and given feedback whether successful or not. The involvement of the pupil School Council in the selection process is innovative and powerful, ensuring their input is heard and taken into account when staff are recruited or change roles.

Resource planning is focused on ensuring the school has skilled and qualified people able to meet current and anticipated pupil roll and needs. A competency matrix is maintained, along with the details of agency and supply staff that can supplement the core team when needed. A comprehensive resource plan has been developed in anticipation of the number and needs of new pupils expected to join the school in September 2017. These include the erection of a new classroom, the recruitment and development of staff and the provision of learning resources.

'We're looking ahead to 2018 Spring Term to ensure we have right people in the right place to manage the anticipated higher intake'

In light of the school's growth plans and the need to ensure resilience around critical and 'difficult to replace' roles a succession plan has been developed. The plan has been developed by leaders with the support of external HR specialists. It revolves around identifying individual talents, multi-skilling individuals and teams as well as developing core leadership skills through involvement in specific initiatives and the achievement of formal NPQ qualifications.

'The school has developed a multi-skilling approach so all roles are covered - especially through developing the capabilities and confidence of TAs'

'We have a succession plan to make sure everything's covered if key people leave or are off'

HR metrics are recorded, analysed and shared with staff and external stakeholders including OFSTED. They include attendance, CPD activity/achievement, performance management, staff turnover as well as any near misses/accidents. The data is reviewed at leadership meetings and in the school's SEF. Data is used to highlight opportunities for improvement and recently led to changes being made to the way the school manages absence and the covering of lunch periods. Where appropriate the school benchmarks its people management data against other SEN Schools:

Education Staff Spend (GBP per pupil)						
School name	Type of school	Number of Pupils (full time equivalent)	% pupils eligible for free school meals	Spend on teaching staff	Spend on supply teachers	Spend on education support staff
England - median for Special schools		NA	NA	8218	364	7373
Elmwood School	Special School	53	60.4	10,323	802	8,132
Lindsworth School	Special School	88	61.4	12,656	1,187	0
Mount Gilbert School	Special School	35	57.1	13,668	280	6,738
Portland School and Specialist College	Special School	90	64.4	7,671	1,322	4,206
Rosewood School	Special School	45	68.9	15,045	1,244	3,657
Shenstone Lodge School	Special School	68	51.5	13,857	1,108	12,792

Regular confidential surveys are undertaken with pupils, parents and carers and staff. A recent one looked how pupils use technology as part of the school's Prevent cyber safety strategy. The data from each is analysed, disseminated and used to drive continuous improvement.

OFSTED Inspections take place every three years – in 2014 the School achieved a GOOD rating which represented a significant improvement from SATISFACTORY in 2011. Recent lesson observation by EVOLVE indicates that for 90% of lessons the school's quality of teaching and attainment are OUTSTANDING. Regular external School Improvement Visits are carried out by Walsall Council and safety audits are undertaken by external specialist consultants. The desk review confirmed that action plans are developed, shared and implemented based on the feedback from each.

Rigorous observation monitoring and evaluation processes are facilitated by the leadership team which include pupil trails and an audit of attendance, behaviour and attainment based on a baseline assessment of each pupil when they join the school.

All online assessment respondents (100%) agree they look for improvement ideas from within and external to the school and that they are always seeking ways to improve.

'I use benchmark pupil data, build on and do gap analysis on which we develop differentiated schemes of work'

'As well as the hard data we collect we use pupil self-perception surveys including the Sorensen Self-Esteem Test'

The school also generates ideas from outside the education sector. Leaders, staff and pupils have been involved in business initiatives including Black Country Impact and the CAMHS link nurse pilot project: pupils benefit from engagement with Sky Sports and Youth Sport Trust (Living for Sport) initiative. In 2016 the school achieved Green School Gold Award status from the Woodland Trust in recognition of its innovative work in outdoor education.

When working with pupils, individuals and classroom based teams are encouraged and expected to make decisions and to try different approaches to achieve what they need to. All are qualified, committed and confident to try new ways of doing things. Leaders and lead teachers recognise their colleagues' expertise and delegate responsibility to them.

'We work together to refocus pupil assessment criteria - we didn't get it right first time but we got lots of learning from the process'

9 out of 10 online assessment respondents (91%) agree they can experiment without being worried about making mistakes. When interviewed people said they are encouraged to take reasonable risks as long as there is no health, safety or other negative impact on pupil or colleague welfare. As two staff commented:

'We're definitely prepared to take risks and to be innovative to meet pupil needs and help each achieve their full potential'

'We're always given room to try new things'

Regular whole team and subject meetings provide opportunities for staff to work together to generate ideas, one is currently looking at the development of a Pupil Leadership Team whilst another is focused on how the school manages behaviour. 96% of those who completed the online assessment agree they are *responsible for improving the way we do things*.

Everybody interviewed understands and is fully committed to the achievement of OUTSTANDING Grade 1 inspection status as a longer-term aspiration. Almost all online

assessment respondents (96%) agree the school has a plan for the future to ensure its continued success and that it is *a great place to work and has a bright future*.

The job descriptions of all staff include involvement in the school's whole planning cycle. Interviews confirmed that regular State of the Nation sessions provide an opportunity for everyone to get involved in long term planning. People explained how they are engaged in planning for new intake and continued school growth and how they input into the development of curriculums and schemes of work.

96% agree Elmwood School *is a great place to work and has a bright future*.

Everyone (100%) agrees/strongly agrees the school embraces change to create a sustainable future. During 2017 Governors and leaders have considered the benefits of the school becoming an academy which would mean significant change and impact on the whole school community. Staff interviews and documentary evidence seen as part of the desk review make it clear that information in relation to the proposed change has been communicated openly, transparently and quickly. People have been asked for their input and the implications of the change have been explored. Almost nine out of ten respondents to the 2017 Staff Survey (89%) agree they *have faith in the integrity of the leadership team and that even in difficult situations; I can depend on the leadership team*.

'Our possible involvement with academy status discussed and explained – we're all fully involved'

As mentioned earlier there are numerous examples of people taking the lead to champion change across the school including Team Teach, Prevent and the mental health agenda.

Everyone interviewed understands, and is fully committed to, identifying and meeting the needs of the pupils, their parents/carers and the wider community of Walsall. 96% of online assessment respondents agree that a positive relationship with the community is key to the school's continued success.

Members of the leadership team maintain strong liaison with Walsall Council re. SEND Funding and are heavily involved in consultation re. provision. Their growth projections are based on data which indicates a 16% increase in children in the borough with SEN resulting in the need for 90-100 specialist places by 2024.

Staff and leaders are active in the West Midlands SEMH group. The school helped plan and deliver workshops for all West Midlands SEMH schools in November.2016. The Deputy Headteacher has also been working with the DfE to progress 5 national data sets for the SEMH sector.

The school has built a team with a range of skills, experience, qualifications, gender and a diversity that matches the communities it serves.

Interviews, observations and the desk review confirm how clearly everyone at Elmwood School understands how critical relationships are with pupils, parents and carers. The school has developed a positive reputation in recent years culminating in a GOOD Ofsted Inspection report which included the following feedback:

'Links with parents are good and have been enhanced by the appointment of an effective family support worker. Similarly, links with other professionals are positive, the school being an active partner in the wider network of support to meet the learning and social and emotional needs of students'

'The local authority and the school work closely together in a variety of ways and the school is appreciative of the support it has received'

Metrics and other sources of evidence:

Online assessment results:

91% combined agreement in Building capability
96.75% combined agreement in Delivering continuous improvement
97% combined agreement in Creating sustainable success.

Elmwood School has been re-accredited as a Leading Parent Partnership approved school (2016-2019)

Staff absence:

Autumn Term 2014 - 275 days

Autumn 2015 - 89 days

Autumn Term 2016 - 148 days

This represents a reduction of almost 50% over three years.

Building capability:

Non-teaching staff progress within the school through effective performance appraisals taking on greater responsibilities of innovative and diverse curriculum offers. These include:

- 2 MISP Practitioners.
- 2 SULP Practitioners.
- 2 Unqualified Teacher gaining their QTLS.
- 1 applicant via UCAS to join us as a maths ITT (through our SCITT status).
- 1 aspiring Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (progressing to QTLS).

In addition to this there have been the following progressions within teaching staff:

- Deputy Headteacher achieved NPQH (June 2016)
- Curriculum Lead in English achieved NPQSL (November 2016)
- PE Teacher accepted for NPQSL (September 2016)
- Science Teacher accepted for NPQML (September 2015)
- Curriculum Lead in maths accepted for NPQML (November 2016)
- 3 Specialist Leaders in Education
-

Pupil attendance benchmarking:

Spring Term 2016-17 Comparison Attendance

	Shenstone Lodge	Hunters Hill	New Horizons	Lindsworth	Elmwood	Bridge Centre	SCS	Av.
Y7	95%	91.03%	84%	83%	91.07%	67.21%	84.60%	85%
Y8	78%	85.07%	77%	82%	95.50%	52.15%	81.19%	79%
Y9	76.50%	78.59%	72%	69%	90.46%	67.08%	64.61%	73%
Y10	59%	71.43%	75%	85%	83.38%	37.72%	69.88%	69%
Y11	57.50%	58.97 %	93%	53%	81.02%	49.83%	56.97%	65%
Av.	73%	81.53%	80%	74%	88.29%	54.80%	71.45%	74%

The school's data is stronger than any other comparable school the West Midlands Engage Group.

Quality of teaching and learning:

Internal lesson observations validated by Lead professionals from Evolve teaching alliance – their conclusions are outlined below:

Spring Term 2017		
Key Stage 3		
Subject	Progress Statement	Judgement
English	90% of pupils are making at or above expected progress from their baseline assessments into the school, with 84% of them working above expected progress.	Outstanding
Maths	91% of pupils are making at or above expected progress from their baseline assessments into the school, with 65% of them working above expected progress.	Outstanding
Science	74% of pupils are making at or above expected progress from their baseline assessments into the school, with 19% of them working above expected progress.	Good
Key Stage 4		
Subject	Progress Statement	Judgement
English	91% of pupils are making at or above expected progress from their baseline assessments into the school, with 85% of them working above expected progress.	Outstanding
Maths	86% of pupils are making at or above expected progress from their baseline assessments into the school, with 63% of them working above expected progress.	Outstanding

Science	56% of pupils are making at or above expected progress from their baseline assessments into the school, with 0% of them working above expected progress.	Unsatisfactory
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The school has developed 7 MISD trained practitioners who have enhanced the PSHE curriculum and all staff are advanced Team Teach and First Aid trained annually in excess of IQM and Team Teach requirements.

RONI indices stated that the following cohorts had a high percentage of becoming a NEET:

2014-15	Actual NEET	2015-16	Actual NEET	2016-17
7/9 (78%) have an elevated risk of becoming a NEET.	10% are recorded as NEET (January 2016).	5/7 (71%) have an elevated risk of becoming a NEET.	14% are recorded as NEET (November 2016)	6/15 (40%) have an elevated risk of becoming a NEET.

As a result of the good practice identified the school has achieved ADVANCED performance level for each of the three Indicators.

To continue its journey to become a HIGH PERFORMING school consideration should be given to:

- Encouraging everyone to take ownership of their learning and continually look to the future to identify and address capabilities needed for sustainable success
- Providing people with the opportunity to look to the outside world for ideas and innovation
- Consciously developing the strategic leadership capabilities of members of the senior leadership team so they are fully prepared for future challenges and opportunities

Recommendations and Next Steps

The following recommendations for the leadership team are based on the professional judgement and assessment of Elmwood School undertaken by Howard Jones.

To achieve higher levels of performance leaders and staff should consider:

- Identifying and addressing strategic leadership development needs to ensure leaders and aspiring leaders have the skills, knowledge and behaviours to lead the school as it grows and develops
- Encouraging all members of the school community to challenge behaviours they feel are not in line with Elmwood School's values and ethos
- Involving staff in the design and development of flexible and tailored reward and recognition approaches that motivate individuals and teams
- Encouraging everyone to take ownership of their learning, development and CPD
- Providing opportunities and time for people to look beyond the current education/SEND environment to learn from the outside world and bring new ideas to enhance school performance

The key dates for the next stages of Elmwood School IIP journey are set out below:

Accreditation date	12-Month Review	24-Month Review	Accreditation Expiry
07/07/2017	07/07/2018	07/07/2019	06/07/2020

A formal feedback meeting will be held in September 2017 to discuss the findings and agree the school's continuous improvement plan.

Get in touch:

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