

Governor Visit Record

Name: Kim Gillings & Nikki Gamston

Date: 5 November 2021 10h00-12h00

Focus of visit (link to strategy and school development plan)

English Curriculum throughout all levels of the Lowick and Holy Island C of E First Schools.

Summary of activities e.g. talking to staff and pupils, looking at specific resources, having lunch etc.

The visit team included Head teacher: - R. Simpson; teacher- H. Stiansen; Parent Governors- Kim Gillings and Nikki Gamston.

The visit included a visit to the class 2 classroom; the class one classroom; the library; the learning Zone; the Nursery and Head Teachers Office.

After a tour of these areas the visit continued in the Headteachers office where we looked at and discussed how the English Curriculum is set up i.e., what the priorities are and what resources and strategies are used to achieve these goals. We also looked at how monitoring of the success of this, as a whole, is done as well as how individual pupils progress within the programmes are monitored, and how they are assisted if they are not achieving the level for age requirements.

School books of pupils for English as well as other subjects such as RE where English is also required were checked for both Lowick and Holy Island C of E school pupils.

What have I learned as a result of my visit? (relate this back to focus of visit)

The following questions were focussed on during the visit: -

- 1) What are the key priorities in the schools and why are these priorities?

The focus of the English teachers is ensuring high levels of listening, concentrating, articulation and conversation. This focus is carried through all of the subject lessons. This is further emphasised with the use of the programmes Read, Write, Inc (RWI); CLP and Talk4Writing. These programmes are used hand in hand to ensure phonics, articulation, understanding and debating are at a good level before writing on the topic even begins. Commander Joes is also being found to be very helpful in advancing the listening, understanding and communication skills.

It was explained to the governors that speaking, concentrating and listening are the base needed for strong phonics decoding and writing skills- these skills are essential for the children's ongoing development.

- 2) How are these priorities addressed?

Three to five sessions of RWI are done with the children weekly. Extra sessions are set for children needing extra help. RWI has been evaluated and has been amalgamated with the reading and writing to ensure it remains fun and incorporates creativity so as to encourage pupil enthusiasm. Active learning is used to bring fun movement into the lessons and add another dimension. An action plan is utilised to monitor each half terms goals and checklists allow the teachers to track and monitor individual pupils progress so that assistance can be given as soon as it is needed rather than waiting for formal termly assessments. SEN children are given extra precision set 1:1 sessions eg. talk boost, Site reading and conversation practice. Reading book bands being sent home with children are matched to their learning in their phonics groups.

In the childrens work books the teachers also use 'assessment blocks' which focus both the teachers and pupils on the outcomes required and on the areas where the individual pupil needs to make an extra effort.

Reading for pleasure groups ensure that all children have a chance to share their reading interests and have their reading listened to on a regular basis.

3) How will you know you have been successful?

Assessments are run before half term. Ongoing monitoring is done during reading and RWI. The children are moved to the next level of RWI and reading books dependant on their progress. The children who missed the formal phonics check (Year 1) in 2020 will be assessed internally with an old set of tests this year to check and assess them. Writing across the curriculum is evident.

4) How is progress towards your targets monitored?

Half term assessments as well as progress checklists for reading and RWI are used to monitor progress and keep records of this progress. Marking of work is usually done in class and each time work is completed to ensure children are monitored and to assist them with showing where mistakes have been made and how to correct this.

5) How is it ensured that strong teachers can share good practice and that teachers who need assistance receive that?

Shared teaching of classes is done to make use of different teachers strengths and allow teachers to learn from each other. Formal meetings are held to discuss teaching, training and ideas but this is also done on an ad-hoc basis e.g., by sharing a lunch table. Teachers also attend training sessions e.g. programmes that are being used in the school such as RWI or Commander Joes when needed and revision of training techniques is done and in house training is done. Progress of pupils also shows if teachers need assistance in certain areas and this is addressed when required.

6) What was the pupils attitudes in the classes?

The pupils in all the classes were well behaved and responding well to the teachers. They appeared confident in their interactions with the teachers and happy in their lessons. The pupils were well focused and even with parents(governors) unexpectedly coming into class they settled down again well and continued with their lessons. The children/ teacher interaction seemed a very happy and well balanced one with the children listening intently and enthusiastically to the teachers. The time spent in the classes was short and was to view work on the walls and classroom setup and resources. This teacher/ pupil interaction was not a focus of the visit but was pleasing to see and showed that the teaching of listening, concentrating and conversation which is one of the English curriculum focus areas was being well instilled. Their also appeared to be mutual respect.

Our strengths (What are we doing well?)

The teachers appeared to be keeping good records of the progress of pupils within the different programmes and ensuring that individuals were given assistance in the specific areas that they need it to ensure that they progress. The teachers were making a great effort to make the lessons fun and mix programmes together with the curriculum to keep the lessons fun, active, interactive, creative and interesting so that the children see learning as a fun process. The teachers appear enthusiastic and also creative in their teaching.

The governors were able to see the effort which had been made to integrate the different programmes that were being used and how well it was coming through in the work. Teachers appeared to be enthusiastic and showed this by the extra effort that had been put in in areas such as the library where all of the books had been regraded to blend the oxford owl reading colour grades and the RWI colour grades so that the programmes were smoothly integrating. Extra ideas were being introduced by the teachers and adopted to help monitor progress. The monitoring of the pupils progress appeared to be well in hand and the records well kept. The staff were open to the governor visit and were happy for all records to be checked.

What do we need to improve? (These will be focus for next visit)

It was discussed during the visit that 'training' of new parents and 're-training' of parents of the older children was required in the different programmes so that the parents are assisting the children correctly with homework and not confusing them with what they were taught decades ago using different techniques.

Actions for the governing board to consider: Check on teacher training and ensure that training is offered to teachers in areas where they feel less confident or in areas where they feel they could grow and make an even bigger impact in pupil learning. Agree what information could be shared with parents so they know how to best support their children's reading at home - there are lots of wonderful strategies and systems in school to be shared and celebrated.

Date of next visit:

To be announced

Signed: Kim Gillings

Nikki Gamston