

VISIT REPORT



School:	(2087) College Town Primary School		
LA:	Bracknell Forest		
Date:	14/10/2020, 08:00	Adviser:	Caroline Morgan
Reference:	Autumn Visit 1 and 2.	Advisers:	
Attendees:	Trudi Sammons - Headteacher, Anne Duncan - Deputy Headteacher, Paul Tatum - Mathematics Subject Leader, Jade Faircloth - SENDCo	Category:	School Improvement

College Town Primary School – Autumn Term 2 - Note of Visit - 14th October 2020

A key area for improvement identified in 2019/20 was the teaching of mathematics and the progress pupils make as a result across each stage and phase. This visit provided the opportunity to look at what actions leaders are taking to drive up standards and improve pupils outcomes given the return to school following the partial closure of schools as a result of the pandemic from March 2020 to July 2020.

Mathematics

All pupils are currently being assessed using their previous end of year assessments, during this first half-term. This will give teachers more information about the impact of covid on the learning gaps which may have been created during the spring and summer terms in the last academic year. Staff at College Town Primary have used the White Rose Assessments to provide additional information using their question by question analysis and RAG rated analysis tools to determine who may and may not need additional support and intervention on key topics, in order to fill any mathematical gaps. A second round of assessments will take place at Christmas to identify improvements and revisit gaps so that the spring terms curriculum, can be adjusted to support pupils and enable them to quickly catch-up.

Leaders have made the decision to keep the core curriculum for this autumn term. However, class teachers and subject leaders have reviewed their school's yearly curriculum identifying where missed learning would impact on the next stage in a pupils' development. Pre-teaching tasks are being used to enable pupils to overcome these knowledge barriers and additional time at the beginning of the lesson is being set aside to ensuring these building blocks are fully understood.

Leaders have already noticed that pupils' fluency with mathematics has been impacted as a result of partial school closures. To improve pupils' recall with number, 10-minute 'arithmetic surgeries' have been incorporated into the school day to improve pupils' confidence. This approach is aimed at providing a low tariff, high-frequency approach to help secure pupils' knowledge.

The subject leader has used inset time with staff, so that all class teachers understand how the curriculum is taught across the school, for example, place value from Year 1 to Year 6. This has helped all staff to grow in their understanding of how the curriculum builds for pupils across each key stage. In addition, aspects of the calculation policy have also been revisited so that staff approach, for example, addition in line with the school policy. This rolling programme of staff development is planned across this academic year, so that all staff can have a better understanding of what mathematical skills pupils learn when, as well as what they should know by the end of Year 6.

Leaders have adopted the White Rose Scheme as their scheme of work for mathematics. The power points provided within this scheme are used as teachers main teaching tools and supporting resources. In addition, the importance of modelling effectively has been emphasised with all staff so that there is a structured approach for all pupils. Pupils are being actively encouraged to work out their answer to a problem in key stage 2 rather than feel they must do this in their head. This should enable all pupils to develop quickly. This is helping staff teams provide a consistent approach for the pupils in the class.

The subject leader at the end of term showcased what effective mathematics should look like at College Town. This has helped staff think about their use of questioning and how it should be used to draw out pupils' understanding, scaffold learning and how they assess pupils development. This approach is also helping staff reflect on whether their modelled example was useful to a pupil. Within each year team, different staff take a rolling programme of responsibility to plan the learning, so that key vocabulary, questions and sufficient dialogue is available to help the pupils to identify any misunderstanding, and reinforce their learning. As an additional resource, 'My maths' has also been invested in so that pupils and their parents can revisit topics at home and spend time practising their skills.

Key topics noted by White Rose as typically difficult for pupils nationally are; place value, fractions, place value, operating symbols, have already been identified as needing additional support across the school.

In addition, staff have been encouraged to use manipulatives, concrete examples, pictorial representations and abstract approaches more fluidly with pupils as they progress through key stage 2. This is so that staff use their pictorial approaches and physical objects to quickly remind pupils of what they have already learnt should they need it to scaffold new learning and build on from prior understanding.

Pupils have returned to school ready to learn. The transition work at the end of the summer term has helped the pupils to reengage with one

another and rebuild friendships. Each class is now mixed ability and is often supported with a TA. Pupils seating within the class has been rearranged so that pupils can support one another. A peer tutoring approach is being encouraged so that pupils help one another in line with the school values.

Leaders have noted that Year 1 pupils can count forwards but struggle to count backwards. Year 2 have lost 6 months of Year 1 and they are finding it difficult to settle properly into school. Leaders have also supplemented additional materials into Year 1 as most of the pupils historically had already learnt much of the curriculum in reception.

Lesson observations

During my visit on the 14th October the subject leader, Paul Tatum and I visited two classes in Year 5. In line with school covid risk policy, we stood at the back of the room in visors. Both groups began their lesson using their four refresher topics, 'flashback 4' before they moved into today's lesson on interpreting graphs.

In each class the pupils were very engaged, listened carefully and offered their solutions to a range of questions the teacher asked. The teachers in both classes checked on a number of pupils who did not have their hands up to specific problems. Some pupils would have benefited by the teacher using the board to revisit rounding to the nearest thousand to help those weaker pupils use a written approach to identifying their solution. This would support the effective questioning around rounding, to a thousand, ten thousand or a hundred when working with larger numbers. Similarly, the questioning around which number was bigger or smaller was very effective and if in addition a simple sentence like, "which inequality sign should I use to show this..... and how do you know this is right" would help those less confident realise that the $<$ $>$ signs always point towards the smallest number. In both lessons, a copy of the graph recording cress growth by the number of days was available for each pupil. However, there were different interpretations of the more challenging question on consecutive days. It would be helpful for different year teams to spend some time prior to the lesson checking the resources and whether there may be misconceptions in the pupils' interpretation of the questions so that teachers provide the same clear guidance to all groups. In addition, leaders need to encourage weaker pupils to actively use a visual or written approach during their activities so that they can identify why their answer may be right or wrong.

Book scrutiny

The subject leader, Paul Tatum, the headteacher, Trudi Sammons and I looked through a selection of books from Year 6 to Year 1. Books were typically, very well organised, pupils were clearly proud of the work they had been working through since the beginning of term. There was evidence in key stage 2 of additional simplified materials and support for those with weaker skills. Verbal support for those with low cognitive skills by staff and further explained examples were also available for a few. In addition, extension materials had been recorded as the challenge in some classes.

The modelling examples indicated as a key aspect of the revised mathematics curriculum were missing from all but one book. Leaders are aware this needs to be addressed to ensure that pupils can revisit these specific questions to be used to aid recall moving forward.

The exercise books looked at in Year 2 supported staffs' views that the year group hadn't yet settled and there were gaps in their learning. The Year 1 books showed these pupils had made a stronger start.

Possible Actions for the Spring Term

1. **Ensure clear modelled examples are provided for pupils to refer to in their exercise books on each topic.**
2. **Encourage staff to discuss how they are going to teach their mathematics lesson with others in their year group to identify any misconceptions and address them with the pupils.**
3. **Make sure that extension, challenge tasks are available for those high prior attainers should they need them after completing the main body of the mathematics lesson.**
4. **Provide additional support to work with Year 2 to help them catch-up.**
5. **Encourage staff to reflect on when to use modelling with starter activities to support those less able pupils grasp their prior learning and use it effectively.**

Remote Learning

Leaders have worked methodically through the government guidance documents, cross-matched the Oak Academy resources to the school curriculum and identified the autumn term elements which could not be taught effectively through this approach.

Leaders have already surveyed families to establish what software and hardware are available for pupils to use during the school day from home, should this be needed. The school policy is finalised and the plans now offer support for three different scenarios

- A pupil who is at home self-isolating
- A class who are self-isolating
- A year group or the whole school are learning remotely due to an outbreak.

A class 5 teacher has modelled a variety of approaches while self-isolating to assess what works and what does not.

For individual pupils or small group self-isolating a resource pack will be sent home with the pupils.

Teams in Microsoft 365 will be used to enable staff to meet virtually with a class, year group or school. Pupils will meet with their class teacher and TA support at the beginning and end of the school day. This will help to set expectations and also act as a well-being check for all pupils. All pupils will be set, approximately 4 hours of work per day which will match the in-school curriculum using a mixture of Oak Academy resources for English as well as other subjects and White Rose materials for mathematics. All pupils will be sent home with their class storybook and will be incorporated into the school day. For pupils in reception and Year 1, interactive activities will also be provided. The materials for the week will be shared through a link on the school website.

Staff will be available to provide support over the course of the day, which will be restricted to the school day and to one email a day. In addition, the 'school cloud' will be used weekly to discuss virtually face to face, how well their child is working with the remote learning offer.

In the case of whole classes, year groups or the school self-isolating. Pupils who have an EHCP or are SEND, will also be provided with an additional one to one support and checks will be made by the SENDCo, FLA. Pupils with low cognition will be provided with a resource pack with less challenging materials which will help develop their skills and metacognition.

Catch-up funding

There is a planned programme of support for those who need additional help across this academic year. This includes support for groups of pupils in Year 2 with their phonics, a homework club for those in Years 4,3,5 which provides additional opportunities for pupils to practice some of their skills, iron out any misconceptions and reinforcing learning through targeted class teacher intervention after school for planned sessions over the course of the school year. Year 6 will be provided with additional support for their comprehension and reading as well as mathematics initially while a small group will be provided with targetted mathematics support throughout November. In addition Year 2 who will be provided with some pre learning and revision activities through January to enable them to meet the grade. This 15 hours of time is being provided for all teachers directed time.

Staffing

New staff have made an excellent start. The three NQTs are very confident and willing to go the extra mile to support the pupils which is in line with other established staff at the school. Managing some staffs' anxiety is an ongoing situation for all leaders across the school. Additional support through the LA has been offered to all who feel anxious however the growing number of cases locally is impacting on some staff's well-being.

To manage on-site risk, school leaders are highly visible at the beginning and the end of the staggered day. Parents have been strongly advised to wear their facemasks when they drop off and collect their children throughout the school staggered start and finish times, social distancing is similarly shared reminding parents through newsletters etc. Following a recent class bubble closure, parents have been noticeably more compliant with the school processes and systems.

Culture and ethos across the school

A short walk around the school site, just before the end of the school day on the 14th October, showed the children actively involved in their learning. Pupils were returning orderly from their last play in the afternoon, others worked creatively with colour, Year 4 were developing an understanding of electricity and circuits while a different class were receiving additional support so they could understand the impact of words on others. This purposeful environment of learning was delightful to see and confirmed leaders opinion that pupils were glad to be back in school learning.