

# VISIT REPORT

**School: (2087) College Town Primary School**

**LA: Bracknell Forest**

**Date: 30/09/2021, 09:30**

**Adviser: Caroline Morgan**

**Reference: Autumn 1 note of visit**

**Advisers:**

**Attendees: Trudi Sammons - Headteacher**

**Category: School Improvement**

## Comments

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### Summary of activities

During my autumn term visit I met with:

- The Headteacher, Trudi Sammons to discuss the current context, the key priorities for improvement and the school development plan.
- The curriculum leaders who shared the adjustments made to the curriculum, how leaders were identifying and using CPD to support staff development as well as how leaders are relaunching a range of quality assurance activities across the school for foundation subject leaders.
- The subject leader for mathematics, as well as discussed, the changes and alterations made to help pupils improve and develop their reading across the school.

In addition I looked at:

- The learning environments across the school, as leaders have developed a whole school strategy ensuring that displays for learning in classrooms are helpful and support pupils development.
- EYFS pupils newly refurbished learning space, which prioritises discovery and reading. This helped to understand how the EYFS framework is being taught through this space this academic year.

### Current context

All staff are positive about the year ahead. Catch-up funding has been used to provide two associate senior leaders, subject leaders for English, mathematics with additional time to work with staff and pupils in need of additional help and guidance. Class sizes have been reduced in reception and key stage 1 to give staff additional time with their pupils. In addition, Fiona Mitchell is working periodically with a small group of year 3 and 4 pupils who have developed significant gaps in their learning during lock down. There is a new group of staff in place in year 1 and the senior team are providing CPD training for those new to role with example lessons.

There has been an increased focus on developing the basic skills so that pupils read well, write effectively and use mathematics across a range of disciplines. The wider school curriculum was reintroduced following the return to school on the 9th March 2021, however some key concepts or knowledge has had to be revisited or pre-taught to reconnect the learning across the foundation subjects. This work is continuing into this academic year.

### Key priorities for this academic year

Leaders have thought carefully about how they measure the impact of this year's SDP plan with both pupils, parents and staff. The plans address covid recovery as well as continuing to strive for excellence.

Quality of Education.

- Identify gaps in pupils learning.
- Teaching and learning to be at least 'good'.
- Further develop pupils writing and reading.

Behaviour and Attitudes

- Develop consistency in the application of the behaviour policy.
- Review break and lunchtime systems in light of covid to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to engage in physical and social activities.
- Continue to develop pupil support and the pastoral team to ensure consistency and effective safeguarding at all times.

Personal Development

- Minimise the impact of covid on pupil wellbeing and enhance emotional health.
- Ensure EYFS pupils have an increased opportunity to develop their personal, social and emotional development.
- Increase staff awareness of how strategies provided by outside school agencies, can be used in the classroom, for

example, SALT.

- Relaunch school council, digital leaders and eco schools.

## Leadership and Management

- Keep College Town Primary School covid safe, by ensuring quality first teaching, ensuring the environment is safe, manage staff absence and continue to support pupil and staff welfare.
- Re-establish the new normal.
- Support new staff through targeted CPD, so that they become highly effective members of the College Town Primary School team.
- Develop EYFS and carry out baseline assessments.
- Support NQTs +1 in their second year of teaching.
- Develop the ECT programme of support in light of the Early Careers Framework.
- Ensure CPD is highly effective and addresses the needs identified by both the SLT and staff.
- Ensure a rigorous self assessment process is maintained.
- Review and strengthen home school partnership.
- Review staffing structure
- Set a budget for 2022-23
- Review provision for SEND pupils and ensure that curriculum and wider school experiences are fully accessible.
- Further develop subject leadership, ensuring that QA processes across the school enable foundation leaders to develop a stronger understanding of the implementation and impact of the curriculum.

## **Mathematics(Paul Tatum) and English subject leaders(Natasha Nixon and Anne Duncan) – Paul Tatum Context**

To give these core subject leaders time to focus on improving provision in their specific areas of English and mathematics as both subject leaders have been provided with a reduced timetable this year. Each subject leader has been tasked with reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of their curriculum, developing an action plan to target for example, improving staff's subject knowledge, skills and planning or enhancing resources. This action has been taken to ensure that the needs of pupils are met in each classroom. In addition, both subject leaders will be looking at additional ways to further support groups of pupils, in order to reinforce their knowledge and skills.

There is a whole school strategy around the use of displays. Every classroom teacher is expected to share relevant information to this week's learning, using prior knowledge, key concepts, modelled examples or specific questions on subject boards in their classrooms to support pupils knowledge and understanding. Staff are expected to use these periodically with pupils as an aid memoire to improve pupils' recall and application. In most keys stage 2 classes, these are clear and easy to read. These learning walls are helpful additions when used well by staff and can accelerate pupils' recall and application of skills.

### **Mathematics subject leader**

The subject leader explained that the whole school approach to mathematics continues to be based on White Rose Mathematics. However, staff have been directed to use the teaching slides within the scheme, to help them to fully understand how to teach the core concepts. There is an expectation that staff will use these teaching approaches with the pupils in order to build on from their prior learning. Staff continue to submit their planning on a weekly basis in a secure area which are routinely checked by the subject leader. Currently the subject leader believes there are no concerns on staff's planning of mathematics.

Due to commitments with teaching year 6 English and mathematics, the subject leader has not been able to observe how the staff teach mathematics. However, he is intending to look at learning in year 3 where he and Anne Duncan have identified that support is needed. The subject leader also intends to look at learning in EYFS asap.

Senior Leaders have provided core subject leaders with a set of short term actions. These include, visiting lessons, looking at learning through book looks, reviewing the curriculum and addressing where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge.

## **Recommendations**

- The subject leader has to ensure that pupils at College Town Primary School are being given every opportunity to further

develop their mathematical skills. This means making sure that the teaching of key concepts is consistently applied and that lessons are appropriately planned for the needs of all pupils. Book looks, looking at learnings from EYFS to Year 6 must be prioritised to ensure this is happening. The subject leader needs to look at learning to ensure that what is being taught is in line with the scheme and methods are being appropriately applied by staff teams. Just because the planning looks ok it doesn't mean it is being taught well. To do this he needs to use the first 45 minutes of the day and adjust his teaching timetable to enable him to go and look at learning. It would be helpful for the subject leader to meet with school leaders to share his findings regularly and discuss where staff and pupils practice needs to be further developed.

- The subject leader needs to look at the learning walls and displays across the school and identify if any further additions need to be made to enhance the learning environment or advise how staff can use these more effectively in lessons to advance knowledge and skills.
- Key topics proving difficult for pupils to grasp need to be quickly identified. Most schools have found that pupils have missed or have misconceptions about place value and fractions. Looking at the curriculum plan for this year, the subject leader needs to provide advice or signpost for example, the NCTEM progression videos and resources so that staff can understand what prior knowledge should have taken place.
- How pupils move from using concrete manipulatives to abstract thinking requires pupils to sometimes quickly refresh their knowledge using concrete or visual imagery. The subject leader needs to be clear that all staff are using prior learning efficiently to enable pupils to build on from their previous learning.
- Fluency, problem solving and reasoning are the three components of the National Curriculum. The subject leader needs to revisit where there are sufficient opportunities for problem solving and reasoning and how these skills are developed from EYFS to year 6.
- Develop a tracking system, to identify which pupils are on track, below or excelling. Use this data analysis to identify where further support is needed and direct staff and provide the additional support to enable pupils to catch-up.
- Use the key priorities identified in the Raising Attainment Plan to develop mathematics across the school.

### English subject leader

The development of reading so that pupils read well and for pleasure is rightly a whole school priority. Leaders recognise that pupils who read often, develop their vocabulary and build confidence in language. These skills enable pupils to access the wider curriculum. Staff use a variety of approaches to develop reading. Guided reading(R-2), class reads(years 3 - 6), book corners and recommended reads, are available across the school in each classroom. Pupils are encouraged to look beyond the title and enticed to sit down and read for pleasure. New staff have been trained so that they question a pupil's, inference, understanding of new vocabulary, and thoughts on what might happen next in a story. This approach is helping all staff to have the same high expectations of what their pupils can or will be able to do. In addition, leaders have invested in new stories or texts which link the topics being learnt within the foundation subjects. The libraries in each phase (EYFS, key stage 1 and key stage 2) have been replenished and pupils are spending time in their school library choosing reading books or researching. These areas are notably well kept, fresh and encourage pupils to come in and find a new book to read.

Staff continue to be provided with pupils reading ages and development records so that they can identify those who read below age related expectations. These pupils are identified as priority readers and staff teams check how well they are improving by listening to them read daily. The rest of the class read at least once a week to a member of staff. Book bands are used to ensure that pupils read books which are linked to their prior ability. Leaders regularly look at how well pupils read and routinely evaluate the progress of different groups.

Staff use VIPERS as an approach to question and check a pupils understanding of a text and to structure writing.  
(Vocabulary, infer, predict, explain, retrieve, summarise)

Leaders have reflected on the Reading Framework issued by the DfE in July 2021 and have taken a series of steps to further enhance reading across the school. These include

- Ensuring that pupils take a book home to read, which is matched to their letters and sounds in EYFS.
- Pupils at key stages 1 and 2 choose age appropriate reading books for their daily home reading homework.
- Reading logs record what a pupil has read, key vocabulary and predict what comes next in the story.
- Books are crisp and new.
- Story time is used to reinforce phonics in EYFS.
- Parents have been encouraged read to their child for pleasure.
- Support has been provided from leaders, so that parents can use phonics effectively to help pupils blend words at home.

- A newsletter identifying new books and how to check pupils understanding is provided to parents in a termly newsletter.

### **EYFS – Addressing the new EYFS framework**

Leaders have invested in a newly redesigned and refurbished reception area. This provides a broad range of opportunities for the children to investigate and explore learning. This well organised and rich learning environment includes additional outdoor areas, where pupils can develop an interest in reading in their new Reading Hub. Pupils know when and how they can join different learning groups and they abide by this routine when joining activities which have space. This approach works very well in this space. I am looking forward to seeing this facility used for phonics and for early number on my next visit.

### **Curriculum lead – Amy Farrant and Anne Duncan**

I met with the curriculum leaders who explained that all class and subject leaders reviewed the curriculum last academic year to identify which topics, skills and knowledge had been taught face to face, blended or through remote learning. During the summer term, designated blocks of time were used to teach the History and Geography topics to pupils which had to be paused as a result of lockdown. Through discussions with staff, subject leaders were able to analysis the areas which would need some additional pre-teaching learning activities in order to reinforce or fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. This evaluation of the curriculum was shared with staff before the summer holidays so that they could quickly begin to address these learning gaps from September. Consequently, the curriculum leaders, subject leaders and staff team have a clear plan for pupils learning this academic year.

In addition, the curriculum leaders have thought carefully about how to develop their foundation subject leaders and provide them with opportunities to look at learning. Consequently, there is a balanced approach which provides time for subject leaders to quality assure pupils' books, look at learning in the classroom, talk to pupils and evaluate the impact of their curriculum. This well organised approach will provide subject leaders with a stronger understanding of the implementation and impact on the pupils' development.

Leaders are very focused on ensuring that the curriculum is fit for purpose and matches the needs of the pupils in their school. Leaders continue to visit lessons daily and look at learning in the classroom to identify where teaching practises can be further improved. Leaders high expectations are being realised by all staff teams and new staff where necessary are provided with example lessons and coaching support to strengthen their practice. In addition, staff teams have been advised that they may still need to use remote learning should an outbreak occur.

Parents continue to be engaged in supporting their children at home and routinely read what is recorded on their child's class pages to support their development. Consequently, year teams are expected to ensure that materials on the website are accurate and up-to-date. This collaborative approach between staff and parents is enabling pupils to learn more effectively and recall their knowledge and skills. Parents have been advised that when their children are sick, work will only be provided for them after 3 days. This will focus initially on English and mathematics and will be linked to the Oak Academy or Busy Things at key stage 1.

### **Recommendations**

- The foundation subject leaders would benefit from creating a moderation folder which captures a handful of examples of pupils' end product. For example, a research board, piece of extended writing, presentation to others etc. This would help subject leaders evidence the impact of the curriculum on pupils with different starting points, as well as provide guidance for teachers in subsequent years of the types of age related work that pupils can and should produce. In addition, foundation leaders can decide which pupils are therefore working towards, at the standard or have achieved beyond their age related standard.
- The FLA and the National College have created networks to support foundation subject leadership support. Leaders should consider if their staff would benefit from being part of these networks.
- Review and evaluate the new quality assurance programme at Christmas and share strengths with subject leaders to develop those new to subject leadership and develop their understanding of the subject journey pupils follow while at College Town Primary School.