

Melcombe Primary School Learning and Teaching Review

This review was carried out on the 01/02 March 2016 led by an Educational Consultant, with two serving Headteachers from neighbouring schools and the Local Authority Attached Adviser. Lessons were observed jointly with the Headteacher, Deputy and members of the SLT. The Headteacher and Deputy were present and contributed fully in all team meetings. Members of the team observed teaching and learning in over 25 lessons/part lessons throughout the Nursery, Early Years, Key Stage 1 and 2. All teachers/TAs observed were given the opportunity to receive feedback.

Discussions (some with the Headteacher present) were held with individual staff who have particular roles and responsibilities, middle leaders, pupils and governors. Safeguarding procedures and the Single Central Record were scrutinised. A range of documentation, including SEF, SDP marking policy was also looked at. Discussions were held with individual and groups of pupils to ascertain progress and to find out what they had learnt this academic year.

The purpose of this review was to gauge progress in moving forward with teaching and learning mindful of last year's dip in attainment as well as the implementation of the new curriculum. It was conducted as a developmental and coaching exercise based on the new Ofsted Framework as well as being both challenging and supportive.

Teaching and Learning

The 'Teaching & Learning model' cycle of learning adopted by the school underpins the majority of the teaching seen during the review. This entails the pupils being clear on what they are learning and why, short breaks for 'Brain Gym', success criteria discussed and how this fits into the bigger picture of what they are learning. This is good practice, although at times can be time consuming and presentation of this model via IT can lead to a very busy picture and overload of information for some.

That said, the quality of teaching is good with a significant number of observations with aspects of practice that stands out. In the best lessons a clear link could be seen between the quality of teaching and the progress made by the pupils. The teaching was supported by lessons that had been planned well, adults were organised and lessons well managed, in this environment children were attentive, keen and enthusiastic and worked well with each other and adults, a strong feature of a school with a positive cohesive ethos for learning.

However, in some classes, tasks for the more able pupils were too easy and not differentiated, consequently these pupils were not meeting their potential. The quality of feedback to pupils is also variable, it is well received and helpful whereas in some instances while diagnostic, it fell short of telling what needs to be done to get better ie next steps. The Marking policy has recently been reviewed and the new expectations, as yet, are not consistently applied across all year groups. Assessment without levels is being managed well and school leaders have a good understanding of the

requirements. Some resources such as FFT available to support assessment, target setting and tracking are not fully exploited by class teachers.

Very good relationships between adults in the classroom and children were an evident feature in the lessons as well as the cohesive relationships and behaviour of the children towards each other. The use of other adults varied from class to class and also depended upon activity in some classes in upper Key Stage 2 they were used to model practice extremely effectively, although other observations such as when children were on the carpet found they had very little input.

Related issues

Movement around the school is good with children aware of the risks and dangers of doors and stairs. Children said they feel safe and bullying was rare. Students new to the school with English as an Additional Language are supported well. Children with SEN are given appropriate support and provision maps drawn for each individual. Others deemed vulnerable are also monitored carefully and support provided at every opportunity.

Social development is a strength, pupils work well together in small groups and in pairs during lessons and interact with each other in a positive way in unstructured time at break and lunch. Good opportunities in some lessons such as circle time to develop spiritual understanding and empathy. Theme lessons showed awareness of social issues and moral values well. A good number of pupils take the opportunity to attend the wide range of extra curricular activities or represent the school in sporting competition and some achieve higher levels of excellence. The implementation of Extended Day provision has been well managed, it is of a high quality and well received.

Pupils are respectful of each other's cultures/religions. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to reflect on their experiences although this aspect could be developed further, this area of SMSC is being developed well by the deputy. The RE co-ordinator has carried out an audit of provision and has an innovative plan of action to improve RE and Collective Worship ready for launch next term. From observation and individual discussion with children, the teaching of British values is being effectively taught via assembly and in class across the school.

The school is very conscious of its Safeguarding responsibilities and this is well met. The SCR is compliant, those children deemed vulnerable felt safe and well looked after. However attendance at 94.9% falls short of the national average, this is mainly due to a small core of pupils who are 'persistently absent'. Further analysis of these pupils is needed to ensure strategies being used are as effective as possible.

The Governing body has been reconstituted and new governors appointed. They are keen and enthusiastic to be effective, both supportive and challenging to the head and SLT. They are well aware of their responsibilities and the difference between strategic and operational involvement. However, the group is small in number and whilst having a core of experienced educationalists, understandably need to be up skilled to meet

demands. In this respect they will be carrying out an audit of expertise and developing a pertinent training programme to meet needs.

What works really well

- Professional commitment and attitude from staff to their work
- Manner and rapport between adults and children - conducive to learning
- Some very positive relationships/clear expectations which combined promoted the good learning observed
- Positive attitude and behaviour for learning demonstrated across the school
- Teachers have good grasp of overall picture, they focus on progress and learning.
- Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge
- Awareness of vulnerable pupils and those with SEN and their specific needs
- Overall lessons are organised and planned to include a range of interesting and pertinent tasks and activities (with the caveat for the needs of higher attainers)
- Provision for pupils new to the school with EAL
- Pupils know the targets they are working towards
- Lessons moved at a good base underpinned by the Teaching & Learning model
- IT used to good effect
- Teachers have good questioning skills
- Effective routines used to gain attention
- Culture of talk partners permeates all classes
- Breadth of extended school and links to learning, child care extra
- Ethos in nursery – range of activities clearly linked to previous learning and evaluation, learning through play
- Children in free play using previous learnt knowledge
- Independent learning in Nursery
- Work in Reception Classes
- Teaching of British Values
- Many examples of confident Speaking and Listening across the school
- SEN/Safeguarding (mindful of attendance)

To cross a grade boundary

- Ensure tasks are appropriate and differentiated to meet the needs of the more able children including higher order questioning
- Teachers need to consistently have high expectations
- Ensure job description for subject co-ordinators is current
- Improve consistency in feedback/marking
- Scrutinise attendance data for trends and tracking of persistent absence and review strategies to improve attendance
- Teachers to improve modelling handwriting
- Review routine for answering questions (hands up) have high expectations of pupils' answers
- Improve middle leaders/subject leaders articulation of role and responsibility
- Implement RE and Collective Worship Programme

- Ensure Early Years assessment is consistent
- Review Pens and handwriting policy for consistency
- Monitor the use of worksheets/cutting out/colouring/sticking in
- Improve the lunchtime experience as a social interaction
- Recruit to and develop Governing body

Conclusion

There is much to be admired in the school. Clearly effective and passionate teaching is very much responsible for the learning and at least good progress being made by all year groups. The SLT model a professional and committed attitude to improvement that permeates throughout the workforce. The children are delightful, they are keen and enthusiastic and show a love and enjoyment of learning related to all aspects of life at Melcombe.

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