



Fleet Primary School

Fleet Road Hampstead London NW3 2QT

Tel: 020 7485 2028

E-mail: admin@fleet.camden.sch.uk

Headteacher: Don McGibbon



Governor Visit Report

Area of focus for visit:	English	Link Governor: Annie Balme & Margaret O'Sullivan
Date of meeting:	24th March 2021	Link Staff Member and role: Ruth Hanfling – English Lead

Context:

English influences much of what we do at Fleet; children at our school love to read and write. All of our written work relates to our topic based creative curriculum and teachers work hard to create meaningful lessons that are fun and engaging for the children. The subject encompasses writing, reading, grammar, phonics and spelling.

The link governors meet with English Lead. They look at the approach to English and how it looks across the school. They discuss the different aspects of the English curriculum from Early Years, through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. They consider some of the current challenges and the approaches being taken to meet them. The outcome of this meeting is then shared via this report to the full governing body and published on the governor's page of the school website.

Meeting Report:

On March 24th, we met with the English Lead, Ruth Hanfling, to discuss the English curriculum. What was evident straight away is how positive, clear and realistic Ruth's vision is. We discussed in detail the School Development Plan, the English Action Plan for 2020/2021 and Tracy Goldblatt's visit and report. We looked at the targets for this year and the additional gaps that have arisen due to the Covid-19 lockdowns. After talking about the successfully met targets, we then looked at the next steps.

The key priority for this year's School Development Plan being to accelerate learning in order to bring writing in line with the National levels at the end of the Key Stages. Post Spring Term lockdown, the additional key priorities are for all children to get back in to good reading and writing habits and for teachers to adjust their expectations and teaching accordingly to fit in with expected standards. Fleet prides itself on how the English curriculum is topic based with the key objective of making it as enjoyable, engaging and as accessible to all children as possible.

In 2020, the End of Key Stage 2 national data shows that reading was above both Camden and National levels, but attainment in writing was below both Camden and National levels. The moderation of the KS2 writing in summer 2020, was commended for accuracy of the school's judgements and the breadth of opportunities and writing for purpose.

In 2019/2020, vocabulary (and to a lesser extent spelling) were identified as holding back writing and were a whole school focus. Quality First Teaching and additional interventions helped accelerate progress. However, the lockdown in 2020 stopped this acceleration and meant that children who had been working towards for writing were not able to convert to reaching expected.

Raising standards in writing across the school

At the beginning of the 2020/2021 academic year, strategies were re-embedded to continue to raise the attainment in writing, as the evidence prior to the 2020 lockdown showed a positive trajectory.

In September 2020, the whole school took part in a CLPE writing project in order for everyone to work collaboratively and to raise the profile of writing. It was a great way to start the academic year and for all children and staff to feel part of one team. They enjoyed knowing that everyone was working on the same project. The project was set around the book 'Here We Are' by Oliver Jeffers and each class planned a two week unit around the book using the CLPE planning as a basis. At the end of the project, there was a whole school zoom to share work and there are displays of the work in school. Feedback from the project has been that it was a big success and the final celebration is that all classes are contributing to making a mural based around the project. The mural will be in the Junior playground.

Every half term, Ruth carries out a work scrutiny in each year group and looks at the books, the environment and the working walls. Autumn 1 and Autumn 2 showed a good level and quality of writing being taught in Years 2-6 and that the marking policy has been well embedded throughout the school. Any concerns were addressed, and support with planning and teaching is being given where necessary. The moderation showed that teachers are regularly using self and peer assessment strategies so children can improve their own work. Due to lockdown, the Spring Term moderations did not take place, and the next scrutiny will take place in the first half of the Summer Term.

In November 2020, Ruth organised for Tracy Goldblatt (Primary Literacy Advisor) to monitor the writing throughout the school. She looked at 3 books in each year group (LA, MA and HA) to check progression and next steps. Overall, the visit was very positive and Tracy noted consistency, with staff adhering to the whole school approach. Tracy's feedback emphasised the strength of content in writing throughout the school and how creatively the curriculum is put together. A number of strengths were identified including the development of children's vocabulary; use of high quality texts linked to other subjects to make writing more meaningful; children developing a writer's voice; writing for different purposes and consistency of learning objectives, success criteria and marking. Progress could be seen in most year groups and stamina of writing was seen to be increasing as the Autumn Term went on. Strong literacy leadership was identified, with books being regularly monitored and staff being supported where needed.

The areas that Tracy identified as needing to focus on next are being included in teacher's planning for the Summer Term. The focus being around incorporating grammar in to the beginning of each lesson, with a key theme for the week, and there being more security on sentence structure. Additionally, a stronger emphasis on children being more familiar with the text type being taught (the purpose, structure and grammar content) and time being given for children to

familiarise, read and deconstruct texts to identify the key components to support them in writing their own versions.

Writing stamina is another area to focus on, especially post lockdown, and Ruth is embedding the practise of having an extended piece of writing each week and more opportunities to practise writing smaller pieces that then build up to a final longer piece. During lockdown, all teachers were asked to plan writing tasks of varying lengths and to request that at least one piece of writing per week was hand written and not typed to keep up writing stamina.

As well as the overall feedback, each teacher received individual feedback. Ruth is going through this again with staff, as a reminder for the Summer Term, as due to the Spring Term lockdown Ruth feels it is important to re-set Tracy's feedback into motion. Ruth will moderate in Summer 1 and Summer 2 how each class is getting on.

Ruth has also attended English lead meetings in Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021, led by Tracy, and they've mainly focussed on the challenges of adapting the curriculum post closures and addressing gaps.

During lockdowns, the priorities have been adapted with the main focus being to keep children writing and reading at home. On phone calls between staff and families, this was a key area to focus on and support families with. The Senior Leadership Team were regularly monitoring the online learning and supporting teachers with their planning and lessons. Children were sending in their work and receiving individual feedback.

Reading

In 2019/2020, Ruth focused on reading in the Early Years and KS1 and the teaching and assessing of phonics. In 2020/2021, there has been more of a focus on reading in KS1 and KS2. In KS1, gaps in the reading schemes have been filled with new books for each colour band. New books have also been ordered to support KS2 guided reading, with a focus on female and BAME authors. Ruth lead a staff meeting on guided reading for KS1 and KS2 at the end of Spring term. This was a reminder of what good practice in guided reading looks like, some signposting to useful resources and a chance for teachers to ask questions about any specific reading related challenges or share any good practice from their classes.

Before the Spring lockdown, Ruth reorganised the library so that it is more accessible for the children to find books. Both in the library, and now in KS2 classrooms, books are organised by genre. In KS1, teachers have made book boxes of different topics and authors. Feedback from staff and children has been very positive and teachers have been encouraged to build in time for regular library visits.

In January 2020, Marion Hunter identified the need to sort book corners in classrooms, so that they are more engaging and better used. In February 2020, there was an inset to support teachers with ideas of how to improve their book corners and classes were given a small budget for a few new resources. Now school is open again, Ruth will be checking book corners in the Summer Term. At present soft furnishings have been removed because of Covid regulations.

During lockdown, Bug Club was introduced to support children and families with reading, particularly those families who would not have access to a good range of books at home. Now

allocated school staff are running 20 minute 1:1 sessions with identified children in Years 1-3. Staff are feeding back that these sessions are working well. Ruth has identified that Bug Club is most suited to children in Years 1-4. For children who have English as a second language, it is a good way for them to hear texts and talk about them. Betsy, a reading volunteer at Fleet (who is training to be a teacher in September) works with reading groups in Years 1-6. The teachers give her a focus. For example, in Year 1 – phonics and in Year 6 – inference.

Spellings

Spellings of High Frequency Words are now organised into 12 lists for years 2-6. The aim is for each child to work systematically through the lists and to try to beat their score from the week before and for it to not feel pressurised. One week there is a test and the other week there are games to practise spellings for the following week, as well as explicit teaching of spelling patterns and groups. Each teacher keeps a spreadsheet of spelling progress and Ruth will moderate these in the Summer Term. Parents can access all lists via the website, as well as a document detailing suggested games to help their child practise.

Engagement with families where children are falling behind

During lockdown, staff were allocated specific families to call. Any concerns raised, were flagged to Senior Leadership and some families were offered extra support sessions with TAs. Now that school is re-opened again, teachers are monitoring these children's progress carefully as they settle back in and teachers have had the opportunity to discuss concerns with SLT in Pupil Progress meetings this term, after they had gathered assessment data in reading, writing and maths. There are parent's evenings for all children at the start of the Summer Term 2021 where teachers can share any changes in progress with parents.

Thank you very much for your time today Ruth, it was very informative and great to see the targets met and your clear and realistic vision for the next steps for literacy. We look forward to catching up at the end of the Summer Term.

Written By: Annie Balme and Margaret O'Sullivan

Date Written: 31st March