



Fleet Primary School

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Governor Visit Report

Area of focus for visit:	EYFS	Link Governor:	Kim Issroff, Sinead Costelloe
Date of meeting:	24 January 2020	Link Staff Member and role:	Beth Cleine – EYFS Lead

Context:

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Fleet our EYFS consists of a full time Nursery class for up to 26 places and a Reception class of 30. The Early Years has its own curriculum and assessment procedures as outlined in the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage', meaning that processes and procedures are unique to them compared to the curriculum and assessment approach of the rest of the school. This approach organises the curriculum into seven areas of learning and development – personal, social and emotional development; physical development; communication and language; literacy, mathematics, understanding the world; and expressive arts and design. A child who reaches the expected level in all seven of these areas by the end of their reception year is considered to have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD).

The link governor meets with EYFS lead to discuss the EYFS. They look at the approach to learning and how children are doing. They discuss the different aspects of the EYFS curriculum and consider some of the unique challenges. 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:

The children at Fleet get an amazing deal with experienced staff in our early years. Our provision is exciting and enables the children to engage independently. Many children start well below curriculum expectations and make accelerated progress during their time with us. Learning walks last term conducted by Beth in Nursery showed fantastic practice with settled and engaged children who were happily communicating with adults.

This year, 12 children in Reception came from other nurseries and this has been a trend for the past few years. There has been a very high number of summer born children over the past few years. Both Nursery and Reception currently have over 50% of children born in the summer months. This impacts on the settling in period and the provision we provide initially. There is an even spread of children in terms of attainment and each class has a few children with additional needs and high proportions of EAL.

Reading is given high priority. Phonics links into their reading and children are given books based on their phonetical understanding. We also encourage them to use other strategies when reading such as using the first sound of a word or thinking about what makes sense. We use running records to assess the children's levels and to see what strategies they need to learn. Such as reading of meaning, sentence structure and visual cues. There is a guided reading session in Reception every day. Children take home 2 readers that they have read with their group. Beth will regularly read with children who need additional support on top of their weekly session. There is also shared reading every day which enables the teacher to model reading strategies. Stories are read as often as possible, at least every day as we aim to embed a love of books. The text might link to the topic or the children can choose from the book corner. Reception has a 'favourite books' box where children can bring books in from home to share. Children in both Nursery and Reception are able to borrow books from the book corner to take home to read.

Nursery and Reception have started using a strategy called 'Talk for Writing' which involves rereading favourite texts with the use of a story map and telling the story together. This helps to build up their language structures and vocabulary.

Last year there was a focus on sustained shared thinking – long in depth conversations to give quality language time to develop vocabulary and language. This is now embedded in the practice. This was done using the lesson study model, staff used this time as a chance to do some action research.

The funding cuts means that it's difficult to get additional TA support time. It feels like it takes a long time to get help from Camden for children with additional needs, this would be our biggest challenge. In Nursery currently there are 2 children being assessed for SEND and the process takes a lot of time. We have strong teaching assistants and having additional adults means there can be extra adult led activities. All adults are very hard working.

Staff use the baseline information, observations, running reading records and tracking groups to aid in identifying what needs to be taught e.g. this term in Reception there is a focus on managing feelings and behaviours, writing and number as this presented as a need from baseline data. Observations of the children are done constantly and inform teaching and the provision provided. This is a fair and appropriate amount of data collection for the needs of the teacher. There are also the profiles which are the most time consuming aspect of the job but provide evidence for each descriptors and are a real celebration of their learning journey.

Reception and Nursery follow the same early years curriculum called *Development Matters*. It sets out guidance for what the children should be able to do and how adults can support them. Like the rest of the school, our curriculum is topic based but also follows the interests of the children.

The early years teachers are developing their own EYFS vision of what they fundamentally want the children to leave the early years with and how we will support them in achieving this. Such as; being independent, risk takers and good communicators. This will feed into our EYFS 'curriculum'.

There is also an emphasis on outdoor learning with 'Welly Wednesdays' in Nursery and 'Forest Fun' in Reception

In terms of preparing the children for KS1, the early years aim to have children leave as good readers and writers with a strong foundation of number knowledge and addition and subtraction. They need to be good communicators because we know this impacts greatly on their ability to read and write. They need a good foundation in phonics too. We want them to be confident and independent learners. The way Reception runs changes towards the end of the summer term which helps prepare them for life in Year 1. The transition is well managed with transition visits and free flow between Year 1 and reception as well as story swaps with the teachers.

We trialled the National Baseline Assessment this year. This will be statutory from next year. Baselines were completed within 6 weeks of the children starting. Staff carry out a diagnostic interview on maths and communication and language and literacy. It's beneficial to spend 20 minutes 1:1 with a child but requires additional cover in the classroom. The new baseline tests produce a list of learning outcomes the children can do/know. The idea is that these will eventually be used to predict end of KS2 outcomes. This has formalised what staff at Fleet were already doing.

There are also new descriptors for early learning goals which are currently being trialled across the country. These have less of an emphasis on technology, role-play and being imaginative. Beth thinks this will change the sorts of things we do with the children, as some of the new goals are much harder.

Thank you to Beth for taking the time to talk to us about her practice.

Written By: Kim Issorff, Sinead Costelloe

Date Written: 28 January 2020