



Fleet Primary School

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Governor Visit Report

Area of focus for visit:	English - writing	Link Governor:	Annie Balme
Date of meeting:	10 th February 2020	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 governor meets 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:

I met with Ruth Hanfling, English Lead, on 10th February 2020, to discuss the English curriculum, as the school has identified English as a high development priority on the School Development Plan with a whole school focus on: writing and writing for purpose; spelling and vocabulary and embedding independence (non-negotiable and self/peer assessment). The outcomes for these priorities aim to be, improving attainment levels across the school and end of KS2 outcomes for national testing in English, as writing levels are still below maths and reading.

Looking together at each of the priorities on the School Development Plan, Ruth talked me through the wide range of targets and strategies that have been put into place to meet these priorities. In the Autumn Term, an action plan was created for writing and reading across the school with SIP Marion Hunter, which is been audited and evaluated throughout the year.

To audit Early Reading, governor Marianne Porter visited in January 2020 followed by SIP Marion Hunter conducting a learning walk with Ruth to further identify strengths and areas for development. The outcome of this visit was that Marion Hunter thought that the school was addressing its priorities for Early Reading well. The next planned visit is from the Camden Literacy Lead, Tracy Goldblath, who is due to carry out a writing audit this Spring Term to see how things are going and what the next steps are.

Through the Camden Challenge Partner Hub, Ruth has opportunities to meet up with other English subject leads to think about their roles under the new framework and to evaluate where they currently are and next steps.

Writing and writing for purpose:

Initiatives such as whole school writing week and free writing are raising the profile of writing across the school. Displays around the school celebrate the richness of writing in all the classes. Peer and self-assessment, and grammar and spelling skills, are being more embedded in the quality first teaching of each class. SIP visits and writing audits have noted improvement across the school. During the KS2 writing moderation by the local authority in June 2019, the school was commended for the richness and breadth of writing opportunities and the writing for purpose. More writing opportunities across the curriculum were evidenced in line with last year's school development plan.

Ruth is working out of class one day a week to work with both teachers and pupils on improving writing across the school. Each term, she is working with teachers and groups of children that are identified from termly Pupil Progress meetings. On Mondays, weekly writing groups take place in Years 4, 5 and 6 and in Year 2, Ruth is working with small groups across the class to teach the children how to self assess their writing and grow in independence.

Each half term there are book scrutinies carried out by Ruth and a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to check the quality and consistency of work and marking. Two greater depth, two middle, two working towards and one SEN book are scrutinised from each class. For each class, a form is filled in covering different areas and the feedback is given to Don and each teacher. Teachers are always given feedback on what is going well and an Even Better If/next step, to develop their practise. INSET was given in September to clarify the marking policy to all staff and learning walks are carried out by Ruth and a member of the SLT to focus on the teaching of writing and in order to give constructive feedback.

The KITT project - Save Our Stories - took place to raise the profile of writing in October 2019. All children engaged in the project and made a big book. The children really enjoyed this project.

Spelling and vocabulary:

In September, INSET was delivered to all staff on spelling strategies, with teachers now delivering regular spelling lessons and tests every two weeks. Yrs 2-6 have 12 spellings lists per class to cover during the year. If they pass all twelve there are extra levels. Test 1 and 2 are easy (HFWs), so children have the feeling of success, then spelling lists progress in line with the National Curriculum. The approach being used is to encourage success with children working against themselves to achieve their own personal best. It feels more structured and easier to monitor where the support is needed.

Children who don't have support at home, get TA support and precision teaching and games. There are spelling workshops too. Open mornings took place in Autumn 2019 to help support parents with spelling games too.

In Autumn 2019, Word Aware was introduced to develop the vocabulary of all the children. All staff were given training in September with the aim of teachers now all teaching vocabulary explicitly with an increasing amount of vocabulary being introduced as the children go up the school. For example, in Year 6 they learn 4 new words a week, whereas in Year 2, one new word is learnt a week. Ways in which these new words are taught include in Year 3 they have a visor with the word on it and in Year 4 they have sticky labels with the word on and children become 'boss of the word' and have to tell everyone the meaning all day and use it as much as possible. All classes have the vocabulary displayed in their classrooms on their topic wall or working wall. The words are on the Topic Snap Shots too. Teachers have seen this approach as having a positive impact on vocabulary.

Embedding independence:

Independence is being built on in all classes, with specific focus in the pivotal year group of Year 2 where Ruth works with groups across the class to really embed the skills needed to build independence. In the Autumn Term, 2 times per half term, the Year 2 children had adult support to build on these skills. In the Spring Term, they have moved on to embed their peer assessment skills, and in the Summer Term they will develop their self assessment skills.

Having the generic marking code introduced in 2018/2019 (capital letters, punctuation, spelling and sense) has helped to have consistency across the classes. In KS2, once a week approximately, the children carry out self and peer assessment for every extended piece of writing, against a specific success criteria. Self and peer assessment starts from Year 1, where they use symbols/smiley faces to be introduced to the concept. Then in Year 2, the success criteria is quite visual with symbols. By Year 3 and 4, they have 3 or 4 different targets, and in Year 5 and Year 6 they have more like 6 targets to meet in each piece of writing.

Thank you to Ruth for going through the priorities on the School Development Plan and the Action Plan. It was exciting to learn about everything that is going on in all the classes. Ruth and I have agreed to meet at the end of the academic year to go through the Action Plan and update this visit.

Written By: Annie Balme

Date Written: 18th February 2020