



## **BEECH GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **CO-HEAD TEACHERS' REPORT**

**For the meeting of Governors on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

#### **KEY PRIORITY 1: to ensure pupils make substantial and sustained progress across all subjects**

##### **1.1: Implement Read Write inc. from Reception to lower KS2**

Mrs Coverdale, as Reading Lead, has worked closely with Mr Dalgliesh the Read Write inc. Consultant to secure the implementation of the programme throughout school. Children from Reception, KS1 and Y3 were carefully grouped according to their phonic skills and daily sessions set aside for the delivery of the programme.

Across the year, these groups have been fluid, and children have moved between them so that they were always working with children of a similar ability. The delivery of each group input has been closely monitored, and as well as the whole school professional development days, additional training has been provided for staff to ensure quality and consistency.

Mr Dalgleish has been so impressed with the way the programme has been implemented that he has asked us to host a 'Phonics Roadshow' on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> June, where visitors from other schools can come to observe our staff delivering taught sessions of the programme. This is a great complement to school, and has a lot to do with Mrs Coverdale's hard work and commitment to supporting staff through training and delivery.

From a school point of view, the impact can be seen in the pupil data we have so far. Data from the end of spring term showed that Reception, Y1 and Y2 had significantly increased the percentage of children working within Age Related Expectations (ARE) for reading, and we hope that summer terms assessment data will show a continuation of this trend. All three of these year groups are also on track to make at least the 6 steps expected progress, with the probability that Y2 will exceed this.

The phonic screening has now been completed in Y1, with Y2 children who did not pass last year taking a re-sit. Early indications are that we will have a pass rate in Y1 of 85%, with 84% of the children in Y2 who re-sat the test passing this time round.

Overall, looking at the positive trends, it appears that the significant expenditure on resources, coupled with the hard work of staff, particularly Mrs Coverdale, in implementing the programme have paid off in terms of increased pupil progress and attainment. The plan is that this improvement will continue as children move up from reception at a higher level than previously.

##### **1.2: implement Fresh Start Intervention for targeted children in upper KS2**

We suffered a significant delay in starting this programme due to the Local Authority finance system being unable to process our order and payment for the materials. This was not resolved until just after Christmas, meaning that the delivery of the programme didn't start until half way through the spring term.

The children identified for this intervention were targeted because of very low reading and phonic skills, and the programme is designed to help them catch up. We had hoped to put this in place with a group of Y5 and a group of Y6 children, but the delay in starting meant that the Y6 children were already heavily involved in SATs revision, and it was felt to be more beneficial to continue with that.

Miss Dawson has worked with a particularly difficult group of Y5 children who, after a shaky start, are now making progress. As a group, they are still below age-related expectations, but if we are able to continue the programme with them into Y6, which we hope to do, we should be able to close the gap for at least some of the group.

### **1.3: Increase the percentage of children reaching ARE in maths at the end of each key stage**

At the beginning of the school year, Mrs Steel-Brewster set up a maths working party involving staff from all age-phase teams. Together they have identified the key issues around maths teaching and learning and where we need to improve.

One of the areas identified was fractions, and through links with Durham University, Mrs Steel-Brewster was able to arrange a very successful fractions day in which several students from the university came to school for the day and carried out practical activities related to fractions in KS2 classes. Children enjoyed the inputs immensely, and the exploration of fractions in a practical context will hopefully deepen their understanding when they see the abstract form.

The maths working party has also delivered two whole staff training sessions; the first on rapid recall activities, and the latest one on bar modelling and reciprocal maths. These new approaches to the subject will hopefully clear away some of children's misconceptions and enable them to remember the simple mathematical facts they need to bring to bear on more complex calculations.

The impact of this additional training and support has been seen in lesson observations and in the scrutiny of children's work in books. There were no major issues seen in either monitoring activity, and any areas for improvement have been followed up and addressed by School Leadership Team Members.

Outcomes at the end of KS1 have been submitted and they show an increase in the percentage of children at age-related expectations in maths from last year, coupled with more of our higher ability children reaching the level above expected of 'greater depth'. Teacher assessment for the end of KS2 show a similar improvement. At the time of writing, the official SATs results have not been received in school, but we believe that our teacher assessment will be close to the final percentage.

### **1.4: Improve children's capacity to produce high quality independent writing**

When the outcomes from each key stage last year were analysed, we recognised the fact that improving reading had to be a key priority. The impact of fluent reading and accurate comprehension can be significant across all subject areas, from problem solving in maths to sentence structure and vocabulary choice in writing. Hence our decision to invest heavily in Read Write inc.

However, we had already put a large amount of time and effort into developing children's writing skills through a range of strategies. We employed direct teaching on the features of writing genre, our system of marking was changed to give feedback which encouraged children to edit and improve their own work.

The main concern was that with the increased time and focus spent on improving reading, opportunities for extended independent writing would be squeezed out of the timetable. To ensure that good quality teaching of writing was still taking place the school leadership team observed lessons in all teaching areas and were reassured by the feedback from the observations.

As a back-up, we also looked at examples of writing in children's books across school from reception onwards. This is the first year that reception children have had formal writing teaching, and their progress has been good, although from a very low starting point. Elsewhere in school, we were pleased to see the range of opportunities to write that children were still being given.

Outcomes at KS1 show an improvement in the children achieving ARE from last year, while KS2 outcomes look like being slightly lower. However, comparing the KS2 outcomes this year with the KS1 results for those same children shows that a low percentage of them were at ARE in KS1 so their progress across the key stage has been good.

From our Easter data, all but one of our year groups can demonstrate an increase in children at ARE for writing, and we hope this trend will be reinforced once summer assessments are complete. At least four of our year groups are also on track to come close to, if not meet, the target of 6 steps progress overall by the end of the year.

**Because we have a continuous struggle to improve children's writing, and far too many remain below ARE, our next steps will be to identify specific aspects of writing which children struggle with, and set in place a series of non-negotiables for each year group. This will be a priority in the next School Development Plan.**

## **KEY PRIORITY 2: Continue to develop teachers' capacity to encourage high quality learning**

### **2.1: Develop teachers' skills and confidence in the delivery of new initiatives**

As always, our teachers and teaching assistants have worked hard to implement all of the new strategies we have introduced this school year. Staff training has been intensive, and the follow-up observations and scrutiny have been rigorously pursued by school leadership team members. Each monitoring activity has highlighted several minor areas for improvement in individual classes, and all of these have been followed up and addressed.

Overall we saw **no** inadequate teaching in any classroom, and the group support observed could not be more focused. Intervention has taken two forms; the first to quickly help children who have struggled in a particular lesson to consolidate what they have learnt, evidence of this can be particularly seen in children's maths books where the teacher has indicated the need for further support, the second is planned regular group work for children who are below expectations.

### **2.2: Adapt teacher planning to increase opportunities for extended writing**

As noted in 1.4, children are still being taught writing skills, and there are opportunities for them to practice what they have learnt independently in extended pieces of work. In order to achieve this, we have needed to make significant changes to lesson planning.

Where time is tight for a discreet writing session, opportunities for extended writing have been built into topic work so that children have a purpose to their writing. Our scrutiny of topic books confirmed that children are writing more often, and in better quality than previously about the topics they are involved in. External moderators praised the fact that samples of writing were seen in a range of subject areas.

Our marking policy needed to change to adapt to the additional focus on writing. Extended independent work done in topic areas needed to be marked and edited in the same way as that done in discreet English lessons, and in upper KS2 highlighting of errors had to be amended to enable children to proof-read their own writing and identify what needed to change themselves.

This year, we had external moderation of our SATs outcomes in KS1 and KS2. In KS2, the moderation focused solely on teacher assessment for writing, and found that the judgements made were completely accurate, while the KS1 moderators felt that teachers knew the children well and were able to make informed judgements about their learning.

### **2.3: Provide focused, taught grammar sessions from Y1 to Y6**

In the last few years, a new test has been introduced into KS2 SATs. Initially it was called 'Spelling and Grammar' (SPAG), this year the name has changed to 'Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling' (GPS), and a version was produced for KS1 which was optional. In addition to difficult spellings, these tests contained some quite complex questions about the grammatical structure of pieces of text, and aspects of the English language which most adults would be hard pressed to identify!

Currently, the score for these tests is not included in the overall outcome for children taking SATs, but we have no doubt that it soon will be. Many teachers, including some of ours, did not feel confident teaching some of the requirements of the tests, particularly in upper KS2. So we knew that the only way forward was to purchase some additional resource material.

**These resources are now in use in all teaching areas from Y1 – Y6, and specific lessons are dedicated to using them, but their implementation is relatively new. Children taking the KS2 tests this year did not have the benefit of taught grammar sessions throughout school. A priority for the next School Development Plan will be to observe grammar lessons, and evaluate the impact of the new resource material.**

### **KEY PRIORITY 3: To equip children with the life skills to ensure safety and welfare**

#### **3.1: Improve overall attendance and reduce the percentage of persistent absentees**

Mrs White and Mrs Green have worked tirelessly with parents to promote good attendance and discourage lateness. Their links with families are strong, and they provide a familiar face for parents to talk to if they have concerns either in school, or through home visits. Through a system called 'First Day Calling' they contact parents directly on the first day children are absent and will often transport children to and from school if home circumstances are difficult.

We also have a significant reward system in place to promote good and improved attendance which includes certificates and prizes for 100%, a family hamper draw into which every child with over 95% attendance is included, and a party for those who reach this target. Our overall attendance is reported to parents through the newsletter, and classes with the best attendance receive a certificate to build towards a reward trip. We believe that as well as targeting families where attendance is poor, it is important to recognise where parents and children make every effort to avoid absence and lateness.

Our work with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) which we buy in continues, and with her support we have pursued fines and penalty notices for persistent absentees and holidays in term time which take children to below acceptable levels of attendance. The EWO does home visits and provides reports for the Local Authority attendance team.

Despite every effort on our behalf, attendance overall remains low, currently standing at 94% for the year. At times through the year, we meet and exceed our target of 95%, then a sickness bug, a flu virus or the inevitable holidays in term time completely decimates our overall percentage. In addition to this, we have several children who are currently absent because of circumstances related to Safeguarding e.g. placed with relatives who live out of area and needing to be transported to school.

**Clearly this will remain as a priority for the next school development plan as good attendance is fundamental to raising standards of attainment and progress.**

#### **3.2: Increase pupil awareness of how to stay safe and build positive relationships**

Much of the work around this issue is done through direct sessions in class as part of the personal, social, health and citizenship education curriculum. We teach children about healthy lifestyles including healthy eating and avoidance of substance abuse and make them aware of 'stranger danger' when they are outside of school.

Linked to this is the incidental teaching which encourages children to talk to an adult if they feel worried or upset. All of our staff give the same messages about sharing problems, and this is part of our Five Golden Rules. Concerns aired by parents are recorded and addressed by Mrs White or Mrs Green who make the teaching staff closest to the child aware of the issue.

What we really need to know, however, is whether children understand and apply what we have taught them. Pupil surveys have limited success, because younger children often don't understand the questions in the broader sense and others will respond only according to what has happened that day and not overall. The survey done by Mr Speakman, which we have already discussed, was much more reflective of how children really feel and painted a positive picture of the work we do to keep them safe.

#### **3.3: Improve pupil capacity for digital critical thinking and online safety**

The advent of technology which is readily accessible to children has brought benefits in the way we can engage them in learning outside what would be possible without it. However it also brings concerns and highlights the vulnerability of those who are regularly (and often illegally) using social media unsupervised outside school.

Several times we have dealt at parents' requests, with issues that have happened outside school between children who were communicating on social networking sites. Work has been done in classes to help children understand that an unkind remark made verbally can be hurtful enough, but that such remarks put online are much worse.

A lot of circle time work is used to discuss feelings and relationship issues, while ICT lessons stress the issue of giving away personal information which could lead to unsavoury individuals accessing their profiles and communications.

In order to reinforce this issue, Mrs Bel arranged for an input from NSPCC on online safety. This organisation did an assembly and then workshops for the older children. We were pleased to note that some of the messages from the input were repeated to Mr Speakman during his conversation with groups of children.

Another aspect to this, and part of the reason for including it in the School Development Plan was highlighted to us through the PREVENT training which has been undergone by all staff. Through this staff have been made aware of the range of extremist views of all kinds which are readily accessible to children. Teaching children to listen to a range of different views before forming their own opinion, and not following people who make aggressive comments about others, coupled with an increased awareness of the need to watch for changes in children's behaviour is the way we are currently addressing the issues.

**Further aspects of the PREVENT agenda may need to be included in the next School Development Plan given the current social climate.**

### **3.4: Focus the work of the Learning Mentors on improving the attitude to learning for individuals or groups with particular needs**

Mr Dixon has used classroom behaviour trackers to identify where there are groups or individual children who are having difficulty in settling in class and are subsequently disrupting the learning of others. Through this analysis he has been able to target the work of Learning Mentors and reduce exclusion and significant incidents.

It is evident from his report that many of the behaviour issues we encounter have social and safeguarding roots, upon which we can only have limited impact. It is good to see therefore, that both exclusions and significant incidents have reduced in number through the support provided, and that less children are involved in these situations than at the beginning of the school year.

## **KEY PRIORITY 4: Ensure leadership at all levels is working to secure improved outcomes for all pupils**

### **4.1: Monitor the effectiveness and consistency of Read Write inc. implementation.**

We have already discussed the excellent work Mrs Coverdale has done to secure the implementation of the programme, and assist in the training and development of the staff involved. In addition to this, a significant contribution has been made by other members of the school leadership team.

Mrs Hauxwell jnr. (formerly Miss Judd) has done much to organise groupings and assessments in Y1, as has Mrs Nelson in EYFS, while Mrs Stead and Mrs Bollands have supported staff in Y3 and Y4 to group children and deliver the programme. Fresh Start implementation has been organised by Mrs Steel-Brewster. The way this programme has been delivered is a great example of what can be achieved with all staff working together towards a common goal.

### **4.2: Consolidate and disseminate the work of the Maths Working Party**

We have already discussed the work done by the Maths Working Party, and how staff have received two lots of additional training from working party members. Mrs Steel-Brewster, in her input into this meeting has given governors some insight into what the group have been involved in and what we hope these different approaches will bring to children's learning and progress in maths.

The success of this strategy is similar to that of 4.1, in that larger groups of staff working together, albeit under the direction of a senior teacher, are much more likely to be able to successfully disseminate a new initiative and support its implementation than a senior leader working in isolation. The work of this group will continue, and new aspects of maths teaching will be identified to address issues highlighted by our latest assessment data.

### **4.3: Provide an overview for governors on the implementation and impact of new initiatives.**

Mrs Coverdale provided an informative input into the spring term meeting, which was well-received by governors and gave a good insight into the specifics of the Read Write inc. programme and how it had changed the way we teach phonics across school. The impact on the KS1 phonics scores and reading SATs is clear to see, and as those

children move through school, their stronger grasp on reading skills and comprehension will continue to support their learning.

Mrs Steel-Brewster's work to develop maths teaching is relatively new, but hopefully governors who have listened to her input will understand why it is so important to try the different approaches to teaching maths which can enable more children to find a method of learning mathematical skills which suits their way of thinking.

**This will continue to be a priority in the new School Development Plan. Teachers have asked for more training on bar modelling, and Mrs Steel Brewster would like to access further external training before disseminating the information to staff via workshops.**

#### **4.4: Provide targeted training for governors in line with the outcomes of the skills audit**

Mr Wright kindly circulated and collated the governor skills audit and shared the outcomes at one of our first meetings this year. Since then, we have organised inputs from school staff on issues which we feel will enhance governors understanding of the day to day leadership and management of the school.

We have covered curriculum issues such as Read Write inc. and maths, and interpreting external data such as RAISEonline and the Data Dashboard, all of which have been well received, and we hope, helpful to governors. If we return to the governor skills audit, there are three key issues which appear to be a priority for training; Managing Change, Performance Management/Appraisal, and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

**This could be a priority for the next school development plan if governors are in agreement, and we will provide or source training to address the issues identified.**

#### **Staff Changes**

There are two teachers leaving us at the end of this school year, both of whom have been appointed to posts in different schools. Mrs Bolland who has been a long-serving and much valued member of staff, and Miss Harper whose time with us has been shorter but none the less valuable. We wish them both well in their new settings and hope they have benefitted from their time at Beech Grove. Their posts will not be filled due to financial constraints.

Following the consultation period which has been implemented this term, four teaching assistants will also be leaving at the end of term. Mrs Langley, Mrs Kirk, Mrs Slater and Mrs Hancock have all been with us for a considerable length of time. We wish them well for the future.

**Sheila Hauxwell/John Dixon**

**July 2017**