



## **Beech Grove Primary School**

### **Head Teachers' Report**

For the meeting of Governors on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Autumn term at Beech Grove was not an easy time in our school. The most significant aspect of this was the long-term sickness absence of all three members of our Inclusion Team. Both Parent Support Advisors and our Inclusion Lead were out of school, yet Safeguarding meetings and practice still needed to be maintained.

One of our Learning Mentors, Mrs Harrison took over the 'front of house' role of the PSAs dealing with routine queries from staff and parents and carrying out 'First Day Calling' where calls are made to home if children are absent without an explanation.

Mrs Harrison has worked tirelessly to fill the gaps left by our excellent PSAs and has done a marvellous job, yet she still manages to find time to support Breakfast Club, playground duty and in-class support for targeted children. Our thanks go to her.

Mr Dixon and Mrs Hauxwell took on the remainder of the responsibilities, and together with another Learning Mentor, Mr Hauxwell, they covered over 35 meetings in November and December ensuring that up to date paperwork and school representation at meetings was never missing.

The fact that we managed 100% compliance with Safeguarding arrangements that term despite the difficult circumstances is due in no small way to our superb staff. Team Leaders stepped up and supported the teachers in their teams instead of referring to Mr Dixon and Mrs Hauxwell, as well as Class Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Learning Mentors who covered for absences and managed the day to day issues that our children bring with them.

Unfortunately, our PSAs are still absent, and we have no news about their return to work, so the situation is not much improved, but we have established routines which streamline the existing procedures and ensure that dates and times of meetings and the relevant paperwork are collated centrally so that all staff involved have access.

### **SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**KEY PRIORITY 1: To ensure pupils make substantial; and sustained progress across all subjects**

#### **1.1 Continue to deliver Read Write Inc. and Fresh Start**

RWI has been one of the most successful teaching programmes and intervention strategies ever implemented in school. Not only did it take our phonics pass rate to higher than national average, it also had a significant impact on the end of KS1 outcomes in reading and writing. Our first milestone of 5% of more children reaching ARE for reading and writing by December was exceeded, and our end of year predictions show that we hope to continue the upward trend which has been established.

RWI is mainly focused on KS1, but several of our children struggle with the basics of reading further up school, and this has a significant impact on their achievement in all subject areas. Implementing the Fresh Start intervention programme, which is part of RWI, has enabled us to target some of those children and provide them with structured additional support. One of our experienced TAs Mrs McIlleron has delivered the programme very effectively and the milestone target of 25% of those accessing the programme to have completed it has been exceeded.

Because of the success of RWI in our school, in no small way due to the hard work and diligence of Mrs Coverdale and the staff who deliver the programme, we have once again been asked to host the DfE Phonics Roadshow, and the Regional Consultant who works with us has put us forward to be a lead school for the initiative. In addition to this, we have won the opportunity to have the loan of one of the Read Write Inc. Reading Benches which is proving very popular with the children.

## **1.2 Increase the focus on higher order comprehension skills in upper KS2**

Reading outcomes at KS2 have always been lower than we would hope, despite several intervention programmes and small group support. Question-level analysis of last year's outcomes shows that children having limited comprehension skills is a major issue. Mr Dixon and Mrs Steel-Brewster our Y6 lead analysed the performance in reading for other schools across the borough and liaised with a neighbouring school to see how they had improved their reading outcomes in 2017.

Because of this we have implemented the 'Passionate Readers Programme', initially in Y6, which focuses heavily on supporting children to recognise the type of question they are being asked, and to identify the skills they will need to answer it. The release time for the English lead from the otherschool to work with our staff has been provided through the Leadership Hub which is financed by the Local Authority School Improvement Fund.

The first step in the implementation of the initiative was to supplement our reading resources for upper KS2 and give children access to the newest and most popular books for their age group. This was intended to encourage them first to read for enjoyment, something that very few had previously done. The new books are prominently displayed and have already successfully increased the numbers of children choosing to read more frequently. Mrs Steel Brewster surveyed children at the start of the term, and at the end and found increased numbers in those who had finished a book for the first time and those who could describe the content of a book well enough to recommend it to a friend.

Our milestone for progress across the term was 2 steps, and current data shows that the cohort made only one step. However, that progress measure was taken from their teacher assessment level at the end of Y5, and not from the practice SAT they took at this point. Progress from that test to the one at the end of autumn term shows an average of 1.9 steps which is closer to the milestone. It is worth noting that progress in English and maths in Y6 are now measured by different criteria from Y5, so although more Y6 children moved into ARE last term in all subject areas, progress looks slow from Y5. Writing, however, is measured by teacher assessment and so is consistent across year groups.

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

### **2.1 Provide whole staff CPD on Bar Modelling and Reciprocal Maths**

Mrs Steel-Brewster and the Maths Working Party trialled the elements of both new strategies, and then delivered their findings at a whole school staff meeting. This ensured that the changes to teaching methods suggested were tried and tested for their relevance to each year group. Feedback from the meeting was very positive and all teachers took the ideas away to try in their own classroom.

The School Leadership Team then carried out lesson observations across school with a focus on the implementation of the new strategies, but also with regard to any outstanding areas for development from the observations in the last school year. Overall, the quality of lessons seen met the expectations set in at least 90% of the cases, and follow-up support will be given by team leaders to ensure that any areas for development are addressed.

Following on from the observations, maths books from all classes were scrutinised and findings fed back to individual teachers. The books showed a good range of activities with appropriate differentiation evident across the ability groups.

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

### **3.1 Focus mentor support on children identified with SEMH**

An update on Team Teach was attended by all staff with the delivery assisted by Mr Dixon and Mr Hauxwell. In addition to learning the latest rationale behind the ways of addressing a child to prevent an incident escalating, staff were given the opportunity to practice different methods of guiding children away from difficult situations when a crisis has occurred, keeping themselves and the child safe.

Following the update sessions, Mr Hauxwell updated all the Care Plans of the children identified with Social, Emotional, or Mental Health issues (SEMH). The plans are completed with parental agreement, and indicate the best approach for each individual to support their behaviour and ensure that they and other children are kept safe.

Staff deal with some significantly challenging behaviour extremely well, sometimes on a daily basis, and our policy and consistent procedures are having an impact on the number of times we need to physically intervene to support a child. The behaviour Summary also shows how good community links with PCSOs and housing keep us informed of any issues on the estate. This helps staff to recognise why some children may be struggling to fit back into routines and boundaries after school holidays, and enables us to support them to do so.

The planned Learning Walk to look at how the children with identified SEMH were coping in classrooms, and what provision was in place to support them, did not take place. Mr Dixon and Mr Hauxwell were unable to arrange the time to carry out the observations and to provide feedback for staff as both were involved in safeguarding meetings to cover for absent staff. It will be rearranged for spring term.

### **3.2 Continue to pursue good attendance and punctuality**

Our drive to improve attendance continues despite being an uphill struggle at times. Rewards for children and families where expectations of 95% attendance are met have been well received, and it was pleasing to see the numbers of children who secured an invitation to the attendance parties. However, some families are still causing concern, and legal routes are being followed through our Education Welfare Officer where all other strategies have been tried and have failed.

Much of the day to day work with families on absence and lateness had been previously done by the PSAs, who had good links with even our harder to reach families. In their absence, Mrs Harrison has taken over this daily contact and has managed to reduce the persistent lateness through good communication, although not enough to meet the milestone target.

Our overall attendance for last term reached a running total of 93.5%, which is a slight improvement on this time last year, but sickness bugs and other genuine viral infections coupled with holidays in term time have set us back yet again. We will continue to work towards a goal that all children will receive their entitlement of a full-time education with minimal time lost to learning through absence.

Schools now have the option to engage the services of the PCSO where there are significant concerns about a child's absence. They will make a home visit and impress upon parents the seriousness of the situation. As a school we welcome this support additional from our Local Authority.

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

### **4.1 Review and amend the whole school English curriculum**

#### **2.1 Implement non-negotiable sentence types in each year group**

At the end of the last school year, the School Leadership Team had raised concerns that some aspects of the English curriculum no longer matched the new expectations or the particular needs of our children, and that in certain cases the time allocation to each area was no longer appropriate.

Ready for the beginning of autumn term, each year group leader amended their section of the whole school English curriculum, taking out the sections no longer relevant, and adding more emphasis on the teaching of sentence types. They also changed the order in which some of the genres of writing were taught to ensure adequate time given to the trickier aspects.

They then met as a leadership team and collated their work to ensure coverage of all aspects and progression from year to year. Mrs Coverdale added a rationale statement for the website to say that although school used the national curriculum, it had been supplemented following assessment findings so that it more closely catered for the specific needs of our school. The new curriculum is in full use, and can be found on the website in its entirety.

#### **4.1 Evaluate Topic planning to increase the focus on science**

Following the review of the English curriculum, we needed to change the order in which topics were taught to maximise opportunities for writing skills taught in English lessons to be practiced in other areas of the curriculum so that they could be reinforced.

Several years ago, we used the Cornerstones material to set up new topics for teaching foundation subject such as history, geography and art. From the outset staff realised that the science elements of the topics were not enough to meet national curriculum expectations so had begun to add discreet science lessons to their planning. This ensured effective coverage, but was done on an ad hoc basis and not formalised into a curriculum.

Year group leaders followed the same procedure as for the English review, in that they evaluated what was actually being taught, and altered the order in which it was taught to make topics fit better with core subject teaching. Mrs Coverdale and Mrs Stead checked for coverage and progression and standardised the format for planning. Medium and long-term plans were then created and are displayed on the website so that parents can see and hopefully support the topics children are going to be involved in each term.

Also displayed in the curriculum section of the website is a document entitled 'What we are learning', with a page for each year group. This is updated each term and includes information for parents on everything that will be taught that term. Although our website is popular, especially since the advent of the Twitter feed, we recognise that not all parents have access to the internet, so children take a paper copy home at the start of the term.

We have had some very pleasing feedback from this where parents have been enthusiastically involved in helping children with topic-related homework. Y6 teachers were presented with several models of the Titanic, or of the solar system made at home, while other year groups have brought in examples of writing that parents have helped with.

#### **4.4 Provide focused sessions of governor training in response to the skills audit**

Mr Wright conducted an audit of Governor Skills in the last school year, and in autumn term we began to address some of the areas that Governors felt they wanted to know more about. From the audit, the area that came across as the priority was that of school finance. All governors see and agree the budget plan, and receive regular updates on spending against planning, but few had any detailed knowledge of where the funding streams came from and what the starting point of the budget plan was.

Ms Latheron our School Business Manager provided an in-depth input to one Governor meeting on school funding and how the allocation from each stream was arrived at. It gave Governors a better understanding of which areas and expenses are decided for us, and where the school has the flexibility to make choices.

Following on from this input, we had several requests from Governors about areas they would like to be more informed about. Last school year Mrs Coverdale came to the Governors' meeting to talk about Read Write Inc. and Mrs Steel Brewster provided an insight into Bar Modelling, and the new strategies which were going to be shown to staff this term.

In autumn term, Mrs Nelson provided an input on EYFS showing that so many of our children enter nursery and reception operating at a level well below that expected for their age, and how this impacts on the percentage who can reach end of EYFS expectations (GLD) before entering Y1.

Sheila Hauxwell

John Dixon

January 2018