North Tyneside Council

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT VISIT REPORT

School: (2060) Langley First School

LA: North Tyneside

Date: 25/05/2021, 13:00

Adviser: Catherine Worton

Term: Summer : 12/04/2021 - 16/07/2021

Headteacher: Tim Jones

Attendees: Tim Jones, Headteacher and Carrie Marron, Deputy Headteacher

Latest Ofsted Grade: Outstanding

LA Category: SLA Level 2

Curriculum and assessment including remote learning

Leaders evaluate curriculum progress and assessment procedures as at least GOOD and the school development partner endorses this judgement. COVID security has inevitably restricted opportunities for the school development partner to observe the curriculum in action in classrooms. However, leaders have organised a wide range of meetings with a range of stakeholders across the year and shared important documents. This has provided valuable insight into curriculum development and more specifically into the design and impact of the remote learning offer. There is ample evidence from these discussions and encounters that curriculum development is very strong and assessment procedures rigorous and productive. Observations of teaching and learning early in the autumn term will be critical in supporting a more precise judgement of the curriculum moving forward.

- The staff team provided an outstanding remote learning offer. Leaders relentlessly pursued parity between the on-site and remote curriculum, providing equal access for pupils in all circumstances. Both discussions with pupils and scrutiny of teaching materials across the year confirmed consistency of coverage on and off site. Teacher assessment data at the point of the reintegration of pupils revealed no discernible gap between the attainment of pupils on and off the school site.
- Engagement in the home-learning programme was rigorously monitored and school places swiftly offered to children who were finding it more difficult to participate from home. Senior leaders monitored the attainment of all sub-groups of pupils across the periods of lockdown so that emerging gaps could be addressed swiftly.
- Teachers made excellent use of interactive platforms so that pupils received regular constructive feedback to maintain the momentum of their learning. The overwhelming majority of parents were effusive about the quality of the home-learning programme and many shared their positive experiences of learning alongside their children.
- The complexities of the unfolding pandemic did not distract teachers and leaders from key learning priorities. Teaching paid appropriate attention to critical skills and knowledge through repetition so that learning developed incrementally and securely.
- Leaders fully appreciated the significance of personal, social and physical well-being as all children returned to the school site. They built an impressive range of attractive additional opportunities into the curriculum for children to share concerns and rebuild relationships. These included classroom worry boxes, a whole school book focus on Oliver Jeffers' *What We'll Build* and additional activities from sports coaches across the lunchtime period.
- Assessments to gauge progress over the periods of school closure have been well-chosen both to reveal general trends and to identify individuals and groups in need of additional support.
- As in many schools, children have demonstrated more rapid progress in reading and mathematics than in writing. Senior leaders have acted swiftly to support teachers as they plan for the whole class and for individual writers requiring additional support. There is an appropriate emphasis on strategies to build stamina and resilience and all classes are offering an increased range of opportunities to write. Additional activities to support and develop writing skills include "Exciting Writing Fridays" and a popular whole school writing competition.
- In a community of very successful and enthusiastic readers, the literacy leader is paying close attention to the phonological development of the youngest learners. As a school with the DfE 2007 Letters and Sounds Programme at the core of its synthetic phonics offer, he is currently reviewing options for teaching and reading materials for 2022, in line with the national agenda. *PM Benchmark* and *Salford Reading Tests* are being used to check reading attainment more widely. Parents have supported reading well and standards have been maintained
- The mathematics leader has led a thoughtful programme of formal and informal assessments. The outcomes of these have been used as a framework for a recovery programme of lighter touch and more intensive, deeper level units of work. *National Tutoring Programme* funding is currently supporting three pupils in year four to support their mathematical reasoning and teachers report a positive response from these pupils.
- Additional funding has been invested in a range of relevant remediation and intensive support programmes. Pre-teaching has proved to be a successful strategy in year three for children with specific learning difficulties and this may be extended to other year groups in the autumn term.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs will, as ever, be very carefully tracked as they participate in this adapted curriculum. However, to date there is no evidence that gaps between their attainment and that of other children is widening.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are already seeing strong progress since all pupils returned to learn on site, particularly in writing. They anticipate that almost all children will be attaining at an age appropriate level or better by the

end of the academic year and will begin the learning programmes in the next year group from a secure foundation. This is a significant achievement.

Behaviour, attitudes and attendance

The school evaluates behaviour, attitudes and attendance as at least GOOD. Conversations between the school development partner, pupils and staff and scrutiny of parental questionnaires suggest that many aspects are OUTSTANDING.

- Leaders always have the highest expectations of attendance and behaviour and this has been maintained throughout the pandemic. During socially distanced learning walks and meetings with pupil groups, children displayed their usual courtesy, enthusiasm, confidence and respect for their peers. They continue to articulate and demonstrate exemplary interpersonal behaviours.
- Attendance, always strong, remains above the national mean at 98.5%
- A scrutiny of safeguarding records in the spring term demonstrated that rare examples of derogatory language from pupils were noted, recorded and challenged.

Personal Development

The school evaluates personal development as at least GOOD and the school development partner supports this judgement. Further discussions with pupils and staff next term, once social distancing rules are relaxed, will provide further evidence to fine tune this judgement.

- Personal development continues to have a high profile in the school community and was prominent in the remote learning offer.
- The PSHE leader is embedding the *Jigsaw* programme across the school and is keen to re-establish links with other PHSE leaders in the local collaborative of schools to strengthen practice further.
- The SRE policy is out for consultation with parents and will be formally reviewed and approved at the autumn term governing body meeting.
- Since full reopening, leaders have encouraged activities which foster teamwork to rebuild existing friendships and develop new ones.
- Specialist support is being provided by the educational psychologist and the school nurse for individuals and small groups who need support to build emotional literacy. All staff are also trained in mini-yoga and can promote this within their own classes.
- Leaders are planning their usual Sports Fortnight where children have the opportunity to try out a wide range of sports, games and physical fitness challenges.

Leadership and management including safeguarding

The school evaluates leadership and management to be at least GOOD but the school development partner judges it to be OUTSTANDING. The model of distributed leadership, orchestrated by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, is exemplary. The commitment, ambition and insight of leaders at all levels, including governors, has created every possible opportunity for success for all groups of pupils, despite the challenging circumstances. Safeguarding has the highest priority within the school culture and safeguarding procedures are effective.

- The SEF is a powerful working document at Langley First School. Appropriate time has been allocated to review priorities amongst leaders as at all levels so that the curriculum offer for the remainder of the summer term and the beginning of the autumn term is finely tuned to meet the needs of pupils of varying abilities and circumstances. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a thorough understanding of the impact of COVID on curriculum design and demonstrate the professional agility to create new priorities and shape learning programmes accordingly.
- Leaders empower their staff team through professional development opportunities and have rightly revisited the key principles of effective teaching and learning with the whole team. These principles will form the framework of classroom visits for the remainder of this academic year and the beginning of the next.
- Governors monitor the work of the school and make excellent use of their personal and professional expertise to hold senior leaders to account. They visit the school regularly to monitor initiatives.
- Senior leaders fully recognise the particular impact of partial school closure on children in years one and two. Professional conversations with key stage one colleagues are helping them to reshape their teaching, learning and classroom environments to best meet the needs of these children. This includes increased opportunities for outdoor learning. The deployment of an additional teacher in year one for two days a week, especially one with early years experience, has proved successful and senior leaders are considering how this might be sustained moving forward. The *Launchpad to Literacy* material is also being used as a part of the gap analysis in these year groups. Elements of the *NELI* programme may be adapted to secure skills in key stage one over the next half term.
- Leaders have also deployed an additional 0.5 teacher to the reception year group, particularly to secure early communication skills through the *Word Aware*, *NELI* and *Launchpad to Literacy* programmes.
- A detailed evaluation of the safeguarding culture of the school in the spring term demonstrated that all members of the school community were well-informed about their responsibilities, procedures and protocols were universally understood and training was up to date.