

## Learning Walk — 16 February 2017

### ***A group of governors visited school to look at Writing.***

**What did we do?** We met Mr O'Brien, HT and Mrs. Pickering, the writing co-ordinator.

Claire Stubbs, link governor for writing, explained some of the work she had recently done in school with Mrs Pickering. Mrs Pickering showed us the revised writing assessment sheets used from years 1 to 6. These have 'can do' statements which are matched to the national curriculum criteria for writing. We then saw Mrs Baker and Miss Limer who were moderating a writing task from children in years five and six. We then went to visit some classes, look at some Writing, look at learning prompts for Writing in classes and to talk to some children.

Nursery: We saw emergent writing in nursery where a child could write her name. Another child had formed letters.

Reception: Some reception children were doing Phonics in the hall and learning sounds then writing the word e.g zip, chin. In the classroom children were using small books for pictures and writing. They used talk for writing techniques to recount, with actions, the story of 'Betty and the Yeti'. This was a very good session. In the PP strategy for this year there is a focus on developing oral skills in EYFS.

**Years 1 and 3:** the children explained that they had planned their story from a choice of two pictures. Year 1 used a story map and were encouraged to have their own ideas on what their story should contain. None of the stories read was the same; there was a variety of content. They could all explain the marking i.e. pink needs correction and yellow means good work. They said that they are given time to correct their work and that they learn from this. They also said the time given by the teacher is usually long enough to complete the task.

**Year 2:** In year two there was some display work on talk for writing. The children were able to say what has helped them to write and some were very clear on how they had structured their work. The teacher was asked about people premium students; in this class progress of PP was as good or better than non-PP apart from any SEN/PP children.

**Year 4:** In this class a governor looked at the books and could see that there was a lot of work on different planning strategies e.g. posters, spider diagrams and planning for the narrative structure. Children had been report writing using Book Creator on iPads and had worked enthusiastically as they had chosen their own topic. For example, one child had written about black holes and had combined text, pictures and video. There was plenty of writing in their books and the pink and yellow of the marking scheme was evident. Feedback from the teacher was in place but the students had not yet had time to do their 'Cow' (correct our work) session on the feedback

**Year 5:** There were posters about 'outstanding openers' and examples of punctuation and adverbs. There were also the spelling lists from years three and four and years five and six. There were questions about the words on the spelling lists : 'Can you change a noun into a verb?'. There was also a talk for writing display on the window.

**Year 6:** In year six there were displays with samples of discussion texts, texts with key vocabulary and useful sentences. There were posters about punctuation, spelling for year six and SPAG. A governor spoke to a year 6 child and asked about how the writing task had been approached. Before writing, the children had made a list of vocabulary ideas, practised the use of quotation marks and had been given a descriptive passage as an example. The governor was shown the planning sheet used to help with the narrative structure, examples of particular targets to work on from the last piece of writing and also the 'Writing Tools' book which was a reference book that children use to check things that they have already learnt e.g. use of adverbs. The year six child was asked what was done after the task had been completed; the class would then read their work through and edit it. Changes to the work could be seen. Sometimes there were additional tasks e.d some text to be punctuated. The child had a self -assessment sheet where particular skills were marked in green where they could be done and in orange where they needed developing and could talk about the levels of assessment: WTS, EXP, and Higher.

**What did we learn?** We learnt that the revised Writing assessment sheets enable better security of judgements to record children's embedded skill development. The sheets are used to then record assessments on Statonline. The assessment sheets give teachers clear evidence of improvement and progress in writing. We learned that certain aspects of writing are not assessed e.g. writing for effect. This is in line with current statutory requirements. Creativity is encouraged and finding enjoyment and pleasure in writing. Moderation takes place half-termly and there is final moderation by the local authority. In addition the Catholic schools in Newcastle have set up a moderation group for writing. After the moderation process in school the teachers then give verbal feedback to the children on a one-to-one basis and then discuss the work that has been assessed and look at how to improve it. There are opportunities for teachers to see how writing develops across the school.

We found out about the common assessment writing task using a picture as a prompt.

Miss Limer read out the story from a year 5 child and we listened to the moderation process.

We were able to see that classrooms have lots of learning information around the room to help the children with their Writing.

We were reminded of the process for 'talk for writing' of hearing, retelling, re-writing and reframing. Mrs. Pickering made the link between reading with storytelling and writing. School was trying to engage parents to support children in their writing. There had been a workshop on 'talk for writing' and parents had attended a 'talk for writing' nativity at Christmas. In EYFS PP spending was used to fund part of the TA post to support children in their learning. It was noticed in Reception that there was visual information as a prompt to staff on which children were in which groups e.g. PP, EAL. This is used in other classes too. We learned about some scores at KS2 assessment, where children need to reach 99+ to achieved GDS.

**Positive comments?** There was a really good atmosphere for learning in school with excellent behaviour. Some groups were in the hall with staff in small groups. A student teacher had a small group and was helping them make progress on something they had found difficult the day before. Additional adults were used to create smaller groups for learning. Children are well-supported in their writing.

**Any questions?** Children were asked about their work and strategies they could use to help them in writing. We asked staff about the broad assessments bands: WTS, EXP, Higher/GDS and asked about encouraging the children as it might be difficult for a child to move out of a particular broad band. We were told that children are given lots of encouragement. We asked whether the writing task was independent writing, which it was. We asked about how the writing assessment sheet was used and clarified that WTS columns were completed first then EXP.

**Future visits** We could focus on the progress of particular groups and look at samples of work in different classes and across the ability range.

**Other comments?** We noted that children have other opportunities to develop writing, including extended writing in other subjects e.g. in RE.

**SIP Links** Key Issue 3: improve attainment in Writing across the whole school.