

Early Years Learning Walk — 6 March 2017

A group of governors visited school to look at EYFS.

What did we do?

Hugh Stolliday, link governor for EYFS, explained about his link visits to discuss EYFS with Mrs Henzell. We then visited *Reception and Nursery* and spoke to the staff and the children. Mr O'Brien was also visiting EYFS, observing learning and teaching.

Nursery: there were different activities in progress. Some boys were playing together with Duplo and talking about what they were doing. One child was role-playing a doctor in hospital and was being encouraged by the teacher to write appointment slips. One group was making biscuits with a member of staff. They were rolling out the dough, using cutters to shape the biscuits and learning about different shapes.

Reception: some children were on the mat doing a shape, number and colour activity, some were playing with jelly beads and one group was in the shop area. A few groups were doing a writing activity. This was organised at different ability levels. Children moved around the activities at intervals.

In both areas there were activities that lead to Reading, Writing and Maths. There was a mix of activities, with tasks to promote and encourage learning.

What did we learn?

There is a wide range of ability in both classes. Sometimes children spend five terms in nursery because of different ages and starting times. There are some barriers to learning: language difficulties in terms of speech development and EAL, social issues re toilet training and feeding, SEN. The different start dates in nursery can be a difficulty. One child recently repeated a year in reception because of particular needs and this had an impact on resources and staffing. In Reception, 10 children are from other nurseries though this is not necessarily a barrier.

Positive comments?

The rising trends in EYFS are a strength of the school. Children were enjoying their activities and were learning in different ways. Staff provide a good range of engaging activities and we saw opportunities for progression into more formal learning. Staff engage parents and families using the learning journals (see below), home visits before starting, and curriculum workshops. The children seemed very happy in both classes and were engaged and focussed in their activities. To encourage Maths learning in Reception, staff have developed Maths super-heroes using some items of super-heroes clothing.

Any questions?

We asked the children what they liked about nursery and reception. They said they liked playing. Some said they liked phonics and reading.

We asked the staff about assessment in EYFS. Assessment is both paper-based and electronic. Learning journals are used. Information is recorded on an iPad and parents can look at this and a book goes home for each child. Leaders would like to develop an online learning journal so parents can have better access. We asked about projections for Good Levels of Development in Reception at the end of the year. Staff are aiming for national levels at GLD.

We asked about Science teaching and learning in EYFS. There are lots of opportunities for this. Science is linked to the current theme and is part of the EYFS strand understanding the world. Science activities include cooking, space and planets, growing plants, farm visit, looking at the seasons, using the outdoors area.

What could we look at on future visits?

We could ask about the impact on staffing and resources of the five days a week and 3 extended days provision (8.00 till 5.30) that will be offered in September. We could ask whether the development of an EYFS unit is feasible and have any discussions taken place on this.

Other comments

Leaders would like to develop a single unit for EYFS where nursery and reception children are together in one space but could then be in smaller groups to suit needs and abilities. Further development of the patio area outside EYFS is a priority.

Links with School Improvement Plan: Key Issue 7: continued improvement in EYFS