

Learning Walk 9/2/2016

A group of governors visited school to look at Phonics and Literacy and to talk to the children about the new behaviour system.

What did we do?

We visited several classes for Phonics and Literacy then returned to some groups to ask about the new behaviour system.

N: there was a mix of activities including Literacy and Phonics as some children were in a small group writing and mark-making with a nursery nurse. There was also free play, listening to a story and using a laptop and iPad.

Reception: the teacher began by taking the singing register and then introduced the children to what their day would be like using pictures and actions. This used elements of Maths Makes Sense and Talk for Writing. The teacher then showed them cards with letters on and they all practised the sounds of the letter and wrote them in the air to practise the shape and formation.

Year 1: the children were in ability groups and were sorting cards with 'ee' and 'ea' words. They were working in pairs. There were children from year 2 in this group

Year 2: the children were reading individually. The teacher explained that they had been assessed for reading at the start of the year. Some children had been to a different group in the hall for Phonics.

Year 3: had a visit from the Road Safety officers so would have been doing Phonics later that day.

Year 4: were at their swimming session when we visited.

Year 5: the children were working on compound sentences.

Year 6: the children were looking at grammatical terms eg semantic cohesion; they were looking for missing punctuation marks and were changing the word order in sentences and questions. This was in preparation for the SPG test later in the year.

What did we learn?

We saw that Phonics is taught in mixed groups from Year 1 to year 4, by stage not age.

Phonics is taught every day, using teachers and teaching assistants, and some children have additional interventions.

Mrs Pickering, Literacy co-ordinator and year 6 teacher, explained that there were changes to the testing in KS1 and KS2 this year. In year 6 we learnt that the terms the children have to understand are very demanding.

We were able to see the marking scheme and children were able to explain it to us.

In some classes children can use their jotters first to practise their answers.

We talked to a cross-section of children about the new behaviour system both in class and at lunchtime. The children were able to tell us about the rules, the steps to success, the rewards and the sanctions. They all had a good understanding of the system, even the youngest children in nursery knew about the red cards and the platinum cards and could explain what they were for. We saw how the system was displayed in class.

Behaviour in the hall and on the yards at lunchtime was excellent and we saw how the lunchtime staff give out the VIP passes at the end of lunchtime.

Positive comments?

All the children we saw were very engaged with their work and behaviour as excellent. In Reception it was really good to see how all opportunities for learning were taken eg counting the activities that they would do that day. We saw activities that seemed to stretch the children. Presentation in books was very good and older children were using pens. Children were supported by additional staff eg in Reception there were three additional adults. It was interesting to see the development of the children's work and skills from the earlier classes through to Years 5 and 6. Children were confident in talking to us about their work.

The children were good at explaining the benefits of the new system and talked about the improvements that had been made because of it. They told us that it made everyone responsible for their behaviour as there was a keen sense of competition in the class and across the school and a sense of being a team as well as an individual. Some children commented that behaviour had already been very good at our school and that the new scheme had improved it even further.

It is positive that all staff use the system across all parts of the school day. The children liked the new rewards and said the sanctions were effective as they would not like a text home about anything negative.

Any questions?

We asked about directed activity in nursery We were informed that there was choice during the day but children were directed to activities where necessary.

We asked about how children learn handwriting (through Read, Write, Inc in year 3)

We asked the children to explain the new behaviour system to us. They were very good at doing this. We also asked specifically about behaviour at lunchtime, and they said it was about being safe and, when asked, they said that they did feel safe.

Future visits

We did not have time to talk to staff about the behaviour system, though we do get information at meetings about it. It would be useful next time to see how staff view the changes.

Other comments?

It was a very interesting visit. The new behaviour system has effective rules (that children were involved in drawing up) and the whole process was excellent as parents and governors were also part of the consultation.

Links to School Improvement Plan

SIP 1 Phonics

SIP 2 KS 1 and Y3 attainment

SIP 19 NPQSL project

SIP 22 GB