

Governor Monitoring Visit Subject: School Improvement Plan – wider curriculum and STEAM

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I had a limited amount of time for my visit so I looked at only a few specific actions of the School Improvement Plan as follows.

**Improvement Focus 2.1: Eradicating Inconsistencies in teaching and learning across key stages 1 and 2**

Action	Target for Term 1	Target for Term 2
Short/medium/long term planning shared with all subject leaders as appropriate.	Decisions are confirmed as to format of topic planning/curriculum coverage overviews and all teachers are clear on what needs to be shared with subject leaders to enable them to monitor the curriculum effectively.	85%+ teachers share their weekly/half/termly planning with the appropriate subject leaders
Begin to rethink the class topics and introduce a common planning format for KS1/2 so that key skills are developed and targeted more closely.”	Staff have a clearer picture of coverage of skills in their class/subject.	80%+ KS1/2 teachers are using the agreed school format for class topic/skills curriculum overviews.  Staff have a clearer picture of coverage of skills in their class/subject.
Continue to ensure a breadth and balance of experiences in our curriculum by incorporating first hand experiences, themed/focus weeks and specialist input which allow pupils to best develop and apply skills in context and achieve the best possible outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class visits/visitors and workshops for targeted pupils</li><li>• KS2 specialist music, French and computing lessons</li><li>• Revised approach to RE via assemblies/theme days</li><li>• STEAM fortnight in the summer term</li></ul>	Qualitative feedback shows that staff/pupils are positive about the topics and themes covered in different subjects in terms of enjoyment, improved outcomes and making links in learning.	Qualitative feedback shows that staff/pupils are positive about the topics and themes covered in different subjects in terms of enjoyment, improved outcomes and making links in learning.

Examples of Year 2, 3 and 6 teaching plans for the Autumn Term were provided. The plans are visually similar to a mind map and initially appear simplistic but on review I found them to be quite comprehensive. The plans are based around a central topic, such as ‘Rocks and Prehistoric Britain’ for Year 3, and for each subject the Curriculum requirements are listed on one side of the page with a brief description of how this will be achieved on the other side of the page. It was very pleasing to hear Year 2 pupils interest when showing me the different types of work they had produced around their topic for the Autumn term, ‘Castle Kings and Queens’, and the eagerness for the topic was equally obvious in the Teacher. This is a new topic and due to the enthusiasm and engagement of the pupils, a visit has been planned to Newcastle Keep for Year 2.

Specialist subjects such as computing, French and music are being taught to Years 4, 5 and 6 on a Wednesday afternoon using a Carousel approach, whereby each class has a 45 minute session per subject before moving to the next. There is also a wider 'PPA carousel' for Year 1, 2, 3 with 3 TAs involved in supporting each class during one afternoon each week while their class teacher has planning time out of the classroom. This was necessary to avoid the cost of paying for an additional teacher to cover the PPA time but it does mean that the pupils have the chance to do three different activities each week with a known adult - e.g. classes may be doing writing/reading/maths interventions, a handwriting session, art & design, yoga, drama etc depending on the needs of the class and the skills of the TAs.

A STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths) fortnight is planned for the Summer term. The planned activities will be linked to the topics covered during the Term/Year but there will also be opportunities for the Children to take part in STEAM activities "just for fun". This is a teacher led event supported by County and hopefully by the STEM Ambassadors network.

I am confident that the Term 1 targets will be met for the actions highlighted. The implemented planning format will be an efficient method for Teaching staff and Subject Leaders to successfully monitor progress and the teaching staff I spoke with were supportive of it. But regular monitoring will be necessary to ensure the plan remains effective but also for developing the topic-based plans for the following Terms so that by the end of the Year all curriculum targets are met.

Governors should review and discuss the Parents/Carers Homework Questionnaire-October 2018-Analysis. The results of the questionnaire are generally favourable, but Governors may consider that there are some areas for improvement should be challenged and that could be linked in to Improvement Focus 2.1 of the Overall Action Plan.

**Improvement Focus 2.2: Equipping leaders at all levels with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to monitor and plan the improvement in their subjects.**

Subject leaders create action plans with measurable termly targets which are reviewed in staff appraisal meetings at the start of and throughout the academic year, with ongoing monitoring feedback provided from the subject leaders to the headteacher. Subject leaders monitoring files are also discussed at staff meetings ensuring that all subject leaders know what should be included generally and subject specific.

Regular subject leader work scrutiny ensures consistency in terms of books and school systems for marking and presentation. Termly pupil interviews also evaluate progress against the expectations.

Regular communication and evaluation between the staff, subject leaders and headteacher should ensure effective planning scrutiny. Whilst it was not possible for me to determine yet if the Target for Term 1 was likely to be achieved, the necessary monitoring structure does appear to be in place. It would be my expectation that the individual subject and overall action plans would be updated for each new Term to reflect the reality of the progress.

Staff CPD is an ongoing requirement which benefits teaching and learning. Subject leaders will flag and signpost suitable CPD of non-core subjects as necessary, but individuals must also take responsibility for their own CPD requirements and this should be highlighted in the staff appraisals where necessary.

Teacher knowledge for key topics can be updated through Online Training throughout the year. Specialist training such as Computing is widely available although this often comes at a cost and so the course outcomes should be clearly linked to teaching plans/curriculum.

Staff do not generally receive formal CPD for the numerous PE activities that Eastlea provide. However, for new or non-standard PE activities such as Hoopstarz hula-hooping, street dance and rugby, Eastlea use Sports Premium-funded qualified coaches or access them through the Sports partnership. Teaching staff will often participate in the sessions and learn from the coaches eventually enabling the staff to manage more sports activities themselves such as gymnastics.

**Improvement Focus 2.3: Holding subject lead fully accountable for the progress of all groups of pupils in their area of responsibility**

Action	Target for Term 1	Target for Term 2
Core subject coordinators/phase leaders to provide feedback on in year progress to Governors	100% coordinators/phase leaders confident to provide autumn term progress when required	100% coordinators/phase leaders confident to provide spring term progress when required

Progress is regularly reported to the Governors through data, monitoring visits or Head Teacher’s reports but I would like to invite Subject Leaders to feedback the year’s progress and plan (to date) during a Governor’s meeting. This would give all the Governor’s the opportunity to receive the information first hand and ask specific questions but would also benefit the Subject Leaders personal development and confidence in presenting information to third parties.

**Sports Awards**

Finally, I was invited to join representatives of Eastlea, after my monitoring visit, at the Cramlington and Seaton Valley presentation of the Sports Awards. I am very pleased to congratulate Eastlea on the honour of being awarded three Awards. The School Games Platinum award, a special award for 'Developing Leadership and Volunteering' and the prestigious award for 'Promoting and Demonstrating the school games values'.

This is testament to the hard work and continued commitment of Eastlea pupils and staff. Well done.