

Academy Councillor Visit Morning Thursday 5th March 2020

Introduction

The academy councillors work with North Mead Primary Academy to arrange termly academy councillor visit mornings. These meetings give councillors an opportunity to look in detail at specific areas to gather information from staff members. The information gathered during the visits enables councillor to develop a rich and in-depth picture of the school.

Area	Met with member of staff	Councillors
Art	Emily Harris-Wakelam (EH-W)	Karla, Naila
Safeguarding	Jill Hurst (JH) and Alex Curran (AC)	Meera, Safeera, Cathy
Curriculum	Ben Burpitt (BB)	Meera, Karla, Cathy
Reading	James Wharin (JW)	Safeera, Naila, Emily
Character	James Wharin (JW) and Ben Burpitt (BB)	Naila, Meera, Safeera
Staff Wellbeing	Alex Curran (AC)	Cathy, Karla, Emily

Art

Art is covered extensively at the school and provision goes beyond the National Curriculum, with a wide range of artists, countries and type of art covered. The progression of skills for each year group is very clear and EH-W has created knowledge organisers. The school's Art Policy is in place and the differentiation between art and DT has been developed. The school is working towards the 'Arts Promise' which commits to providing a certain level of arts experiences for child by the end of year 6, so contributing to their development of cultural capital.

The school has an Arts Council made up of a representative from each class, chosen from those with an enthusiasm for art. They work with EH-W on projects, provide their views on art education in school and help to promote the subject. The school continues to work on Artsmark which includes art, music and drama and external partnerships. EH-W believes the school is now at silver and is aiming for gold.

Safeguarding and Family Support

Robust systems continue for reporting concerns, making referrals and responding to these. The refresher training of the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) at the school is up to date. Based on one DSL's recent training, the DSL team has carried out a detailed review of current practice and is developing this even further. This includes introducing interim training between the annual staff training, providing a weekly safeguarding briefing for staff, developing a leaflet for parents on where to access help and providing regular updates on internet safety to parents.

At the last visit morning (November 2019) JH said she was keen to meet with others doing the same role in TMET schools to share knowledge and support. The new Trust Family Support Network had its first meeting in late February. It was attended by the primary and secondary schools and JH reported that it was very useful. They will meet again after Easter when they will focus on CPOMS.

Recent and expected checks on safeguarding processes include:

- 16th January 2020 – an internal spot check of Single Central Record
- 24th January 2020 - case review on by Sarah Ridley (TMET Director of Primary Education) and Gemma Bhagalia (TMET Safeguarding Trustee)
- 30th April 2020 – TMET Safeguarding Audit by Mark Oldman (TMET Director of Inclusion and SEND)

Curriculum

The relevant priority on the School Improvement Plan is:

A6 – We aim to complete our curriculum intent and implement and evaluate our new curriculum, enabling children to develop knowledge and skills progressively over time.

The school's curriculum was redesigned for this year and is now more knowledge based and immersive, recognising the need to develop cultural capital in our children. The inspiration for each topic is provided by a book and there are lots of hands on activities in each topic to give the children experiences. Each child has six free trips/visits per year and these are linked to the topics. There is now an emphasis on the children knowing fewer things but in more depth and on planning progression through the year groups in each subject. The children are excited about the new curriculum.

Each topic includes a range of subjects but maths and science are taught as separate, discrete subjects. Music, PE, French and computing are taught by specialists. The school is now engaging with an online platform Votes for Schools which provides a weekly question for the children to discuss and to vote on. This is helping to develop their oracy and confidence.

The school is developing the relationships and sex education curriculum for the next academic year, working with the other Trust primary schools and based on the No Outsiders programme. There will be lots of communication with parents about this.

Reading

The relevant priorities on the School Improvement Plan are:

A1 - We aim to maintain reading attainment and progress at KS1 and KS2 in line with national benchmarks for all learners and disadvantaged learners

A2 - We aim for all pupils to read widely and often

For years 3 to 6 the school is moving from Reading Pro to Accelerated Reader which enables staff to motivate, monitor and manage pupils' independent reading practice. The analysis of the 2019 SATs results shows that comprehension must be a priority for this year. There are now more reading comprehension lessons and key vocabulary is in the knowledge organisers and on the class walls. Parents are being encouraged to discuss books with their children at home to aid comprehension. The new Reading Policy is based on research and reading for pleasure is key. The headteacher of a Leicester primary school has carried out a review of reading at the school.

Character

The relevant priority on the School Improvement Plan is:

F1 - To ensure that children continue to exercise their character muscles, leading to the continued development of the 6Rs.

The three-year Route to Resilience programme is complete and the 6Rs are embedded in the school with the language of character muscles used extensively in school and its social media posts. The school is putting forward this as the area of excellence in the Challenge Partners review due later in March. The school is building character through a range of ways, including the extensive enrichment opportunities, house tournaments, 'Ask the Expert' and the high aspirations and can do attitude of staff.

Staff Wellbeing

The relevant priorities on the School Improvement Plan are:

E1 – To introduce, trial and evaluate the impact of 'well-being' champions.

E2 – To make changes in policies and procedures in order to reduce workload whilst maintaining good progress of learners.

The school has developed a number of things to reduce staff workload and support well-being, including: revised marking requirements; fewer staff meetings; behaviour support provided by the Family Support Worker; a flexible, family friendly approach to requests for absence or flexible working; planning in year groups; specialist teachers for music, PE and French; simplified format for written reports to parents; and, replacing formal lesson observations with drop ins.

The school is currently trialling Power Maths to develop maths learning and this has the secondary impact of reducing planning.

The plan to develop well-being champions is to have some staff members trained to provide support for staff and to watch out for individuals who need support. Two members of staff attended some recent training but this was disappointing. The school is developing alternative plans to achieve this priority, including gathering representatives from staff teams to discuss the impact of decisions and changes.