

Report of Activity

Establishment	Elson Infant School		
District Council	Gosport Borough Council		
DFE No	2607	Area	East
Report Recipient	Debra Marshall	Date	11 March 2016
Author of Record	Michael Moore	Term	Spring 2016

Activity Reason: Annual visit of leadership and learning partner (LLP)
Additional Focus: School self-evaluation

CONTEXT

Elson Infant school is part of a federation with Gomer Infant school. The federation is led by an executive headteacher and each school has a designated headteacher and assistant headteacher.

The school was last inspected in May 2014 and judged to be good.

The key area for development was to:

- improve the quality of teaching to outstanding levels in order to accelerate the progress of all pupils further by:
 - Ensuring that work is always sufficiently challenging, especially for the most able.
 - Providing more systematic and effective teaching of handwriting skills.
 - Encouraging pupils to develop their responses more fully in class discussions in order to further their language skills.

Vulnerable groups

The school currently has two children in care (CIC). One is on track for age related expectations (ARE) the other not but making some progress in all areas. He is reported as having a high level of emotional need and some tracking of progress is therefore through the Boxall profile.

Visit focus

School leaders wished to follow a line of enquiry focussing on eradicating the gap in reading outcomes between boys and girls. This is a focus area in the federation action plan specific to Elson Infant. The 'video coaching' for the spring term is also focussing on guided reading.

Activities

To gather evidence and form conclusions about the line of enquiry, the following activities were undertaken:

- Discussions with a range of leaders.
- A focussed learning walk.

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- Discussions with pupils and a book look during learning walk.

COMMENTARY

Reading is a performance management focus for all teachers and baseline data has been collected. The school rightly reports that, “reading is the building block for writing and we have seen talk for writing (T4W) having an initial impact on motivation and confidence of boys. This will continue as a focus.” The school is also reviewing reading provision at present including the range of books that will enhance the engagement of boys through genres such as non-fiction and humour.

End of Year 2 reading results have been improving. In 2015, 80% of Year 2 pupils attained Level 2b+. This was close to the national figure of 82%. However, the in school gap between boys and girls is an area of focus for the school because there was a 20% difference in the proportion of boys making two sub-levels progress compared to girls in the school. Similarly, early learning goal (ELG) outcomes have been improving significantly since 2013. Reading in 2015 showed boys 72%, girls 78%. By the end of Key Stage 1, reading results points scores were above national but there was a two average point scores (APS) difference between boys and girls within school. Therefore the school is right to be focussing on this area of the curriculum despite high performance compared to national figures.

An indicator of success is that phase 2 assessment data this term indicate that Year 2 boys ARE proportions are now higher than girls by 12%.

Through the learning walk, visiting all classrooms in the school, the LLP was able to monitor the quality of reading provision with a particular focus on boys. This involved observing the level of parent participation in reading sessions at the start of the day, observing a guided library session and guided reading sessions in Year 1 and Year 2.

It is clear that the school’s practitioners have a deep pedagogical understanding of the stages of reading. There was clear evidence of this from the learning walk, which showed how this ‘theoretical’ knowledge is put effectively into practice. The volunteers and parents have clearly been well briefed in approaches and expectations for these reading sessions so that all pupils benefit from effective adult engagement.

Emergent readers benefit from enriching and enjoyable experiences with books, especially picture books. This was evident in the library session where pupils were sorting fiction from non-fiction books and explaining their reasons. Many of these explanations were deductions from the style of illustration as well as text.

In the reception class, pupils are able to work with concepts of print and are developing the ability to focus attention on letter-sound relationships.

Early readers were observed using several strategies to predict a word, including using pictures to confirm predictions. They could discuss the background of the story to better understand the actions of characters and the message the story carried. This was evident when parents and volunteers were working with groups as well as teachers in guided reading. During guided reading sessions observed, pupils were encouraged to pay close

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attention to the visual cues and language patterns, and hence more precisely read for meaning.

Pupils observed clearly like to read books and readily shared their enthusiasm with peers and adults; 'transitional readers' keen to share their ideas about characters, settings, and events. Pupils in Year 2 appear to read at a good pace and both Year 1 and 2 guided reading groups evidenced that pupils generally have strategies to figure out most words they encounter. The links to grammatical aspects of English were clear in the guided reading session (spelling, punctuation, parts of a sentence construction etc) as well as skilful focus on the structure of books, such as looking back for evidence to encourage prediction and justification.

In Year 1, because pupils are less experienced readers because of their age, the guided reading session was appropriately more adult led.

Fluent readers are also well supported. They appeared confident in their understanding of text and how texts work. The pupil observed was reading independently with confidence and perseverance. The teacher in Year 2, for example, was exceptionally skilful in focussing on and drawing out pupils' use of strategies to integrate their cueing systems. Pupils in the group were able to maintain meaning through relatively long and more complex stretches of language. For example, the pupils were encouraged to behave "like detectives... because the book might not tell you how the character is feeling." They could then relate their own experiences and prior reading to hypothesise about the new text they were reading.

Overall, improvements in the quality of provision for reading have been the result of staff being solution focussed and problem solving. This consistency of quality can in turn be attributed to the school's approach to professional development through coaching, video evidence and parallel teaching.

For example, the teacher with responsibility for developing reading was able to present clear evidence following their research and an audit of pupils' attitudes towards reading. As a result of the focus on reading, they reported a "flip" from $\frac{2}{3}$ of pupils stating they didn't enjoy reading at the start of the research, to $\frac{2}{3}$ enjoying reading across the academic year so far.

To further develop the contribution parents and carers can make to their children's reading development, the LLP suggested that teachers could ask questions and make suggestions in the reading diaries to establish more of a dialogue between school and parents.

The early years lead shared examples of how 'discovery time challenges' such as pupils looking for cards that then become a discussion point have enhanced oracy and an engagement with texts and writing.

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The school's self evaluation and progress

Inspections are now made under different criteria. The first table shows the school's last inspection judgements; the second table its self-evaluation against the latest areas of judgement.

Evaluation against old Ofsted criteria	Overall effectiveness	Achievement	Quality of teaching	Behaviour and safety	Leadership and management
Last Ofsted (May 2014)	2	2	2	2	2

Evaluation against <i>current</i> Ofsted criteria	Overall effectiveness	Effectiveness of Leadership and management	Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outcomes for children, and learners	Early Years
School's current view	2	2	2	2	2	2

The school's self-evaluation document states that, "Children in every year group and across the curriculum are generally making good progress from their starting points. Pupil progress processes ensure individuals and groups at risk are quickly identified and action taken. Attainment in all areas is broadly in line with or above 'national averages' in all areas. This results in the vast majority of children being well prepared for next stage of their education."

Therefore teaching and the curriculum are clearly good enough for the vast majority of pupils to reach the threshold. The school has secured a curriculum that is the basis for assessment of the entire curriculum for all pupils.

Performance and expected outcomes for past two years

Despite the school's inspection dashboard indicating no relative weaknesses or strengths compared to national figures, the school's focus resulted in attainment for 2A+ being above national figures in all areas and standards being particularly high in reading and mathematics.

Although levels are not being used in future, the 2015 data shows attainment is in line or above for all areas.

For example, boys' attainment in reading writing and mathematics is now higher than it was in 2013. It would be likely therefore that this relative position compared to national figures would be at least maintained in 2016 results.

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Performance and expected outcomes for next two years

Both schools in the federation are using the Hampshire planning documents for mathematics and English to plan and implement learning. They are using three key phases with assessment points in November, February and April. A final summative assessment in June will decide the proportion of pupils meeting ARE.

Progress and provision for vulnerable pupils

School data shows a positive trend in all subject areas for special educational needs SEN pupils. Results are now above national figures in all areas other than reading.

The majority of current SEN pupil needs are currently concerning speech and language development, although the school reports that the most vulnerable group of pupils are those with mental health issues. There are increasingly high numbers of the youngest pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour. The school has modified and extended its provision as a result of this. For example, there is a “team managing feeling” (TMF) group every morning which is a ‘ready to learn’ session including nurture, this aligns well with the neighbouring junior school’s provision. Already 12 children have benefitted from these support mechanisms. Three have successfully re-integrated full time back into their class and an additional two are reported as being nearly ready to do this.

There is also ‘keep up time’ everyday for any pupils who need it. These sessions are led by teachers or by learning support assistants (LSAs) directed by teachers, so that pupils’ misconceptions can be rapidly addressed to enable them to keep up and to move onto the next day’s learning.

Future school improvement priorities

The school is clearly forward-looking and collectively relentless in its desire to improve outcomes for all its children. Areas for future focus include:

- Forest school development.
- St Francis challenge project.
- CHIMP project with children pilot project. How would it support children?

Priority Level

The school continues to evidence that it has sufficient internal capacity for further improvement and that its self-evaluation is accurate. Therefore it should remain a low priority for local authority support.

Nevertheless, school leaders and governors know they are able to consider commissioning external support, challenge and advice and regularly do so.

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ACTION

The actions in the federation's strategic plan and the actions discussed by leaders specific to Elson Infant school are suitable to continue the school's improvement and refinement. In addition to these areas, the LLP discussed the following refinements with the executive headteacher and other leaders.

- Encourage a dialogue with parents in the reading diaries by asking questions or making suggestions.
- Continue to 'talent spot' and develop the emerging leaders within the school and across the federation.

Signed:



Date:

23/03/2016

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Author of Record				
	Duration	Preparation	Follow Up	Charge Code
Day(s)	1			
Hour(s)				
Total Time Author of Record			Day(s)	Hour(s)
			1	