

Holy Trinity CE Primary School

Governor Visit Report

Name of Governor	Belle Moss
Date of Visit	15 May 2019
Agreed Focus for Visit (linked to SEF, SDIP & Key priorities)	Writing
Name of Staff	Miss Harding

Key Area in SDP: Monitoring Findings from this visit

Focus on the learning and teaching of writing so that it improves across the school.

Impact will show quality and quantity of writing in all books will be of a high standard, matched to ARE and deep learning evidenced.

Actions used to identify findings

We looked in depth at two new initiatives that have been put in place over the last 18 months, reviewed how they were being embedded throughout the school and their impact.

The first was the use of non-negotiables. These were put in place for each year group from Y1-Y6, by benchmarking against the national curriculum and then following discussion at a staff meeting. The non-negotiables were trialled last year and rolled out across the school in September 2018. Individual non-negotiables are made clear to all students (by year group or by aptitude) as they are pasted into the front of each pupil's English workbook. As part of the roll out each teacher is encouraged to mark pupils work by highlighting sections of text in green where they have used their non-negotiables and in pink where there is an 'even better if' lesson to be learnt.

Although the non-negotiables are clearly laid out for each year group, pupils are also assessed on ability level as well, those with lower attainment or SEN children may follow a different year group's non-negotiables to work towards. This is not overly communicated to the children so they are working towards their own goals at a pace that suits their individual needs, although some of the older children are aware. I was able to review anonymously three examples of workbooks for below ARE, expected ARE and above ARE to see that each pupil is being set and measured on achieving their defined non-negotiables irrespective of ability.

The second initiative is a more formalised writing wall of fame. This display, which can be found outside the medical room, features writing work from each of the classes and is currently renewed each term (with a clear desire for more regular changes, time permitting). Once a student's work is taken down from the wall, they are presented with a certificate to take home. This is to ensure they are praised for their work in front of their peers during assembly and highlights that their work has been recognised to parents and carers.

Miss Harding has monitored planning to ensure the SPaG starter regime for each English lesson, which asks teachers to spend the first 5-10 minutes focussing on a SPaG topic of their choosing, is in place. This allows a core area of SPaG to be taught in small chunks but often repeated, a proven technique to embed core learning.

Recent training was discussed, which included two sessions run by Miss Harding to provide intervention group training for TAs and increase their SPaG knowledge.

Three teachers also attended an LA-run Greater Depth writer's course and teachers have attended cluster school moderation events.

What outcomes have been identified as a result of my visit

Miss Harding has clear tracking in place for all the initiatives we discussed. From 2016-18, each year group was carefully tracked for spelling achievements and close monitoring of those who were attaining less than 50% was undertaken. From the tracking, it is clear that positive headway has been made.

Miss Harding also monitors how independent writing and non-negotiables are taught, marked and embedded within each of the year groups by holding regular book looks in each class and again I was shown evidence of this.

I understand new benchmarking kits have been purchased at some cost, in order to ensure that reading comprehension levels are set correctly.

Impact of this visit

I am pleased to report that it is excellent to see such clearly thought out and well managed programmes in place to improve SPaG across the whole school. Miss Harding involves all teachers in discussions at the start of new processes and monitors progress clearly. Teachers are encouraged to bring their own skills and ideas to support SPaG within their year group setting, while having clear support to ensure this is done within curriculum and school-set goals.

It is recommended that all classes study at least three high-quality texts a year, some of which may link to other subject / topic areas, with the aim to standardise the quality of writing across all workbooks. A recent book look conducted specifically to review this area was undertaken and showed consistently high levels of writing being used in Science books across a number of years.

There has been a clear and positive impact of the purchase of Spellodrome as a resource, which was introduced three years ago to counter a drop in spelling across all year groups owing to the increased demands of the new curriculum. Statistics were presented which showed a marked improvement in all years.

Growth Mindset language and processes are clearly being used in both teaching and marking methods, highlighting pupils' achievements and encouraging them to think of ways to continuously improve. Children are encouraged to be resilient and 'have a go', and are then consistently praised for attempting to use higher level vocabulary even if not executed correctly.

As part of ongoing training, Miss Harding encourages teachers to review work from other year groups by holding look book sessions in staff meetings. Examples of work are shared across different years, to extend learning outside of the year groups they are teaching.

Aspects I would like clarified/Questions I have

While there have been clear successes over the last 18 months, there are also continuing areas of challenge which have been highlighted and are to be investigated, these include: spelling in KS1; engaging boys and support for SEN pupils

It is also important to monitor how the non-negotiables continue to be used across the school and to see how the profile of the Writing Wall of Fame will be raised.

I would also like to know the outcome of the current review of KS1 phonics. There is a question as to whether the earlier teaching of split digraphs would benefit the learning of phonics in year 1 and therefore allow more time for the teaching of the spelling expectations in year 2. Our current strategy is being benchmarked against other schools and alternative teaching resources looked into.

To be shared with the school staff and school governing board.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

(Governor)

(Headteacher/Staff member)