

Roberttown CE (vc) J&I School Governor School Visit Record

Name: Helen Wells	Date: 11 th February 2019
Purpose of visit: Tackling Underachievement	
Structure/Timetable of the visit: 1-1.20pm Meeting with senior leaders re. Tackling Underachievement 1.20-1.45pm Abra Intervention- KS1 leader 1.45-2.10pm Meeting with TAs 2.10-2.30pm Meeting with group of children 2.30-2.50pm Meeting with class teachers 2.50-3.15pm Meeting with senior leaders in Y5	
Key Staff to see:	
Position	Name
SENCo	Mrs Baker
Deputy Head	Mrs Wood
KS1 leader	Miss Wiles
HLTAs/SEN support	Mrs Mott, Mrs Goodall, Mrs Ratcliffe
Teachers	Mrs Stubbs, Mrs Clayton
Key Questions/Issues for Governors to explore:	
<p><i>What data do we collect (and how) for those pupils who are underachieving (or at risk)-especially where progress steps may be small or not measured by curriculum outcomes?</i> Mrs Baker and Mrs Wood explained the pupil progress review schedule, and what types of evidence is collected through this process, and in between times (in class and through interventions). It was explained how teaching and support staff are instrumental in the identification of pupils at risk of underachievement, and provision mapping to close gaps; with a priority of adapting quality first teaching strategies, then targeted support and interventions.</p>	
<p><i>How are targets set and at what point is a pupil considered to be underachieving? (according to their own progress or national expectations, or a combination)</i> Mrs Wood explained that targets are set using FFT20, which is pre-populated according to prior attainment in previous key stages. Where targets are deemed unrealistic they are not altered; targets are kept aspirationally high and support to meet them is put in place. Case studies are compiled when it is clear a pupil will not meet their target, to tell the story of the circumstances that have impacted their progress.</p>	
<p><i>What is the picture of our vulnerable groups? Who is generally at risk of underachievement in our school? Any theories on why?</i> Mrs Wood and Mrs Baker explained that the Pupil Premium cohort is a comparatively small and varied group, with some pupils also having other vulnerable group status. SEND pupils tend not to do as well as other groups and this is very dependent on individual needs. Generally boys attainment is a concern, and measures to counter this are outlined on the SDP. This is in line with the local and national picture. Mrs Wood finds it useful to be involved with moderating activities in the local authority to be able to make general comparisons.</p>	

What is the focus area(s) to move this group on? Mrs Goodall explained the work that had been done to increase reading interest and engagement for vulnerable groups recently, including re-organising library books by theme, planning around engaging texts in lessons, particularly books that some groups of boys like, and sending surprise book gifts to pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium, to instigate reading for pleasure, including at home.

How do we check what we do is it is having an impact? Pupil progress and attainment is very closely monitored and evaluated for impact through the pupil progress meetings process, and Mrs Robertson checks progress of interventions by testing at entry and exit of a programme. Pupil Premium funding is also reported and evaluated for impact.

How are children and families invested in this process? Mrs Wood gave an example of how special plans were put in place as a result of listening to a pupil's personal challenge in one area of the curriculum. Staff went above the curriculum expectation to help the pupil to overcome the challenge and feel a sense of achievement. This included working closely with the family to ensure anxiety at home was minimised and pressure was relieved from the parents.

What is the messaging behind this work; how do we communicate to children and parents? Everyone I spoke with expressed a positive attitude to the work that is done to tackle underachievement. This included the pupils explaining that they got help when they needed it, including with behaviour, so that they can do their best learning.

How do we support the whole child throughout this process? Children are given opportunities to shine; through enrichment, structured play, when targeted for extra curricular clubs and by accessing a broad curriculum. Pupil's are supported to build resilience and to have a go, or keep going, even when they find something hard. Peer mentoring helps children to develop pupil relations, but often benefits the mentor as much as the mentee, as confidence and self esteem is built by reteaching a skill or being a role model. Children are also encouraged to develop self awareness, metacognition and growth mindset, with 'fix it' tables in classrooms, and effort praised with points for development shared in verbal and written feedback.

Governor's Observations/Evaluation

Other conversations around tackling underachievement were shared with a group of children, HLTAs and SEN TA, and class teachers.

The varied group of children were supported by Mrs Mott to explain what help they received to move on their learning. This included accessibility equipment, personal medical support, extra help with learning (from peer mentors, reading volunteers, support staff, teachers and accessing interventions and computer programs such as Nessy). Children were positive about this help, and a few described the emotional support they received to manage their emotions and behaviour so that they are ready to learn.

Miss Wiles talked through the school's participation in the ABRA pilot study (with Coventry and York University), which is a structured reading programme with elements of phonological awareness and verbal memory built in. The programme is delivered to all Y1 pupils, who have been split into three smaller groups. Miss Wiles reported good feedback from a recent supervisory visit from the university team, and felt the programme had been most useful for the aspiring readers, than those who are already at expected reading levels. She looks forward to the conclusion feedback from the whole study and said the resources may well be used again in future years where grouping allows.

Mrs Mott, Mrs Goodall and Mrs Ratcliffe described their roles as HLTAs and SEN TA in relation to tackling underachievement. Particular points for governors to note were the trust and communication between the support team and teaching staff; it was explained how this allows for roles to be exchanged in the classroom; so that HLTAs can lead a lesson or whole class monitoring, whilst a class teacher focuses on individuals or groups. Mrs Goodall also explained that having HLTAs in school allowed for continuity for pupils during staff illness, with supply staffing at a minimum.

A chat with Mrs Stubbs and Mrs Clayton explored how underachievement is approached for different aged pupils. For the youngest children in the school this is often targeted through questioning, by variation and outcome, whilst keeping learning fun, fresh and interests based. Both teachers said the well embedded behaviour management and praise system worked well as a motivator for pupils. The main challenge the teachers faced was described as being the logistics (space, staffing and groupings) of targeting support. Having a varied needs in a cohort means that setting priorities and re-evaluating regularly is essential.

Culture observed in the school

The people I spoke with on this visit, from the youngest children, right up to senior staff members, all expressed growth mind-set, positivity and inclusion when discussing matters of raising attainment and tackling underachievement. I was made to feel welcome and would like to thank everyone involved in organising such an informative and enjoyable afternoon.

Any Key Issues Arising for the Governing Body:

Staff and pupils are working hard to tackle underachievement, and this is undertaken with an attitude of growth mind-set and high aspirations.

Governors should continue to consider the attainment and progress of groups at risk of underachievement, namely; Pupil Premium, SEND and boys, and subject areas identified on the SDP.

The main challenge to staff was logistic planning of targeting specific needs (in terms of staffing, space and groupings with such varied cohorts). These issues should remain on governors' radars, especially with budget cuts to schools on the horizon.

Action Following Governing Body Meeting:

No particular action required.

Signed:H Wells.....**Governor**