

Putting the Community First



LONDON BOROUGH

Education and Skills

L.A. REVIEW

Name of School: Brookland Junior School	
Headteacher: Jenny Aylen	Chair of Governors: Mark Leibling
Date of Review: 24th February 2015	
Review team: Neil Marlow (Head of School Improvement / Learning Network Inspector) Eileen Quigley (Headteacher – St. Catherine’s Primary School) Spencer Clayton (Headteacher – Queenswell Junior School) Louise Yarwood (Headteacher – Trent Primary School)	

THE PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

This was a review carried out as an entitlement of a new Headteacher in a Barnet School. Jenny Aylen started in this permanent full-time post in the Autumn Term. It was felt, both by the school and the LA that the timing of this review was in the best interests of the school.

It was agreed that the main thrust of the review would be to get an external view on achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, the behaviour and safety in the school and the leadership and management of the school in order to identify the strengths and areas for development in each area and to validate the views made independently by the school itself.

OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW

There were four members of the LA team and each spent a whole day at the school. 23 observations were conducted of teaching in lessons and these observations ranged in length from 10 minute drop ins as part of a learning walk to 45 minutes. 16 of these were joint observations with members of the Leadership Team. In addition, two Pupil Premium intervention groups were observed and a selection of children from across the school was heard read.

Interviews were conducted by team members with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, Inclusion Lead, Child and Family Well Being Lead, the English Subject Leader, Mathematics Subject Leader, the Computing Subject Leader, the SMSC Lead, the New National Curriculum/Gifted and Talented Lead, two NQTs and the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors. In addition, one of the team talked with the School Council. English, Big Writing, Mathematics, Science, History/Geography/Topic, Spelling and Art Books were sampled across the school. The school also made available their Self Evaluation and documents supporting this. The team also used Raise Online, Fischer Family Trust and the BSIP Achievement Review Report to help get a fuller understanding of achievement.

ACHIEVEMENT

Children generally join the school in Year 3 significantly above national averages. There are strong links with the feeder Infant school to ensure children transfer smoothly and that the achievement is agreed. The contextual background of the children in the school is changing with an increasing number of children with English as an Additional Language, from Ethnic Minority Groups and eligible for Free School Meals. There has been a reduction in the percentage of White British children in the school over the last three years and an increase in the percentage of children from Any Other White Background (mostly Eastern European). The children generally make very good progress as they go through the school and attainment at the end of Year 6 has been significantly above national for the last five years (Note: only five years of data is available in RAISEonline). With children joining the school significantly above national, demonstrating progress is obviously a challenge to the school but a challenge that the school has risen to with Value Added progress being significantly above national for the last three years (Note: only three years of data is available in RAISEonline). Last year's Value Added score was 101.5 which placed the school in the 7th percentile for progress nationally (4th for Mathematics, 19th for Reading and 23rd for Writing). The school is very successful in progressing their more able children as demonstrated by the high percentages of children in last year's Year 6 who progressed from Level 2A in KS1 to Level 5 by the end of KS2 and from Level 3 at KS1 to Level 6 by the end of KS2. A third of the cohort achieved a Level 6 in Mathematics last year and nearly a fifth achieved a Level 6 in English, Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar, both of which were above the national averages (Mathematics significantly so). 3% of the children in Reading and 5% in Writing achieved a Level 6 which were both above the national averages. The percentages of children achieving Level 5's were significantly above national in all subjects.

Where attainment and progress was not as strong was with the less able and disadvantaged pupils where the percentages achieving a Level 4+ and 5+ were generally at best in line with national and in a lot of cases below national attainment for these groups. The value added score for disadvantaged pupils was below national in Mathematics and Writing. The value added for pupils with prior attainment being low has been below national for the last three years, although the numbers in this category are low (4 children in 2014). The school have identified the attainment and progress of their disadvantaged children as an issue and their pupil premium interventions are carefully targeted and flexible to individual and cohort needs. Each intervention has clearly planned outcomes and the impact is RAG rated. The impact of most interventions is significant (Green) as outlined in their Pupil Premium reports which appear on the school website.

The Book Scrutiny demonstrated that achievement is strong across the school and there is clear evidence of the progress that pupils are making in all of the subjects. The emphasis that the school is putting on the achievement of disadvantaged and SEN pupils is having an impact and both the books and the achievement data for the current cohorts demonstrate good progress is being made for these groups.

The children at the school are happy and confident and the very good breadth and balance of the curriculum and the enrichment opportunities are contributing to the strong achievement across the school.

Strengths

- Achievement in Mathematics
- Quality of writing across the school
- Achievement of the More Able
- High percentages reaching Level 5 and Level 6 by the end of KS2

Areas for Development

The school's Self Evaluation document identifies key priorities for development which are appropriate. These are:

- *Raising attainment in SPAG and Reading further across the school.*
- *Continuing to narrow the gap for pupil premium and SEN.*
- *Ensuring new measures of attainment and progress maintain current use of data to inform development actions for subject, cohorts, pupil groups, individual pupils and whole school and maintain the high level of challenge that our use of levels entailed to date.*

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Observing teaching in lessons, evaluating the learning environments, looking at lesson plans, carrying out book scrutiny, analysing the achievement data and speaking to the children throughout the day all demonstrated to the team that there are some real strengths in the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

The children have a very carefully planned and therefore positive transition from the Infant School to the Junior School and the children feel safe and supported and are given the confidence to take risks and "have a go.". Teachers and other adults have created a positive climate for learning in all classrooms and the pupils are generally interested and engaged. Relationships, both between pupils and between adults and pupils are strengths across the school and general behaviour in class was exemplary with positive behaviour strategies used well. The only exception to this was during some transitions e.g. from breaktime to starting the lessons, where learning did not start quickly enough.

The teachers are conscientious in their planning of the lessons which are part of a sequence of lessons and build on previous learning. The use of Bronze, Silver and Gold differentiated success criteria is consistent across the school. The teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and the teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support children with SEN or who have English as an Additional Language. Interventions are planned well and are having an impact on achievement. The majority of lessons seen involved the class teacher circulating around the class during independent activities. Although the interactions were having an impact on individual children the team supported the school's view that more guided group work and teacher modelling should be taking place to focus on the particular needs and abilities of groups of children. This was seen in some lessons but should be more widely deployed as a strategy alongside possibly the use of the teaching assistants circulating round the class to deal with individual problems or even better, raising the expectation of children being fully independent in their learning.

There were some good examples seen of assessment for learning strategies e.g. paired talk, use of mini plenaries, consistent use of success criteria, self-

assessment. The use of “green pen self-assessment” is embedded across the school and used effectively to get the children to reflect on their learning.

Where open ended tasks were observed the children were thriving in having more control of their learning and more rapid progress was taking place. Further and more consistent use of AfL strategies across the school would increase active learning and participation in lessons: creating independent children in control of their learning and the teaching being more matched to individual needs. A lot of the teachers rely on the strategy of asking a question and choosing a child with their hand up to answer. This allows some children to opt out of their learning. More differentiated questioning should be used, matched to the ability level of individual targeted children i.e. selected by the teacher rather than hands up self-selection.

Good use of ICT to support learning was seen in intervention groups and with individual pupils e.g. pupils with SEN but further use to support learning in class could be developed.

The books are all marked up to date by the teachers and the use of green pen is consistent across all subjects. The teachers are extremely conscientious in their marking and often pose questions to the children having marked their work, which is excellent practice. However, at times, the children are not given time and an opportunity to respond to these comments.

Strengths

- Significant teaching strengths right across the school – models of excellent practice
- Well planned lessons
- Strong subject knowledge by teachers
- Relationships
- Behaviour/conduct in class and consistent use of positive behaviour strategies
- Consistent use of Success Criteria
- Consistent use of green pen self-assessment
- Deployment of teaching assistants to support individual pupils or small groups of pupils
- Carefully planned and effective intervention strategies used

Areas for Development

- More assessment for learning strategies deployed to ensure children are active and independent learners
- Better use of differentiated questioning, open ended questions and teacher modelling
- More use of guided group work
- Consistent use of marking and pupil response in books
- Maximise opportunities to use ICT to support learning in class

BEHAVIOUR AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

The team found the social behaviour of the children in the school to be admirable. They were extremely polite, had superb manners, were keen to engage in conversation and demonstrated good interaction with their peers and behaved appropriately with both other children and adults. There was a sense of calm and purpose about the school. Movement around the school was orderly and controlled. The pupils are polite, respectful and hugely proud of their school and act as good ambassadors. Leaders and managers have created a positive ethos in the school and ensure that it is a safe and welcoming environment where the pupils know who and where to go to if they need help. There are good pastoral systems across the school which are consistently applied. The children feel safe and report that the behaviour in the school is very good there is no bullying. They understand how to use the internet safely. They are clear about the rules and respond well to strategies such as Golden Minutes and Secret Teacher.

The break and lunchtimes were well supervised and plenty of opportunities are provided for the children to play freely as well as having calm and quiet areas. Children are given responsibilities at break and lunchtime e.g. prefects, peer mediators, monitors etc and they perform these tasks well and with pride.

The presentation of work in books is a real strength particularly in mathematics.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and the school have recently carried out a Safeguarding Audit.

Attendance has improved in the school over the last three years (95.8% in 2014) but is still below the national average and the median trendline for similar schools. However, the percentage of persistent absentees is extremely low (0.5%) well below both the national and median trendline for similar schools averages.

Strengths

- Pupil safety
- Pupils' conduct in class and around the school
- The politeness and respect for others demonstrated by the pupils
- Presentation in books
- Pupils' understanding of school rules
- Persistent absenteeism

Areas for Development

- Behaviour for learning (see Quality of Teaching section)
- Continue to raise attendance so that it is above the national average

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The relatively new Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher team are working purposefully to continually improve the school. They have a clear vision. They are clear about the school's strengths and areas for development and, along with the other members of the SLT, use achievement data effectively to target interventions and identify areas of priority. Senior and Middle leaders are all clear about their roles and Middle Leaders monitor their areas of responsibility effectively, holding others to account and leading on developments. There is a strong sense of effective distributed leadership across the school. The school believes strongly in the CPD of staff and all staff are well supported in their role and the coaching model that is used has enabled the school to maintain high standards even through changes of staff.

The strong links between the Infant and Junior School has huge benefits, not just to transition but to ensuring consistency of approach across the schools. The new National Curriculum has been effectively introduced and embraced by all due to the involvement of staff and pupils in the implementation. The leadership of teaching and learning in the school is strong with effective appraisal processes in place.

With the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher both being recruited from within the school it is important that the school continues and further widens and develops the partnership work with other schools. This has begun over the last 18 months with the London Schools Excellence Fund Project and more recently with the formation of the Junior School Partnership and the school needs to build on these in order to ensure excellent practice at Brookland Junior is shared as well as the school learning from the excellent practices evident elsewhere.

The governing body are actively involved in the life of the school and have a clear understanding of their roles. Effective sub committees challenge and support the Headteacher and hold her to account. The Chair has a clear vision of direction and purpose of the governing body and holds other governors to account for their effectiveness. They take their responsibility to ensure the pupils are safe very seriously and have recently completed a Safeguarding Audit and ensured that the Safeguarding Governor attends Level 3 Child Protection training.

It would be useful for the governors to have discussions about what are the most effective ways of getting the relevant information in order to support the school's self-evaluation. The current School Self Evaluation Form (January 2015) is too long and descriptive and is more a report to the governing body rather than an evidence based evaluation of the school's effectiveness.

Strengths

- Leadership Team's understanding of strengths and areas for development
- Clarity of direction
- The impact that leadership and management is having on the quality of teaching
- Governors support for the school and holding the school and each other to account

Areas for Development

- Ensure leaders and managers (and governors) are kept up to date with current developments and are outward looking, using current research and

- practice to further develop the school
- Refine the School Self Evaluation process and Form
 - To continue the priority on ensuring that the disadvantaged pupils and less able pupils make rapid and sustained progress

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

The new Headteacher, supported by the new Deputy Headteacher and the SMT has brought renewed energy, vigour, direction and vision to the school. She has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school and is working hard to help embed the necessary changes.

Achievement is strong and there are clear signs of improvements in progress in key areas such as reading and the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.

The school is inclusive and all pupils are well cared for and catered for.

The children's behaviour is excellent and the team saw high levels of social awareness and appropriate interaction in lessons, around school and in the playground. Children treat each other and adults with respect, were keen to learn and were used to working in a variety of social settings.

Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development is a real strength of the school and the spacious grounds are well used to maximise the impact. There is evidence across the school in displays, in classrooms and in the fact that the school has an SMSC Lead and has conducted an SMSC Audit that this area is a high priority in the school. During the day the team observed very effective lessons on democracy and Philosophy for Children which both encouraged pupils to engage in meaningful discussions.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching by embracing strategies and approaches that ensure the teaching is matched to the individual needs and the children are fully engaged and active in their learning and are highly independent
- Continue to raise standards of achievement for disadvantaged pupils and those with a lower attainment on entry to the school
- Continue to embed the new National Curriculum and a life after levels in order to maintain the high standards.