

NOVAC (Note of visit and contact)

School:	Beecroft Primary	Date:	8 th March 2018
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Headteacher:	June Turner	Link Advisor (SIA):	Peter Marsh
Visit Details:	Evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning with a specific focus on reading		

Purpose of the visit and focus of the support or training:

As an outstanding school with consistently high outcomes for pupils and high parental satisfaction, Beecroft Primary remains Ofsted exempt. An analysis of data for 2017 shows how the school maintained their place in the top 10% and 20% nationally for writing and maths respectively. However, there was a dip in reading in 2017 (not at the higher level) and this did impact on the school's combined outcomes whereby 66% of the 28-pupil cohort met with combined success.

The SIA was asked to conduct a review on the impact of the school's response to the outcomes with specific attention to the area of reading.

To amass evidence to support the written summary the SIA completed the following activities:

- An analysis of the school's 2017 data
- Shared the detail of the school's current SEF
- Analysis of the school's Development Planning (with specific regard to reading).
- Lesson observations and learning walks.
- Work scrutiny
- Discussions with and presentations from pupils
- Meetings with the Headteacher
- A meeting with the Learning Mentor

Progress with agreed actions from previous visits:

Not applicable

Summary of the visit / Outcomes:

Following the visit, the SIA was left in little doubt that leaders have ensured that Beecroft continues to give an outstanding education to its pupils. The Authority need have no anxieties over any slippage of standards at Beecroft. Through the passion and drive of the Headteacher, leaders have very successfully created an environment where high expectations and high standards are the norm. The staff are led exceptionally well by the Headteacher who sets the example for exemplary teaching from the front. Subsequently staff work as a highly effective, cohesive team where everyone, including pupils are expected to do their very best. (When schools all around were closing their doors, the very fact that every single staff member managed get to during the recent chaotic and unexpected snowfall says it all.) The performance of all staff, and especially NQT's is monitored effectively thus ensuring they are given clear guidance on how to improve their practice. These factors result in a safe and calm atmosphere in classrooms around school where relationships between pupils and adults are of the highest quality. Staff are justly proud of being a part of the Beecroft story.

The wider analysis of the school's data shows that 100% of pupils achieved phonic check success in 2017. Above national statistics are also recorded for Early Years and for age related attainment in each subject at the end of KS1 and likewise for greater depth. In KS2, in 2016 96% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading and 30% greater depth. By contrast, the 2017 results were indicative of a changing hard to reach intake of poor Pakistani and some white British children. (59% of pupils in the school now do not speak any English at home.) Of the 28-pupil cohort, 66% achieved expected level in reading (in line with national) and 24% reached the higher level, significantly above national.

Typically, leaders have not been complacent in their will and desire to ensure every possible action is taken to ensure the strongest possible outcomes for children in 2018. Leaders have quickly recognised that major changes to school organisation and timetabling have been required to meet the challenges posed by the changes in intake. These changes have been recorded in a detailed 'Reading Plan'. As a result, ability grouping across KS2 has been established to ensure teaching is precise to the needs of the children. It is important to note that the lower ability groups still have access to the high level texts of their more able peers, there is no watering down of aspiration. Such demand is having a positive impact on progress for all groups. As a lead literacy practitioner, the Headteacher has modelled and coached teaching and learning techniques and these are now consistent across the school. Whole class texts are used to deliver the teaching of reading and this also leads from reading into writing. Over £5k has been devolved to new books for the school's already impressive library. Furthermore, to ensure parents realise the importance of home reading, meetings and shared reading sessions have been organised. The school has even gone the extra mile of completing home visits have been made to some of the homes of those hard to reach parents.

From the SIA's Learning Walk and lesson observations it becomes increasingly clear that from entry to the school to exit in Year 6 the needs of each individual child and their family are well considered. In a meeting with the Learning mentor, she so eloquently stated how it is the school's aim 'to capture the families early before bad habits have set in and once the families have been 'Beecrofted', we know we will have good attendance good attitudes to learning.'

This care and nurture at the start of the children's Beecroft journey ensures children get off to an excellent start in the outstanding Reception classes. Through a daily diet of discrete teaching and purposeful play opportunity, the children in Reception make rapid gains in their progress in all areas of their early development. Even though we are only just entering the month of March, children were observed composing Ginger Bread Man stories of some length and because they have numerous word and phoneme prompts on their tables they are able to access some high order language for example, an EAL child confidently read me his passage which began, 'One day the tall, grey haired grandma decided that she didn't want' Expectations of using a sharp non-chubby pencil evidenced the humble beginnings of the excellently formed joined script of children further up the school.

Through the SIA's learning walk and lesson observations it was clear that pupils benefit from outstanding teaching. In the reading lessons observed, teaching was lively, stimulating and taught well. The use of high quality, challenging texts drives the whole class approach to the teaching of reading and without exception, teachers demonstrated excellent subject knowledge. The high level of teacher questioning allowed children to explore the language of the texts in depth. Synonyms, antonyms and high-level language were investigated as the children were required to reflect on what the author was trying to convey. In response to a question from the teacher as to a character's arrogance a child responded 'that he thought it showed the character was egocentric!' Punctuation and grammar is also taught through this reading domain. The ensuing activities presented to the children ranged from preparation and drafting for lengthier pieces of writing e.g. character studies to exercises requiring inferential and retrieval skills.

Beyond reading the SIA also observed the precise teaching of the Deputy Head as she led her small group of lower ability mathematicians toward calculating the area of perpendicular quadrilaterals.

An analysis of work in books shows that there is a high level of consistency across the year groups in terms of style, technique and presentation. This precision in consistency is echoed through classroom display, teaching technique

right down to the high demands of behaviour presentation. The SIA is convinced that it is these consistencies, which start right from Foundation that provides the bedrock for maintaining the high standards seen at Beecroft over time.

Through an impressive presentation by some Y5 pupils, SIA heard first hand how the school has further strengthened the pupils' love of books. The children themselves had taken part in organising competitions on reading homework research topics and in the awarding of prizes for the best results. Pupils confirm that they read widely and often and are able to cite their favourite authors and books.

Another group of Y6 pupils spoke eloquently of their enjoyment of the range of texts afforded to them by the school whereby, every child has a copy of the class text. Expectations are that a majority of the reading will be done at home where accompanying reading diaries capture any new or challenging vocabulary. Books are studied for usually a two-week period and this ensures a range of non-fiction and poetry books can be added to the mix. Further to this, the school's new library ensures pupils have access to borrowing 2 books each week and a 'buddy' reading scheme ensures the most able act as mentors for the more reluctant readers.

During the afternoon the SIA completed a learning walk to evidence the impact of the school's wider curriculum. Lessons on observational drawing, a science lesson where children could eloquently describe their learning of insulation, a computing lesson where analogue signals were being programmed and a DT lesson where children were making and testing battery driven go-karts each evidenced an outstanding curriculum that promotes pupils' enthusiasm for learning. The wonderful display around school, in the hall and in classrooms demonstrates the value teachers place on the children's efforts. Indeed they replicate the high standards that are seen in every element of the school's work.

Although not directly aligned to local schools via any formal alliance engagement, the school is never the less actively engaged in the NOCTUA Teaching School Alliance. Subsequently, networking and supporting and impacting on schools locally and further afield is apparent. Further to this, following an HMI visit to ascertain how the school maintains its high standards from Early Years through to Y6, the Headteacher has been quoted in the 'Bold Beginnings' document and sits on the panel of decision makers for the 2020 Early Years curriculum design.

Distribution list

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