

Reading Deep Dive NOVAC (Note of visit and contact)

School:	Beecroft Primary School	Date:	29 th March 2022
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Purpose of visit	Collaborative reading deep dive		

School context:

The school was judged to be outstanding at the end of its inspection in March 2010. This deep dive report will show that there is vast evidence to show that this is still the case when we jointly monitored phonics and reading at Beecroft Primary School. Standards in reading are consistently above national expectations and outcomes. The school agreed to welcome inspectors to do a pilot inspection in preparation for the new Ofsted framework in September 2019. Judgements were not given, but the feedback praised the school's exemplary curriculum offer.

*"We are very proud of our school which has earned its reputation as an Outstanding school (Ofsted 2010) and this has been validated in a recent visit by a School Inspector in March 2019 when he said "Beecroft really is a special place and staff work as a highly effective, cohesive team where everyone, including pupils are expected to do their very best. Staff are justly proud of being part of the Beecroft story. Creativity is an important part of the curriculum at Beecroft Primary School. We believe subjects like design and technology, music, art and drama are vitally important for children to develop imagination, resourcefulness, problem solving and team-working. To this end we have a purpose built and fully equipped design technology and art room. We are very proud that all children learn to play a musical instrument. We have a broad curriculum which enhances and underpins our high outcomes in **reading**, writing and mathematics."* The School Website

Previous Ofsted Letter from the Inspector: March 2010

There is one area for improvement that we found. We have asked your school to ensure that the outdoor learning environment in the Nursery and Reception areas is as stimulating and exciting as the indoor spaces. You can all help in sustaining the excellent education that Beecroft provides by continuing to attend daily, reaching your targets and supporting each other. I wish you every success in the future.

Comments about teaching and learning in Ofsted report, March 2010

Your headteacher leads your school extremely well with the support of all the staff and governors. They make sure you are happy and you learn very well indeed. You make an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and across Years 1 to 6 you work exceptionally hard and make overall outstanding progress. As a result, you attain standards that are high for your age by the end of Year 6. This is because you receive excellent teaching.

"The Headteacher teaches English to Y6 children every day and she is the leader of English across school. Her mentoring, coaching and modelling of excellent teaching of reading for all teachers, ensures high, consistent expectations and standards. At Beecroft reading is taught through a broad and language-rich curriculum, providing children with the knowledge and skills needed to read with confidence and fluency, whilst developing a lifelong love of reading." Quality of Education Document, updated in March 2022.

Prioritise reading



The school is determined that every pupil will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities. All pupils, including the weakest readers, make sufficient progress to meet or exceed age-related expectations.

100% of children pass the Y1 phonics screening test year on year, regardless of their background, ability or educational needs. These high aspirations are achieved through the staff team consistently striving for excellence in all children. There is so much continuing work surrounding the process and progress for all children.


- Highly trained teachers and support staff
- Active and engaging, whole class phonics teaching twice daily
- Repetition and practising throughout lessons
- Teachers use same structure and terminology
- Every aspect of phonics lessons is explicitly modelled – ‘teach not test.’
- Ensure children ‘keep up’ and ‘catch up’ (additional interventions)
- Assessment to forward plan and intervene for individual children
- Strong emphasis on regular reading at home and full commitment from parents
- Application of phonics skills across the curriculum

Every child has a reading planner which is bespoke to the school’s reading expectations and information. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child’s reading at home. The planner gives guidance to children and adults at home how to record all reading activities. Rewards are earned in line with the number of books read.

A whole class text is taught weekly to develop reading language and comprehension skills, and sometimes this leads to writing activities later in the week. The Headteacher has bought about 100 sets of texts (30 books) over time and this expenditure shows the massive commitment to reading across school. The Headteacher also maintains the book stock, so that it is up to date, with excellent children’s authors that are relevant and challenging. When a new selection of books has been bought to try out, teachers and children like to read them first, before further purchasing decisions are made. Adults and children alike read all the books from one author and discuss them.

New vocabulary and language use is modelled for the children through the text and understanding is developed through high quality discussion. The children use the vocabulary effectively in their writing, because they understand the context and authorial intent. There is a clear writing policy that shows the age-appropriate, yet high expectation enveloped in lessons and end products. The children show enormous pride in their immaculate presentation of writing in English and all other curriculum subjects (fountain pens for all). The intensity of above expected reading skills and standards are evident consistently in all learning and across the curriculum.

The reading diary is used as a tool for staff to monitor the frequency of reading at home, to communicate between home and school. Teachers can have direct discussion with parents and provide any support that might be needed. Parents are also informed about their child’s phonics / reading progress every half term. Teachers send home assessment information with sounds and high frequency words to practise highlighted. This joint responsibility and ownership of practising reading at all levels, through school, is highly impactful, and the rapid progress encourages everyone to learn deeply and to read widely with passion and commitment.

	<p>The Headteacher plans English lessons with all teachers who need support to join the bespoke, specific learning approach. This is tailored for individual needs, along with coaching and modelling of effective teaching. Teachers discuss their planning and delivery with each other, and they are confident enough to ask for leadership help at any time. This joint commitment is made easier because the Head, DHT and AHTs are excellent teachers and lead by example as successful role models.</p> <p>KS2 reading lessons – in Y6 the class were recapping the section of the class reading book that they had read at home. The children were asked for comments to review the text. One child said that the language was beautiful, but it was about war which can be upsetting. It was impressive that they could see this juxta position in the book. The children were tasked to compare two paragraphs and write words and phrases in their drafting book. The tree was personified, and the children could discuss the effect of the strong adjectives used to describe how it is cherished, stroked and admired. In Y5 the focus book was called ‘Varjak Paw’ when the teacher was modelling fluency and expression, and the children followed the text with their finger. The children were discussing the change in mood effectively. Y4 children were also looking at how the author uses language, by building a picture in their mind using the complex vocabulary.</p> <p>In all lessons the children were fully focused on their learning, and not a second of time was wasted. Expectations are high and challenging, but the children relish this approach because the school teaching and learning systems are so tight and progressive. Smooth transition and continuity are the key to deepening the children’s knowledge, understanding and skills. The resulting outcomes and evidence in books are above national expectation in every year group.</p>
<p>Love of reading</p> 	<p><i>Stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction are chosen for reading to develop pupils’ vocabulary, language comprehension and love of reading. Pupils are familiar with and enjoy listening to a wide range of stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction.</i></p> <p>A wide range of stories, non-fiction, songs and rhymes are shared daily for enjoyment, to develop a love of reading and to shower the children in a rich range of vocabulary. Focus and new vocabulary words are always visible in the reading rich environments. Books that are read and re-read to children through daily sessions are carefully chosen to have strong narratives, extend vocabulary, and to reflect a range of backgrounds and cultures. Children can also take these books home to share with parents.</p> <p>Exciting book corners in every classroom display carefully chosen books that focus on popular children’s authors, recommended for the children to read. Also, half termly reading challenges encourage children to choose from the widest range of stories, non-fiction and poems. The new Gruffalo room in the EYFS space was created to excite and spark children’s imagination. The children have been using the space for role playing and storytelling.</p>



The libraries are available for all children in school to use. The EYFS children can borrow books from their library, including dual language books to support EAL parents, so that they can use questioning and reading vocabulary in their home language. In KS1 children have weekly sessions in the school library, and they can choose books to take home from a wide range of quality texts. The £180,000 main library at the heart of the school was opened in April 2016 by Dr Gervase Phinn and it was a wonderful celebratory event. A group of KS2 children received a letter from Gervase, who praised their writing in thank you letters sent to him..... *“Thank you for your delightful letters. It was such a lovely surprise on a wet and windy day in Yorkshire to receive them. Your writing is SO GOOD! It is neat, accurate and entertaining. I can honestly say that I have never received such impressive letters. Indeed, on the course for teachers which I directed last week I was showing them to those who attended to see the excellent standard children can achieve.”*



Y6 pupil mentors must apply for the role and be trained accordingly, so that they can read regularly with the youngest children in school. This happens outside of lessons and often in the library.

During the recent **World Book Day**, the children dressed up as characters in a book of their choice. At home the children were asked to make a character review. The school always encourages children to take part in the **Leeds Libraries** summer holiday reading challenge, and some children have been winners in the past.

Pupil voice meetings

Y6 children were using the main school library and they answered questions about reading. The library was described as “spacious, calm, and beautiful.” The children praised the wide range of books and how specific books by certain authors are always being tried out and recommended. The children said that they sometimes get ‘hooked’ on one author, but the teachers said, “Be brave and try a new author.” Non-fiction books were also mentioned, and one child said how subjects such as science, history and geography are well covered with a wide range of factual books. Since being in EYs the teachers have always encouraged children to try recommended books – this whole school passion is palpable. The Y6 children shared their current books and why they were enjoying them, using mature and complex language to explain features of the books. One child described how there are two kinds of reading in school, one when whole class books are used to expand vocabulary, discuss and explain authorial intent and determine the effectiveness of words and sentences. The other kind is when books are read independently for pure depth and enjoyment. Beecroft primary children literally have the best of both these worlds, and they know how special their education experience is compared to friends/family in other schools.

The **Y3 and Y4** children spoke about how phonics helped them to read when they were younger by learning the letter sounds, using flashcards for words and practising every

	<p>day at school and home. The children unanimously agreed that reading was enjoyable, and they were proud of how well children read at Beecroft, because “the teachers love it too.” When asked about reading in the curriculum, the children described examples of reading about electricity in science and them being able to read difficult words, and to find out their meaning (dictionaries and thesaurus books are out on tables all the time) independently. Maths is also easier to tackle because the children said that they can read the explanations and questions with better understanding. The strong link between reading and writing is the essence of rapid, deep progress across all learning. The Headteacher does research about relevant information, including EEF project outcomes, which she uses in regular staff training. Every adult is deemed to be a successful reader in their own learning too.</p>
<p>Programme and progress</p> 	<p><i>The school’s phonics programme matches or exceeds the expectations of the English national curriculum and the early learning goals. The school has clear expectations of pupils’ phonics progress term-by-term, from Reception to Year 2.</i></p> <p>By the end of Y1, 100% of pupils pass the phonics screening assessment. This has happened every year, from 2018-2021. This is well above national figures (82% in 2019). The school has always used Letters and Sounds, and they are now using the Essential Letters and Sounds programme. It supports teachers to deliver high quality phonics lessons, using the same teaching sequence and language in all classes. The emphasis is on teaching modelling (teach not test), and the repetition and over-learning so that phonic knowledge is thoroughly embedded.</p> <p>Nursery = phase 1, focus on speaking and listening skills. Spring term in Nursery, phase 2 letters and their sounds are gradually introduced.</p> <p>Reception = phases 2 and 3 are taught during the autumn and spring terms. Letters and their phonemes are taught, as well as digraphs and trigraphs. Phases 4 and 5 are then focused on in the summer term, with continual revision of previous phases.</p> <p>KS1 = continued focus on phase 5 and alternative spellings for previously taught sounds, along with continual revision of phases 2,3 and 4.</p> <p>Any children who struggle with higher reading skills in KS2 still access the whole class texts English lessons and well-trained support staff help them to understand the learning at their ability level. Target children, who are the lowest achievers, read individually to adults in school as much as possible. They are often paired up with higher achieving children during lesson discussions and activities.</p> <p>The Y6 children complete a past SATs paper once a term. In March, 60% of the cohort reached greater depth/higher levels in the reading test. Covid disruptions did not affect the children as much as in other schools, because most children were accommodated in school during lockdown periods. No supply staff are used in school and the whole staff team were flexible and diligent during high staff absence due to Covid. Gaps in learning were minimised and closed quickly, using the tight, clear systems for every child.</p>
<p>Books match sounds</p> 	<p><i>The sequence of reading books shows a cumulative progression in phonics knowledge that is matched closely to the school’s phonic programme. Teachers give pupils sufficient practice in reading and re-reading books that match the grapheme-phoneme correspondences they know, both at school and at home.</i></p> <p>Phonetically decodable Oxford Reading Tree books, that have been carefully matched to the child’s phonic knowledge and ability are used. Books are sent home on a weekly basis, with the expectation that parents listen to their children at least three times a</p>

week and to record this in the child's individual diary. The children also read these books in school during guided reading groups and individual reading sessions. Children are provided with a range of texts, including fiction, non-fiction and traditional tales. The intervention scheme called 'ELS' has been updated and staff are being trained in using it to help support children to keep up. New books cost £4,000 and they are phonetically well matched.

Individual reading of an unseen book with a familiar adult was evidenced with children from Y1 to Y3, who were functioning lower than expected. Generally, the children read fluently, used blending fingers/in their head when needed. Independence was obvious and the children were in control of their efforts when reading. This deep focus and concentration were also evident across all ability groups and in all English lessons.

Phonics from the start



Reading, including the teaching of systematic, synthetic phonics, is taught from the beginning of Reception.

In September 2021, the Reception children's individual baseline assessments identified 84% (36/48) of the cohort who were working well below age related expectations in reading. 31 of the cohort are male, 21 have EAL (46%), 20 have summer birthdays and more than half of the children didn't attend Beecroft Nursery. This information is similar in most cohorts entering the reception class. The two most vulnerable groups are the white socially deprived and low achieving, large Pakistani heritage families. The intervention scheme called 'ELS' has been updated and staff are being trained in using it to help support children to keep up. New books cost £4,000 and they are phonetically well matched. The EYFS outdoor area was transformed in 2021, costing £80,000 for the overhaul and building work. The opportunities for language development orally and written oozes in the spaces in the mud kitchen, book shed, mark making boards etc

mud kitchen



reading shed



gathering space



mark making



performance stage, cosy area



sand area



Phonics teaching starts from the very first week in September in Reception and KS1, and it has continued to be taught as a discrete lesson twice daily. The main lesson is in the morning and a shorter, revision lesson in the afternoon. Phonics is also incorporated into subject specific lessons across the curriculum, throughout the school day.

Phonics Lesson visits

In the **reception** classroom, the phonics session was rigorous, robust and full of pace. The children were totally engaged in the interactive learning and not a second was wasted. The teacher was using the agreed, familiar vocabulary, actions and script in the tightly structured approach, such as, “My turn, your turn, targeting particular children to check understanding, fast rote chanting, actions and hands signs.” The teacher’s diction and voice were simplified when needed and clear throughout. The children did robot arms to say sounds in words and they clapped to say the blended word eg. fish is 3 sounds then clap to say the resultant word. The teacher also explained words effectively. In **Y1** the consistency in the teaching of phonics was clear to see. The children were using robot arms to sound and blend, and me, then, you modelling behaviours were developed appropriately, with good pace and rigour.

Catch up quickly



The ongoing assessment of pupils’ phonics progress is sufficiently frequent and detailed to identify any pupil who is falling behind the programme’s pace, and targeted support is given immediately.

Phonics progress is assessed every half term and the data analysis is used to ensure that every child keeps up and fills in any gaps. In EYFS, any child who falls behind the pace of the learning receives additional daily intervention, to further repeat and practise supports them to catch up as planned. This year there has been an additional teacher in Reception, which has meant that teachers can provide targeted support for children in smaller groups. The EYFS leader has been able to provide daily coaching and support for new staff.

In KS1, there is an experienced support staff member who provides additional support for the lowest achieving children. These children also read individually to an adult every day and they have daily extra phonics in small groups and individually. In KS2 there are no sets in English and whole class lessons involve a massive range of abilities, so that children have constant exposure to high quality texts. KS2 children who might struggle to stay on track will attend additional lessons after school, outside of English lessons.

Teachers send words home to practise blending sounds in addition to the children’s daily reading books. The bespoke, individual reading diaries are a constant source for communication between adults at home and staff in school. They are monitored closely in school and contact (from the learning mentor) with home happens if the family need encouragement or support to read with their children at home at least three times a week. Due to reading being ‘the big thing’, homework in other subjects is minimal.

	<p>Spelling and multiplication tables are also high profile. For those children whose families cannot or will not read at home, they have small group teaching to improve their fluency.</p> <p>Inclusion in lessons and learning is carefully determined and planned, so that all children receive any additional support. Those children who might have struggled in KS1 and beyond are fewer because of the intensive start to reading and progressive foundation. By the end of Y1 children reach the end of the phonics programme and they</p>
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Recommendations/considerations:

- Summer term – meeting for parents to share the new Essential Letters and Sounds programme, so that they can help their children with developing reading accuracy and fluency at home.
- The distributed leadership from the senior leaders, cascades into different phases of school, to develop teaching excellence in every class. This constant is always affected by staff absences, maternity leave and staff moving to promotions. The Headteacher will continue to lead the strategic management of any changes, so that the children always have the best team teaching them.
- Continue to collect evidence to show that the excellence in the teaching and learning of reading (and curriculum) is above all expectations nationally and locally, for every child at Beecroft Primary School.
- Continue to welcome colleagues from across the city of Leeds into school, so that they can learn from the success at Beecroft.

Distribution list

Head teacher, Chair of Governors, SSIA

School Use:

	Has the NOVAC been shared with:		Have the recommendations been followed up by:	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
SLT				
Governors				