

Questions arising from HTs report (TW)

1. Fantastic news re: English Hub. Aside from the funding; the support for staff to implement the new phonics scheme from experts will undoubtedly add value. How does Keith intend however to further support those staff with its implementation, particularly when some already feel overwhelmed. I have taken two quotes from the survey results.

There is a lot of pressure to improve subject leadership (which I agree needs to happen) but without much time given to complete tasks.

Obviously as a school, we had a lot to work on when Keith arrived and it is good to know that we are getting on the right track again in regards to curriculum and subject leadership. It is being done in an encouraging and supportive way but it has been an incredible amount of work for us individually. With all of us in new year groups as well, it has been overwhelming. Some teachers are juggling more than one responsibility too. We are trying to implement so many things at once, it is hard to know what the main focus is. It is difficult to catch up on the current workload before more is added. All of the teaching staff are currently working considerable amount of evenings and weekends and not feeling on top of what is being asked. Mornings have been put aside for us and wellbeing time offered so I appreciate that some of this workload is unavoidable at the moment.

I suppose the difficulty here is that we have to move quickly and get a lot done in a short space of time. This does mean added pressure for staff, but it's hard to see how this is avoidable. Most school used the first lockdown to get their curriculums in place especially as the ofsted frame work changed in 2019, unfortunately, this didn't happen here so subject leadership hasn't been developed in the way it needs to be.

So far we have given staff half a day a day each term to support subject leadership, as well as cancelling staff meetings in both the Autumn and Spring term, allowing time to get the curriculum work done. Another day is planned the first week after half term and more time has been freed up in staff meetings. I have also offered cover for the English lead. For example, I am covering in Year 4 all day Tuesday, Weds morning and all day Thursday. This is to cover PPA, subject leader time and a wellbeing day for a member of staff. We have also offered a lot of training for staff to develop their subject areas, which includes time out of the classrooms, also largely covered by me.

Moving forward the workload should reduce as the curriculum change has happened it's a case of monitoring and ensuring that the curriculum is effective and having the impact we want.

We are also developing more time effective feedback strategies, aiming to reduce workload through less written marking and more verbal feedback.

2. Linked in part to the above, Keith's HT report does look to address this in the **SDP part 1**. My question still remains however, as well as phonics, Computing, Geography and key vocabulary all seemingly part of the support programme to develop staff, as well as other new curricular, the subject leads and Keith are also observing its usage in class. This all seems sensible and relevant, but is it having the desired effect? The Ofsted governor training seems relevant here; the 3 I's (Intent, Implementation, Impact), can staff articulate the intent for each subject area? Have they really been given enough time to translate all these changes into the classroom and how confident is Keith that they're being implemented as hoped? I mentioned this as part of the SIC review, particularly as we discussed Maths, my comment was around consistency. How confident is Keith that these changes are being implemented consistently across the school, and if not, should there be a priority? The list of keywords per subject is vast, should there again be non-negotiables or certainly those that need articulating and understanding demonstrated?

This is a good question and something we are working on. This year has very much been a development stage so the curriculum has been reviewed, researched and updated to fit the school's needs – essentially this year we have developed the intent – e.g. what we want the curriculum to look like and what our ethos for the subject is. We have also begun implementation meaning that the content is now being taught. This also links to teacher development e.g. what does a good lesson look like and how can research and understanding about how children learn support the delivery of lessons. So, can staff articulate the curriculum intent – they have developed this so I would say yes.

We have talked a lot about consistency as a staff in different areas including behaviour, marking/feedback; books (how they are expected to be laid out/expectations and standards) and subjects across the school (for example developing a clear sequence of learning and subject specific vocabulary). We have set aside more time for subject leaders to speak to staff and monitor their subjects – the next opportunity is after half term. This does relate back to your first question of workload – these are things that need doing, but I have to be mindful to go one step at a time. This is the key message for next year is consistency – we are going to have a big push on outcomes in books as the key focus e.g. do the quality of outcomes match the curriculum, and can we see progress in the work they are producing? So in answer to the second point how confident am I? – confident that changes have been implemented but not fully confident of consistency yet. For example, I have been in to maths lessons this week (and one Science) and seen some excellent teaching, but also some not so good examples. Subject leaders are also now taking time to see other teachers teach in their subject area – this is a change that they all need to get used to. (we no longer judge lessons e.g. good, outstanding etc. but it is a chance for teachers to take stock and develop their teaching a bit more.

Maths has developed into our main area of focus – this is based upon previous result trends, learning walks by SLT and the HIPs. We know that some teachers could do with developing

their approach to Maths teaching, which links to the review of the curriculum and the work we are now doing with the Maths Hub.

3. What impact has the training RC and HP had on the outcomes for boys? What data can Keith present that has suggested these have worked? What was the source / evidence-informed research used to deliver the training by RC and HP?

This is an area that hasn't fully been developed – potentially this is one to move to next year. We are mindful that there has been a gap between girls and boys in recent years. The training was focused on Meta-cognition and scaffolding to support teaching and learning of all children. I have attached the EEF evidence on the benefits of meta-cognition for your perusal on Gov Hub. The training has only just been concluded, so I can't categorically say there has been any direct impact. I will present the SATS data when it comes out at the next meeting, where we can review impact on the changes over the year.

There are a few key areas here:

- If we can get it right in the early years e.g Early reading, writing and Maths the gap between boys and girls should reduce (as well as PPG and SEN)
- Sport and activity levels need to be considered – e.g are children sat down for long periods of time and can we get them more actively involved in the learning or provide more opportunities for exercise and sport (active maths and English/PE & school sport/daily mile/increased movement breaks).
- Levels of behaviour/focus/self-determination – is there a difference between girls and boys

4. I couldn't find the PP spending sheet on GovHub to review, but how confident is Keith that funding received, albeit relatively small, is being used effectively? What data can Keith present to show that we are indeed closing the gap for our disadvantaged pupils?

PPG monitoring sheet attached to Gov Hub.

Key Areas:

- Supporting children through 121 tutoring – this is coming to an end this year. RJ is collating impact assessment from teachers but parents have commented on how much they think it has helped.
- Mentoring – children who have needed it have had mentoring sessions through St Albans Vista (this also links to the boys question)
- Support with wider activities e.g trips/residential/music lessons
- Support with uniform (where needed)
- Bookmark funding – support for PPG through reading mentoring in Year 2 and 3.

5. Curriculum. Dan has asked about Intent and Implementation. And my question is on the third 'I'. How will the school evaluate success (knowledge & skills learned) and change (a more effective curriculum)? (I'd also like to know if plans will be shared on website (many schools do this). And to point out that the Maths and English plans have not yet been shared on GH.)

Evaluation comes in two Key areas:

- assessment of outcomes (books, test results, final pieces of work, formative and summative assessment),
- Subject Leader monitoring (monitoring of teaching/pupil voice etc)

These are an ongoing process – which is discussed in response to the first question outlined above.

6. Boys priority. Keith acknowledged in SIC that this is an area that hasn't received significant focus, besides the training mentioned. Simply: Is there now anything we are doing differently (as a result of the training or otherwise) to raise outcomes for boys? Also Keith has suggested sport as a priority for next year, which I fully support, though (opinion coming up) this should absolutely be about getting girls involved too (lots of history at Aboyne of girls not having the same opportunities in football).

Please see response above. This is something that will be rolled over to next year and yes, the idea is that the focuses are not boy specific. If we can get it right for boys/ppg/SEN we should be getting it right for everyone.

7. Autism pilot. There appears to be a lack of parental engagement. Is this so? What do we need to change? (My old point about the stigmatisation of 'SEN').

Only one parent completed the questionnaire initially, but we did have some engagement in the sessions, particularly in the year group where the group sessions were being held, where parents started to come forward. Unfortunately, one of our parents decided to run the pilot down on facebook then made a formal complaint about the group work, leading to them being cancelled. In terms of engagement, we do offer a meet and greet with the SENCO as well as now termly ADPR meetings.