



Directors' Note for Portfolio Groups

Portfolio title: Pilton Bluecoat Local Governing Body

Date of meeting: Thursday 3rd February

Attended by: Dan Polak, Caroline Tucker, Caroline Preston, Zoe Charlton, Verity Goss (clerk)

Brief overview of discussion

CT explained that this was a one item meeting, to look at school improvement objectives.

DP had produced a one page summary of the School Improvement Plan. DP explained the rationale for producing the document – the SIP was a very lengthy document with a lot of pages. DP explained that it covered a two year period – it used to be annual, but DP explained that this was too short a period to make a sustained difference. It was more common to have a three year development plan, and this two year plan may get extended to a three year plan as there had been interruptions due to Covid.

DP explained that when Neil Swaite had visited he had recommended that the schools form a SIP on a page document to highlight the priorities.

CP highlighted that on the full SIP on curriculum plan/intent building futures had been listed twice – DP to correct to include positive mental wellbeing.

Local governors discussed bringing the SIP onto on page – DP explained that it was not compulsory, but the SIP was intended to succinctly communicate to all stakeholders what the school was working on. The full 24 page document was too long to do this. Full document was useful, but one page was useful to succinctly show what the key priorities were.

CT noted that most of the areas on the one page document was about the curriculum – how did wellbeing fit into this? DP stated that there was also the SEF, which assessed the strengths of the school. Wellbeing was a strength of the school, and was also included in the recovery strategy, targeting those disadvantaged by the pandemic. CT stated that she had attended a webinar about teaching computing in school. How was computing in school – how was it delivered, and what resources were available for the school? DP stated that Pilton had invested in a number of Chromebooks – devices were a big part of computing, and the government had also provided a number of devices to enable home learning, which were now in the school – 50 had been provided at Pilton. The school was in a strong place with the computing equipment it had. DP stated that Curriculum Maestro did not account for computing particularly well – the computing lead had been using the barefoot planning. There had been a new release of the computing curriculum, which was fully resourced. The computing lead had done their due diligence on the new curriculum, had attended a training course, and talked to computing leads at both the infants and secondary school. Both were intending to use Barefoot, which would give good continuity. Computing lead had led a staff meeting this half term on the delivery of this planning. Pilton was fortunate to have staff who were experienced in computing.

DP stated that TEAM also bought into the services of a technician, who wanted to try a management system that would be attached to every device in the trust, allowing him to fix issues remotely, as well as set up new items without taking the device away from the teacher. CP stated that she had experience of the system planned and it worked well. CP had also covered a computing session using the planning, which had gone very well.

How are the teachers and children finding the visualiser feedback policy? Is this use becoming consistent/familiar across years and classes? DP stated that he had attended a ITT training session where the teacher leading the session stated they would feel lost without on now. Teachers had stated that it had completely transformed their practise.

One of the things they were used for was to give as many examples as possible – teachers were increasingly finding that the more examples they were able to give the more time children had to process what was being said. Visualiser use had been completely implemented across the classroom. Children had responded well when asked about visualiser use. CT and CP to arrange second visit to look at the visualisers.

Can Speak Like an Expert be explained in more detail? DP stated that schools were realising more and more how easy it was for children to forget things. Ofsted defined learning as something remembered after time – a change in long term memory that was sustained and could therefore be built on. Teachers were working on embedding concepts and learning bases to ensure long term memory. With speak like an expert, every two weeks there was a 40 minute session where children worked on making a sentence using key words from their learning – each topic had 12-16 key vocabulary words. The teacher made games out of it – the aim was to remind children of what they had previously learnt. The aim was for children to remember the key learning, not just the activity that had taken place, and topics from previous years were revisited. Did curriculum newsletters still get produced? DP stated that knowledge organisers were sent home for each topic, which covered the same areas as the speak like and expert sessions. Local governors felt it was useful for parents to spark a conversation with their children about what was happening in school. DP agreed to share the speak like an expert model with parents, then send the word banks home.

How are teachers feeling/coping with arranging school trips and any extra pressures they may be finding trying to navigate the organisation of a school trip with Covid contingencies? How is DP finding this as Head e.g. managing teacher/parent expectations as trips are re-introduced? DP stated that it was very stressful, but trips were always a more stressful time. The main worry with the London trip was if a bubble had to be closed – DP stated that the insurance had been checked for what could be refunded if it could not go ahead. There were also a lot of back up staffing plans in case staff could not go at short notice. Staff had considered whether it was wise to attempt the London trip, but it was such a good experience for children and staff. DP was very pleased that it was going ahead.

What was happening with art at the moment in the school in relation to school improvement? DP stated that art did need improvement – the art lead was the same as the reading lead, and there had been more focussed on reading as this would be an Ofsted deep dive area. Next half term there would be more of a focus on art – they were working on getting some local artists to come in to school. The art lead would lead a staff meeting in a few weeks time to enthuse staff about art again. Did art have a curriculum team? DP stated that they did, and the TEAM art lead was very strong. Art was making progress but not at the place the school wanted it to be yet.

CT thought it would be lovely to have an art installation in the foyer area. DP stated that there was also a plan for a wall mural in the library. DP stated that there was a need to have a balance between training days, which were beneficial to staff, as well as time available for staff to create excellent classroom displays. DP stated that he strongly believed displays should be about the work that the children had done, and working with children to create them.

Dates of next meetings: Thursday 17th March 6.30pm.