

East Ayton School Improvement Committee

25/10/19

Attendees

- Derek Johnson
 - Samantha Hay (Chair)
 - David Tomlinson
 - Greg Harper
 - Eileen Race
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Agenda

- Lindhead School visit – SH, DJ
 - Recent Ofsted visits in the area – DJ
 - Staffing developments
 - Ofsted School Inspection Handbook - Governor functions
 - National Curriculum delivery
 - LA visit
 - Reading in school
 - Other updates
 - AOB
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Lindhead School visit – SH, DJ

SH and DJ attended Lindhead school on 9th October 2019. This was encouraged by the County advisors as Lindhead are a recently graded 'Good' school and the County advisors felt that their governing body was an example of best practice. DJ was to have a meeting with the Headteacher and then the Chair of Governors, with SH meeting with them afterwards. The Headteacher was unavailable, so DJ just met with the Chair and another governor who gave him a rundown of the school. Once SH joined them, the conversation was focused on specific things Lindhead do that we can adopt. Both SH and DJ were encouraged by the meeting as it was clear that although some of our documentation can be improved, we are operating in the prescribed manner, with focus and knowledge of our own school.

Question

What changes do we need to make to our governing body to improve?

Answer

The practices that we thought should be implemented were for the governors to assess the School Development Plan and document our role in it.

Lindhead have a Governance report at the end of each school year.

Governors need to talk to the children and make sure that there is documentation of the children's experience and the impact the School Development Plan has had on them.

Reinstate Link Governors to each subject area.

Action

SH and DJ to construct a Governors' Action Plan, this will be discussed at our next meeting and approved/changed as necessary at the next FGB meeting.

SH will create the Governance report for the academic year 2018/2019.

Governors to meet with children and ask questions with specific relevance to the SDP. This will be done during School Improvement Committee meetings and other Governor visits.

Issue of Link Governors will be discussed at the next FGB meeting.

Recent Ofsted visits in the area

DJ and LN have recently been to an Ofsted preparation meeting. The feedback from inspections that have happened locally are that they are on time, which would indicate that our visit will be first week in February or thereabouts. Other feedback was that the inspectors were not very friendly! DJ commented that was outside of our experience and that although our previous inspection was rigorous, it was fair and the inspectors themselves were very helpful during his 1-2-1 meetings with them.

Question

What does the timing of the recent visits mean for our school?

Answer

That we have a busy term ahead of us! DJ confirmed that we are working at full steam with clear focus and plenty of commitment from all members of staff and Governors.

'Deep Dives'

This approach continues to be the focus for recent Ofsted inspections and how these work seems to be a work in progress as both inspectors and schools get used to them. The main focus for the deep dives is reading at the moment. The advice was that schools are able to direct which subjects the inspectors look at – especially if there is a clear reason for this.

Question

What area would we want an inspection to focus on and why?

Answer

It would be good if we could ask the inspectors to focus on religious education - this was an area that was found to be lacking in the last Ofsted so we would have a clear reason for wanting them to assess our progress in this area. It is imperative for us to showcase our school and make sure that where there are excellent examples of work, etc., Ofsted sees them.

Action

DJ to continue to ensure that all areas are taught with rigour and consistency and to make sure that inspectors would be able to see clear progress in R.E. if this is what they looked at.

Question

If the main focus for Ofsted is reading, what does that mean for our school?

Answer

DJ confirmed that reading has been a focus for him and LN with the Y2 teacher taking an interest in subject leadership of this. Although he is only in his RQ year, he shows huge potential and interest in the middle leadership. DJ confirmed that it would be too much to expect him to take over subject leadership of this key area at this stage of his career but that he is being included in discussions/meetings/plans regarding the area and has attended a course on guided reading that was extremely useful.

Staffing Developments

We have received a resignation letter from a teacher. As previously discussed, the teacher's work had been a cause for concern over this term and although many coaching sessions had taken place there had been little or no improvement in their performance. Their resignation comes before any developing performance takes place.

Question

How will we ensure that we create higher standards in this classroom and give the children consistency with a new appointment and the possibility of supply teachers?

Answer

DJ confirmed that we have an existing member of staff who is an NQT, currently working as an ATA in Y6 in the morning and doing PPA cover as an NQT in the afternoon. Both DJ and LN are happy that their work is of a high enough standard that they will meet the challenge of taking over this class. DJ said that they will be monitored closely and coached in whatever way needed to ensure that not only are they exhibiting good teaching but raising the progress of the children in this class and raising expectations. For the remainder of the term the outgoing teacher will do the ATA and cover work.

Question

Can we afford this solution?

Answer

SH confirmed that during the Finance Committee meeting the day before, this restructure had been discussed at length and it was decided that it was affordable and within our budget.

Ofsted School Inspection Handbook - Governor functions

The Headteacher circulated the Governance section of the Ofsted School Inspection Handbook (items 233-241) and gave an overview. A short discussion was held around item 238:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff;
- overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure that its money is well spent, including the pupil premium.

Governors and the Headteacher agreed that we already focus on these points in all our interactions with school, and will continue to do so.

Action

Chair to ensure that this section is given to all governors at the next FGB meeting.
SH and DJ to investigate how much it will be to join the National Governors Association.

National Curriculum delivery

The Headteacher communicated the need to understand the structure of the curriculum and for Governors to be able to evidence this. The school's curriculum must be structured around the National Curriculum as we assess directly against its statements. He explained the need to reason how we've interpreted the National Curriculum, for example why we've chosen certain topics over others (e.g. Vikings instead of Romans). Whilst the National Curriculum is the bedrock, we must also allow for our own uniqueness within our delivery of it, as it is recognised that this is also vital.

Action

To help our understanding as Governors, the Headteacher committed to presenting a broad view of the structure of the National Curriculum to all Governors around how it is interpreted and subsequently delivered in school. It was agreed that the Headteacher would also deliver separate, more focused briefings to the School Improvement Committee to enable us to discuss areas in greater depth.

LA visit

The report of a Local Authority Traded Support visit undertaken on 9 October 2019 was shared for information. It was noted that the report was encouraging.

Reading in school

There was a discussion on the format and impact of guided reading in school.

Question

How can we as governors understand this better?

Answer

It was resolved that a forthcoming topic for the School Improvement Committee would be to listen to children reading and gain a greater understanding of the impact of guided reading.

Action

Add this as a specific topic for investigation at an upcoming School Improvement Committee meeting.

Other updates

The Headteacher provided the following updates:

- The Department of Education asked for the school's story of our effective recent recruitments as it had been raised with them as good practice with positive outcomes;
 - How the Secretary of State for Education on a recent visit had reflected positively on the school's use of Coastal Communities funds used for our Forest School.
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AOB

None raised.

Potential date(s) for the next meeting to be emailed round by Chair, possibly 8th November.

Meeting closed.