

East Ayton School Improvement Committee

22/11/19

Attendees

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

Apologies

- Eileen Race
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Agenda

- Local Authority visit
 - Update from Headteacher - DJ
 - Staff Wellbeing
 - AOB
 - Governor Impact Statement
-

Local Authority visit

Helen Davy had recently been to school for a visit. She praised the School Development Plan but encouraged DJ to ensure that lessons can be clearly identified as being part of the SDP. She had been worried that we were using monitoring as the end process rather than the means to an end.

Question

Is this what is happening?

Answer

No, the mentoring is being noted on the SDP but as part of the process and when it has been done, a corresponding action point is added to the plan afterwards

Action

DJ confirmed that action points are added to the SDP after monitoring has taken place and followed up.

Update from Headteacher - DJ

DJ explained that the monitoring process has identified that the teaching sequence for writing is not being used properly.

Question

How has this been resolved?

Answer

DJ and LN have done a lot of work going through the teaching sequence with all the teachers. DJ took away the planned work and had two training meetings with the teachers.

Action

All teachers then went away and incorporated the teaching sequence into their long term and medium-term plans.

DJ also confirmed that the monitoring has also shown that the basics are still not being enforced rigorously enough. There has been much focus on content and it seems to be that this is not married up with robust use of grammar – this is how we raise expectations. Again, that has been stressed to all teachers and DJ will continue to assess.

Governor Comment

This proves that the monitoring is working well and that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are being responsive to issues that the monitoring raises.

Question

We changed our marking scheme for maths last year, to great effect. Are we doing the same for English?

Answer

The teachers are using 'in the moment' marking for much of the English work but it will mean changing their practice quite a lot to use it for the whole of English marking, so this is a work in progress. DJ confirmed that, as per the previous discussion, he is having to remind all teachers about the need to focus on basic grammar/spelling, etc.

Question

Is 'in the moment' marking applicable for English?

Answer

Yes, especially when used with the technique of 'in the moment re-drafting'. This process works particularly well with writing when the teacher lets the class get on with the work and then stops them 15 minutes in to check that they are using key things. For example, 'Let's stop everyone and double check that you have spelt the date right. Have you used capital letters?'. This can be very dynamic.

Action

Currently being used by JM in Class 6 and this will be rolled out to all classes.

DJ also commented that the staff have all been reminded that they need to comment periodically on the marking to encourage pupils and to raise expectations.

Governor Comment

We have lots of NQTs/RQTs in school and the mentoring system seems to be working well, but it does seem that they are coming out of college with gaps in their knowledge. For example, the teaching sequence – it would seem reasonable to assume that this is part of their training but clearly not.

Question

How are DJ and LN finding the mentoring process and is it putting too much pressure on themselves?

Answer

DJ reported that they are fine with the work but that they are having to be adaptive and re-focus plans to better suit what the NQTs need.

Staff Wellbeing

A discussion was held on the wellbeing of staff.

Question

Are we putting too much pressure on the staff?

Answer

DJ commented that the amount of pressure we had been putting on the staff was entirely in line with the work that needed to be done in the school but that we had now finished the monitoring phase of the SDP so that the pressure would naturally lessen. There is a definite pattern of collaboration and mentoring along with direct instruction. DJ and LN have been able to identify which staff members are starting to feel overwhelmed and are able to provide individual coaching. SH commented that she had spoken to lots of the staff over the

course of the term and had had some productive conversations with the staff about coping with pressure and getting used to the job.

Governor Comment

It is hard to teach robustness but hopefully we can lead by example and continue to ask everyone in school how they are – including DJ and LN. Also, it is perhaps appropriate at some point to acknowledge that what we have been doing is enough and allow all the changes/instructions time to bed in – this will possibly ease the pressure teachers feel or at least give everyone confidence that they are doing a good job. DJ advised again that we had naturally reached that point.

Action

Staff mental health is to continue to be a priority for the SLT and governors, including the wellbeing of DJ and LN.

AOB

DJ advised that the nursery had had to be closed that day as there was a terrible smell which seemed to be coming from the septic tank. When the property was handed over to us, we were not advised that there was a septic tank, so this came as a surprise. It would be reasonable to suggest that it needed emptying and DJ was going to organise.

The date of the next meeting was set for 6 December 2019.

Governor Impact Statement

Governors benefitted from receiving information about the local authority visit. We had gained a better understanding of the reactivity and purpose of monitoring and how it can be used for dynamic changes to what we are focussing on in school. Also, it is imperative that the governors keep in mind the importance of the wellbeing of all staff in school.

Meeting closed.