Blog w.e. 27.04.18

Welcome again to my weekly blog. We now have our Local Authority March 2018 Teaching and Learning Review report and are proud to share identified strengths with you and thank-you, as ever, for your part in continually improving provision and outcomes for our children:

* There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils;
* Pupils enjoy coming into school and are motivated to learn;
* Most pupils show a good grasp of age appropriate mathematical concepts, reflecting the structured and methodical teaching of this subject and the strong focus on reasoning;
* Pupils across the school demonstrate a secure understanding of writing formats and grammatical terminology;
* A significant number of pupils have made accelerated progress;
* Peer and self-assessment is a strong feature of the school and empowers pupils to produce work of a high standard;
* Pupils at the school are well-mannered and show courtesy and respect to each other, staff and visitors. They are proud of their school and appreciate the way in which adults support their learning. They are clear about the school’s ethos, ‘golden rules’ and sanctions, and trust the staff to sort out any behavioural issues;
* Pupils are given additional responsibilities to promote their personal development and self-esteem;

As you know, one of the Academy’s main priorities this year is to improve attendance. All staff believe that it is essential that our children attend school on time and regularly. Any loss of time at school can adversely affect a child’s attainment and all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. As all of the children are also aware, our target is for the whole school’s attendance to at least 97.5%. Attendance is celebrated weekly in our celebration assemblies as well as half termly, where children who have 100% attendance are recognised. Our whole school attendance to date is 94.8%. This is a decrease compared to the week prior to the Easter holidays which means that there is still plenty of room for improvement! A special recognition has to go to **Hufflepuff AC**, **Gryffindor CD** and **Gryffindor LD** who were our highest attendees, all attending for 99.3% of the school week. Please try your best next week by aiming high towards are target as this needs to be a whole team and community effort!

As well as improving attendance, we continue to work on our other School Improvement Priorities and development areas that include application of skills in writing and consistently capturing the good progress being made by pupils.

Now for an update on this week’s year group learning. A huge thank-you to those of you who have invested in copies of your child’s class text and those who have borrowed from the library; the additional immersion in the books is clearly evident in children’s learning at school.

Year 3 Gryffindor have learned how to sketch, paying attention to detail and using lots of different techniques this week - the children were really engrossed; all that could be heard was pencils finely drawing lines. The finished products are amazing and I can't wait to see them displayed around school. Also, children have built on their learning around newspaper reports and have begun to write the main body of the text; this can be the trickiest part of a newspaper to write, but they've done a super job and are ready to edit and improve next week. The children enjoyed critiquing their teacher models as they had missed so many language features out; it's such a good job our children are Gryffindor writing wizards. In maths, Year 3 have progressed to adding and subtracting lengths using different ways to show jottings and they thoroughly enjoyed their carousel lesson where they could apply all their skills and challenge each other’s answers and reasoning. Well done Year 3, keep it up!

In Year 4, the children have been researching exotic animals and have written fantastic non-chronological reports on wild and wonderful creatures. They have then used their findings to sketch images of the animal which left its mark on my office last week. It seems that it was a mixture of creatures from a ‘giraffeopotomus’ to a ‘lionhawk’ - how strange!  We certainly have some imaginative artists in our school and the children can’t wait to use their painting techniques to add finishing touches to their animals next week. In maths, the children have been ordering and comparing decimals. They are competent at discussing and applying their place value knowledge when working with numbers up to 2 decimal places. Fantastic news Year 4!

This week, in Ravenclaw, the children have partaken in a range of learning activities based around the curious book of 'Alice in Wonderland' which they are really enjoying. They have explored and focused on using commas in a variety of ways; creating some wonderful, imaginative setting descriptions based on 'Wonderland'. In maths, Year 5 have started to master their understanding of subtracting fractions as they have delved into complex reasoning problems - excellent gumption was needed from all! Coinciding with St. George's Day on Monday, Year 5 have been developing their knowledge about facts about the British Isles whilst in science, the children have been using some excellent vocabulary to describe the different properties of materials - they have been shocked by the amazing properties of regular household items such as foil, cork and plastics. Ask them all about them!

Once again the Year 6 children have worked tremendously hard as we draw closer to our SATs week. This week, there has been a real focus on working on areas of development in response to our practise questions. What's lovely to see is the increased confidence of the children this past couple of weeks. Our writing focus has been to develop and further practise difficult grammatical terms: perfect tenses, progressive tense, the subjunctive verb form and co-ordinating conjunctions – this all sounds very complicated but our children are becoming experts with technical grammatical terms. In writing application, the year group has continued to develop their 'Candy House' stories to allow those creative juices to flow. There have been some wonderful texts written with some very surprising and unusual twists which have kept the teachers on the edge of their seats as they've read them. In reading, there has been a continued focus on applying their secure learning when answering test base questions. As for maths, the children's arithmetic skills have greatly improved and our targeted focus is reasoning. Brilliant Year 6 - keep up the hard work. I know that you are proud of yourselves and I am proud of you too!

Alongside all of our Maths and English learning the children continue to develop their language skills in French led by Madame Barratt. All of the children are starting new topic areas in French this term. Year 3 Gryffindor are learning how to talk about families and pets. These are always interesting lessons as it helps the children to get to know each other better. Year 4 Hufflepuff are going to be able to talk about the weather; they will even be performing their own weather forecasts! It's about time Year 5 Ravenclaw found out a bit more about France and so they will be looking at geographical features, using French sentences. Year 6 Slytherin are keeping their French number skills secure in between SATs preparation by playing number games together.

Mrs Machin