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| April 2022Curriculum Leader.The passion, experience and desire for the very best opportunities for Longton children shines through. Rebecca described the construction of the curriculum over time, and how it has been adapted, altered and changed through experience and evaluation of teaching. It is clear that this has been a whole-school effort; written by staff, planned by staff and linked together, by staff. This shows ownership by colleagues, and allows knowledge of content in other year groups. CPD opportunities have been taken, most recently at seeing EYFS curriculum and how that flows up into KS1 and 2.In terms of curriculum intent and purpose, Rebecca placed an emphasis on skill progression, the idea of a curriculum that builds on successive concepts and key knowledge (aka Bruner’s spiralling curriculum) and is relevant to the locality. For example, elements of local history are incorporated through the key stages (eg bricks, railways, links to Preston, the docks). We talked about the implementation of subject areas, looking at some Foundation Subjects (Science, Geo, History, RE, Art, DT). There is a standard format for planning: essential knowledge, the vocab. Cultural capital: real people. Currently developments include looking key people, and then whether children would benefit from looking at them again in a later year group (ie at a greater depth). This feeds through into medium term planning for each year group: Key Questions per week (or so), the key learning, types of activities, events. For each medium term plan there is a reminder about vocab, and links to other subjects. I posed a question: Does it track through? Do skills build on previous learning? Rebecca used Fair testing as an example: introduced Y1, comparative tests Y2, predicting. Y3: variables. Higher levels predictions. Y4: change, staying the same. As a subject leader, she knows this through looking at books, talking to children and colleagues.Each year group has its own curriculum: each subject, topics mapped out, skills etc. There is also a sheet for each subject, with skills already met, what prior learning there has been, and what post-learning there would be. Overall curriculum planning is adapted, tweaked etc, as colleagues’ familiarity and experience grows. There are non-negotiables for each year group, for each subject. We talked about whole school themes, a week spent on one area (eg Local history, Art, events such as WW1, Space). We noted that children spoke very positively about these, and remembered them. The school leadership team place a high emphasis on opportunities for subject leaders to monitor standards in their subjects, and evaluate the impact. Subject leaders have time usually 0.5 fortnightly. This time is used to look at books, planning, meet with pupils for discussions. This is also used to monitor standards and coverage. We talked about Care, Grow and Shine. Rebecca indicated that references where possible were made, but not interlinked at all costs and to the detriment to curriculum coverage. The key elements of C,G and S are developed alongside. We talked about assessment. Assessment takes place at different levels and at different time. Colleagues will usually do some form of assessment at the start of a topic to gauge prior learning. This was evident in lesson visits yesterday (25/4/22, when Y4 children were started their environmental science work). There is use of on-going assessment through marking and questioning, pupil discussions, before final assessments of skills and knowledge at the end of term/topic. The school has a system of grade 1, 2, 3, and will formally assess children as emerging, developing or secure. There are also Google quiz at the end, and Quiz cards which are used at other terms to keep that knowledge in the forefronts of the children mins (aka mental warm up from the original NNS). New teacher/next year uses this assessments when planning. Subject leader monitor whether this information is used. Rebecca was particularly proud of the subject organisers, which chart learning over the ½ term ahead (on website and Google classroom). Governors: Rebecca has given two inputs as a subject leader to Governors. There are also link Governors, who from time-to-time join in with lessons. *Commentary. The enthusiasm of the curriculum leader shines through at all times. You get the impression of a team-approach to the curriculum design. There are common messages coming through, whether it be via children, lesson observations or subject leader discussions. The development of the whole child is being delivered through a very carefully planned curriculum.*  |
| EnglishWe started our conversation of by discussing pressing current priorities. Saundra confirmed that this was phonics, having a phonics scheme that was in place by September 2022. The school has invested considerable time and effort in identifying the best phonics scheme for the school. They have looked at some 15 different schemes, before choosing one that is best for the children. Animalphonics, an accredited scheme, based on Letters and sounds. It has been chosen because of the layout (ie the phonics before any pictures), the rhymes & songs that bring these phonics to life. It is linked to writing and spellings. It has a range of assessments, a tracking system and a choice of interventions for those children at risk of falling behind. There will be fidelity to one scheme. Training has been provided for all staff, which is considered very important as teachers may rotate in and out of KS1. Fast track, bounce-back interventions are linked. We talked about reading scheme books. Books bands are linked to phonics phases. Writing: standards are considered to be lower than usual, possibly as a result of COVID. Overall, Saundra would consider that writing amongst girls was above that of all girls nationally. However, standards amongst boys was below national averages. With regard to standards in reading and writing for each year group:-Y1: on track.Y2: reading ok, writing standards have been affected by COVID Y3: off track. Issues connected to attitudes to learning. Y4: on track, albeit with SENDY5: aboveY6 below, especially their vocabulary, inference, deduction, writing . Saundra outlined a range of assessments, in particular no more marking, which includes an element of writing moderation. Other systems include check up weeks (tests, mid term). Rising stars is used for reading and GPS. Reading: as part of the schools aim of ensuring the highest standards in reading, there is a minimum of 10 minutes per day devoted to reading. Termly newsletter about reading are shared with parents. Catch up support is offered for those who don’t read much at home. We discussed monitoring and evaluation systems. Saundra reflected this as being a mixture of both formal (books, scrutiny, Snack & Chat) and informal (pupil discussions in the staffroom, over lunch etc, staff meetings). SLT systems are also in place. Link Governor: termly visits. |
| Mathematics. Erin. In preparation for the post, and recently, CPD has included: SMDG, Edge Hill, specialist teaching, Cert, Diploma. Progression in fractions. CPD within the cluster. Teaching experience is mainly KS2. Having just taught in Y6, this gives extensive knowledge of expectations across the KS2.Maths curriculum mainly based on White Rose maths. Colleagues like the consistency in the planning and layout. Other schemes were used to supplement and augment this if the time allocated to a particular topic is too short. Colleagues are encouraged to use their professional judgement. Assessments of pupils are made using White Rose and the Lancashire scheme. Question level analysis is done on a regular basis to see which areas of maths children are finding easy, and which they find hard. This is good practice, as it allows future teachers to know the strengths and weaknesses of pupils’ mathematical ability. We acknowledged that there remains an impact of covid Erin identified several age groups where it had impacted the most (Y2 and 3). In addition, colleagues had found it harder to teach certain areas of maths remotely eg Shape and Space, measures, fractions. Reasoning however is the main area for development. It was acknowledged that all these areas require practical equipment or specialist input. The impact is still being felt with gaps in knowledge, uneven learning within cohorts, and attitudes to learning. We discuss how we could provide perhaps even training for parents (eg websites, BBC). The subject leader also referred to workshops prior to COVID and that perhaps these could be repeated. Monitoring and evaluation: Release time is given fortnightly, so is once a month after other subjects are included. Erin states that she conducts lesson observations, looking at books with children alongside as well as drop ins. She praised the importance of snack & chat once a term which allowed a excellent evaluation of maths teaching.We discussed what standards were like in each year group:-EY: February in lineY1: gaps, but will be in line or above. Y2: was going to be in line or above. Impact of 6 week teacher placements noted. Saundra has her work cut out. 80% hopeful.Y3: standards are below. Impact of COVID. Absence due to COVID. Interventions. Y4: was below at the end of Y3. Group of 6. Catching upY5: in lineY6: below. I asked about identified groups.SEND: PIVATs, ½ termly. Linked to IEPs. Standards are generally below non-SEND children but progress is good. Girls: traditionally, girls attainment was considered to be below, although cohort specific. Current evaluation is in line. Boys: Generally in line. Erin identified certain year groups which were boy-heavy eg Y3, which impacts on standards.DAPs: are monitored using the tracking system.  I asked what were current priorities. Erin referred to use of data analysis, tracking, question analysis, which identified concrete & pictorial learning, reasoning. Erin indicated that as a result, new equipment had been purchased. I asked to see these, and was immediately taken to two classes and shown a range of practical resources. Erin considered that her M&E had indicated initial impact in terms of confidence (evidenced through lesson observations. PAQ, surveys). Another area for development is initiating interventions for reasoning by TAs. We discussed the impact of catch-up: funding. Some good uptake, but was considered to have limited impact amongst some children.Consistency in planning is evident. I was shown planning at different levels. Documentation is provided for colleagues of key learning for each year groups, and like other subjects, prior and post learning. Erin talked about the role and input from the nominated Governor (Alison). They jointly do book looks, review assessments, and do data analysis.  |

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| *Commentary.**Certain consistent messages come from this:-** *High priority is given to middle managers given time to monitor and evaluate standards in their subjects. Core and foundation subjects are given fortnightly release time. Even with several subjects to monitor this still allows subject leaders time to evaluate the impact of new initiatives or recent purchases (eg practical equipment).*
* *Core subject leaders were able to discuss standards is their subject, year group by year group. They were able to identify cohorts that were exceeding expectations (eg Y5), as well as those that are behind (Y2, Y3, Y6). Within this, core subject leaders were able to identify particular groups and children who required support and interventions.*
* *Common systems are used in terms of the different layers of planning (long-term, medium-term, planning for the week ahead, prior and post learning sheets. There is commonality in key vocab, the knowledge that needs to be taught. Units topics etc start with Key Questions. This was confirmed by lesson observations where KQ were evident in books and on display.*
* *All subject leaders felt well supported by senior leaders, with a high priority given to their CPD to enable them to operate effectively.*
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| History.Helen studied History at A level, and has a strong family connection with the subject. She has had a range of CPD opportunities in the subject (eg Chris Quigley), and also has delivered staff meeting (eg tonight!). In terms of strengths, Helen would suggest the greatest strength is the enthusiasm for history amongst children. Whole school events are a strength (eg WW1, links to local history groups), a viewpoint shared by children (see pupil discussions). Helen discussed the shared ambition of children’s knowledge of British history, but the importance of developing their skills and conceptual development (cause, consequence, interpretations of history from differing viewpoints). She outlined a recent focus on chronology (cf . displays in KS2 classrooms). Helen identified a need to improve on using secondary sources. Helen considered that planning was laid out “how I’d like”! There is a team approach to curriculum planning, delivery and evaluation, with experienced colleagues. There is progression through KS1 into KS2. Medium term plannings show NC coverage, skills, vocab etc. Skills and concepts build on previous learning, through previous and post learning planning. Assessment is on-going (in class), or through quiz/topic quizzes. We discussed curriculum intent, what was particularly important to the school and community. The subject leader was able to outline topics that included (very) local history (ie the brick kilns), field trips (Southport, holidays then and now), then how links in learning were made eg George Stephenson (Y1) then into Y2 Victorians and railways. Y5 Preston docks. I asked about how Helen conducts her M&E. She provided examples of Y3 and 4, looking at Romans, Crime and Punishment.An ambition was to spend more time in class observing, using her fortnightly time.  |
| GeographyWe started our conversation by acknowledging that HMI consider that Geography is the worst taught subject in schools. The subject leaders evaluation was that standards were good, and that it was well taught. The subject leader considers that pupil discussions and books would confirm this judgement Staff expertise is quite high, with 3 staff are Geographers. Discussions with pupils suggest they know what Geography is, rather than ‘it’s topic’. In terms of strengths and areas for development in terms of the quality of teaching and pupil achievement. Positives: Field trips. Orienteering, Southport, river study. Local: brick croft. Longton Landmarks, capitals, Counties, NS America. Italy. Docks, cotton. Areas for development: mapping. Human geography and physical features. We looked at a range of books to identify pupils’ achievement in mappingY1: digi-maps. Simple keysY2: world maps, oceans. Countries in EuropeY3: UK with more detail. Scaled maps, compass points. Mountain rangesY4: Europe in more detail (reinforcement, at greater depth)Y5: field work, cold perhaps annotate their sketches. An ambition is to go see more Geography in action, perhaps team teaching as well.  |

*Commentary*

*The common features of subject leadership continue into the Foundation Subjects:-*

* *Consistency in planning: long-term, medium-plan*
* *Time given to monitoring and planning*
* *Colleagues able to talk about their CPD to support them in the role*
* *Strengths in their subjects, areas of learning that need improving*
* *How the curriculum builds on previous learning. They may return to a concept or skill (eg chronology, mapping) but it is at a deeper level. This was evidenced by work in books*
* *If colleagues had identified the need to develop resources, they were able to show in each class where this was, and how it had been used.*
* *A common feature was the support they felt from senior leaders*