

Virtual Visit Maths: 26 November 2020

Purpose

Governors can't visit school at the moment so on 26 November I had a zoom call with Miss Hunter who is the lead teacher for Maths across the school. The focus was to find out about how some of the actions in the DEP regarding Maths were being addressed.

We agreed that it was a very challenging time for staff. Miss Hunter explained that in her role as lead for Maths she had to think through exactly how she would complete tasks to ensure they were Covid secure, for example, if she was going into another classroom. On school in general, she said that the new pegs had made a real difference as it was now much easier for the children to hang up their coats etc.

Our discussion is summarised below.

Assessing where children are

Miss Hunter explained that the Maths scheme which the school uses – White Rose – is arranged in blocks (eg number placement, fractions). Teachers have first of all gone over the key elements for the particular block for the previous year before moving on to the current year's work. For example, in a Y4 class they have covered the key elements for Y3 first before moving on to the Y4 elements.

Teachers will be able to see which children are on track, which aren't, when they have the first "data point" the first week back in January. There was a mini data point in October so teachers could see how Covid had affected children's progress in each year group. (Note for governors: Janet and I will be meeting with Jenni after that data point to look at the findings).

What did the mini-data point show? Are there issues with particular year groups?

It is individual children in each year group who have been affected rather than there being issues in specific year groups.

What action is being taken to address gaps?

Children who have gaps are supported in the lesson. There is also extra support in the afternoon "same day interventions". These are short, sharp, quick catch-ups so that children don't miss too much of other lessons.

What about Pupil Premium children?

All teachers have a list of the Pupil Premium, SEN and EAL children are in their class so they know where to focus interventions. The approach for Maths is as above, giving extra support, same day interventions where needed and monitoring progress. Teaching assistants support PP and SEN children.

What about Greater Depth children?

If children who were working at Greater Depth (GD) are struggling, they are supported in the afternoon with further challenge.

Miss Hunter conducted a Learning walk in KS2 in early October and as a result has introduced changes for GD children which started on 23 November. She showed me an example of a question sheet. Each class now has 3 main questions, 2 mastery questions and one GD question. GD children don't do the main questions but go straight to mastery and GD questions. They are told when they are moving onto mastery so know which questions to do. (Ofsted had identified that there was a need for the more able children to move onto challenging work more quickly). Miss Hunter is monitoring how this works in practice.

Marking work

Ofsted had raised about delays in marking work during lessons. Since Ofsted, Miss Hunter has made changes to the marking policy within the Teaching and Learning policy setting out how a teacher or TA should mark work if they are in class on their own - "float and mark". This isn't an issue at the moment as there are always two members of staff in class.

Y6

Y6 will have SATS in summer term. All children, including GD, receive additional support in the afternoon from their class teacher. This focuses on the SATS areas which score most marks eg fractions. There will be practice SATS tests. There will also be practice tests next term.

EYFS

F2 have missed a whole block of Maths learning from F1 so Miss Hunter has changed the curriculum to ensure that is covered in F2.

Miss Hunter said that they had noticed a massive difference with the children starting in Foundation. They were struggling to play. When staff looked into it, they realised that they were only children and often there weren't toys at home. Staff are showing them how to play games, do jigsaws, take turns.

Home Learning

Maths is included in the home learning which is sent home. Miss Hunter explained it was a challenge to balance their responsibilities for teaching the class with supporting children at home. Not all parents are able to engage with the learning. Feedback from parents in the summer term was that this could be because they were working or perhaps didn't feel confident they could support their child. When children return to school, they are supported to catch up with interventions etc.

Conclusion

Many thanks to Miss Hunter for her time, detailed and clear explanations and enthusiasm. The zoom lasted 30 minutes and I received a clear picture of what is being done for Maths: catching up, stretching Greater Depth children, supporting individual pupils and addressing Ofsted concerns. Although I obviously couldn't talk to children or see any of this work in action, I felt the virtual visit was still of great value. I look forward to when I can go into school again.