

Kender Primary School review

Tuesday 13 March 2019 facilitator: Joan Barnes

Focus area: How can we improve our practice at Kender so that all children are mostly active rather than passive in their learning.

Evidence base

- Prior to the review the team received the draft timetable for the day which was very structured along with the relevant sections for the review from their SDP. The website also provided access to further information which was up to date, easily accessible and positively reflected the schools' very clear vision, its' ethos, values and inclusivity.
- During the welcome/introductory meeting with Senior Leaders they shared their vision for the school and explained why the focus for the Peer Review had been chosen and the specific strands to be explored, and what they hoped would be achieved by the end of the day. They had prepared a pack for each reviewer which included all the previously shared documents as well as pro-formas for recording observations. They explained the timetable, shared an outline of their curriculum as well as some potential questions for the pupil voice session. All were very helpful.
- The reviewers were given the opportunity to select one of three strands on the timetable to follow throughout the day for lesson observations but for the School Walk, visit to Reception classes and the Forest School, reviewers stayed as a group. In the base for the day English books from across the school were available throughout and regular feedback sessions were timetabled, which was very helpful. An opportunity to observe the Opal Provision at lunchtime was built in to the schedule as was a Pupil Voice Session with children from all year groups.
- Senior Leaders were very open, transparent and welcoming, they demonstrated a very strong team approach and were enthusiastically passionate about their role in leading and guiding the school and their clarity of vision was impressive. They were all very clear about wanting the children to be actively involved in their learning and for them to become independent confident learners, and they were all very keen to do even better in the future and welcomed feedback as to what they could further improve, why and how. Throughout the day they answered questions, as and when asked, provided further information if requested, and clearly knew their school, staff and children very well indeed, and clearly understood their role as leaders and the expectations. They were very proud of their school, very positive and incredibly proud of the children's achievements and nothing was too much trouble. The base for the day was perfect and the hospitality provided throughout the day was wonderful and very much appreciated by all!

Key findings from the review

- The review team were very warmly welcomed by everyone, both staff and children, in a professional, supportive, positive manner. It was very clear that expectations were very high on entry to the school, everyone was very helpful, friendly, calm and certainly ensured visitors felt special. Relationships observed were very respectful and positive across the school. The culture the school have created was impressive and the schools ethos and values were clearly evident everywhere.
- Kender have developed a fantastic learning environment in which to learn, both inside and outside it was an inspirational place to be! The facilities were amazing, they were creative, stimulating, exciting, and the clarity of the vision for learning was evident everywhere. There were some incredible displays of a very high quality which not only celebrated the children's art work but also a range of other high quality work. The schools' ethos was fabulous and it was very clear that they were always striving to improve and their desire to develop independent active learners who lead, was passionately shared.
- The children were fantastic and certainly a credit to the school. They were polite, articulate, confident, happy, respectful and very keen to contribute in class when asked questions. Their learning behaviours were consistently impressive across the school. The children shared how much they enjoyed their learning and their desire to do well, they demonstrated resilience and stamina when doing activities both in the classrooms and outside as they wanted to be successful. They talked excitedly about the range of trips the school organised and how proud they were of their school.
- There was a very strong play approach across the school which was a significant strength and this was observed not only in the playground, but also in the Forest School, Nursery and Reception.
- Reception was amazing, as was the Forest School. The children were confident, engaged, actively involved and all were having fun whilst learning. They worked together, they were on task, they were focused and were able to self-select from a wide range of activities. Interactions with each other was excellent, they shared well and were encouraged, and given the freedom to be independent and although there were structured activities, most were child initiated and the children were allowed to explore. Some very skillful questioning was observed which challenged the children to think and respond. The Nursery environment was very stimulating, there was some excellent modelling observed, lots of challenge and the children were fully engaged throughout. The spaces were all resource rich and enhanced children's learning but it is important that the displays and equipment also reflected the high quality provision.

- The writing was very strong in the children's books, it was of a high quality and clearly showed progress but it wasn't clear how many opportunities there were for independent writing and whether there were enough?
- There was some very strong teaching observed, excellent subject knowledge was demonstrated and the expectations were very high. Relationships were very good, the behaviour was excellent, children were on task and there were lots of good conversations. There was some excellent modeling in a Maths lesson where the children were fully engaged, a good range of strategies were being used and the children were challenged but demonstrated their resilience throughout, they were reflective and actively learning. The teacher encouraged the children to push themselves and they became more confident throughout the lesson. The children were very clear about what they were doing in Science, some active learning was taking place but this was very teacher led and the children could have been challenged further to become more independent learners. Children were really enjoying their Art lesson, all were actively involved and the teacher used a good range of vocabulary but more questioning would have given the opportunity for children to share their ideas and stimulate conversations. All the children and supporting adults were fully engaged in a PE lesson which was well structured, fun, and active and the member of staff had excellent presence with a good blend of expectations, encouragement and competition. The children responded very well indeed and tried their very best throughout. Year 2 in English demonstrated how their prior learning supported them to engage in the planned activities. There were some excellent resources available for the Guided Reading sessions and varied activities organised.

Key recommendations

- Continue the current journey to further develop more active learning across the curriculum and encourage all staff to develop children who become independent confident learners.
- Encourage all staff to facilitate more opportunities for children to lead and model activities rather than the focus being on them to always lead and model. This will then empower the children to become stronger leaders, challenge them and they will become more independent learners as a result. Some training and modelling of good practice may be helpful so that there is a clarity of understanding and give them the confidence to try different approaches to developing children's skills.
- Active learning is embedded in Early Years and is a significant strength of the school – consider whether opportunities could be facilitated for all staff to observe what active learning looks like so that there is a clarity of understanding and expectations shared.

- Some good questioning was observed but this was not consistent – revisit with staff the power and range of skillful questioning to challenge the children to think, contribute, develop their confidence and deepen their knowledge.
- Reflect on and discuss the schools approach to reading and whether the children’s reading skills are being developed effectively, evaluate the impact on the progress children are making and whether other approaches should be explored to further develop and strengthen their skills ie 1:1 reading, Reciprocal Reader, the Lewisham Daily Reading Programme...
- The books seen were marked and this was consistent, but evaluate whether the schools Marking Policy is being consistently applied and is it leading to progress?
- The Forest School was amazing, reflect on and discuss how the learning could be built on, and link in to other areas of the curriculum ie Science, English, Explorers, Environment, evolution... Consider if, and how, their learning could be monitored and measured?

Progress/comments regarding progress against action points

- Senior Leaders are very clear about the importance of the journey ahead for all their children and for them all to be inspired, all to be challenged, all to be mostly actively involved in learning and all to be encouraged to become independent confident learners who are encouraged, and given opportunities, to lead. They are very aware of the challenges they face to ensure that the whole community understand what active learners look like and are consistently able to put this vision into practice, but Senior Leaders are passionate about continuing their positive exciting journey and doing even better in the future.