

Review Date: 31st January 2018
Facilitator: Joan Barnes

School: Kender Primary School
Ashmead Primary School
Cooper's Lane Primary School

Focus Areas

Title – Are we meeting the needs of our more able children?

- Do our classrooms and other available spaces, along with our practice, promote an effective learning environment for our more able children?

Evidence base

- Prior to the review the team received the following documents - a detailed timetable for the day, the school SEF which was very comprehensive and gave an outstanding overview of the school, the Headteachers Autumn Term Report 2017 and a Performance Summary. The website provided further information which was easily accessible and positively reflected the schools vision, ethos and inclusivity.
- There were two members of staff from each of the two visiting schools and the host school and they were organised into two groups with each school represented in each. The two groups had the opportunity to look at a sample of the more able children's books, observe lessons, visit their "Forest School", have conversations with children and experience a playtime and lunchtime where the school keenly promote OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning Project) which encourages creative play after having had conversations/discussions about potential risks and hazards to ensure safety. Conversations were facilitated with members of the School Council and representatives from across the year groups.
- SLT were very welcoming indeed, passionate, positive and enthusiastic about their school and about the review process. The base provided for the day was excellent as was the hospitality and it was very much appreciated by all. Throughout the day they were supportive, they answered questions and positively and proactively provided additional information as and when requested, or if queries arose, or, if deemed useful. They clearly knew their school very well and the people in it and talked excitedly about their journey and the future. They were very strategic in their approach, they were passionate about the children and their desire to do their very best for every individual child shone through. They were clearly proud to be leading the school as part of a very committed dedicated team and all were striving to do even better in the future.
- A tour of the school inside and out set the scene for the Peer Review in relation to the focus – the spaces inspired and created an atmosphere conducive to learning but also where learning was clearly happening throughout the day.

Key findings from the review

- The review team were very warmly welcomed by everyone, both staff and children, in a professional positive manner with happy smiling faces. The school had a wonderful atmosphere with creativity exuding from all the spaces both inside the building and outside. Staff and children were very focused and engaged in what they were doing – the clarity of purpose, the very high expectations and the vision for all children was obvious everywhere. The children were clearly at school to learn, to be inspired, to be entertained, to be engaged and to do well, but also to be happy and safe which they clearly were. The inside flowed to the outside seamlessly in relation to creativity and expectations.
- The learning environment was fabulous in classrooms and corridors, the displays were creative and of very high quality, the book corners were exciting with one even being transformed into a shipwreck scene, the environment was buzzy but calm. The spaces across the school were well used, with full groups, small groups or in 1:1 situations, all activities had a clear focus and expected learning outcomes, the children

were engaged, they participated and understood the expectations. The library was a very stimulating place to be.

- The children were fantastic – well behaved, articulate, very respectful and thoughtful and the core values were certainly demonstrated throughout the day. They were such a credit to the school, they wore their uniform with pride, their engagement was positive and they demonstrated a caring approach for each other. Relationships were very strong across the school community and the children spoke very highly of their teachers, some of whom they said had had a massive impact on their progress. The School Council were confident, very articulate and when questioned they were open and honest, they gave their opinions freely and talked about the challenges they were set. They were very clear about the role of their teachers and the LSA's and shared some good ideas ie the 4Bs – before asking for the teachers help... use your brain, look at the board, look in a book or ask a buddy. The children all shared that they were expected to work hard but didn't always manage to get to the harder, more challenging work.
- In 2016/2017 the school restructured the support staff based on the needs of the children which resulted in some staffing changes as from September 2017 and this is already having a positive impact. The LSA's are deployed matching their skills where they will have a beneficial effect on children's learning either with groups, 1:1 or where specific needs have been identified. SLT or the SENCo line manages the support team of which there are 13 who work 35 hours each week.
- The "Forest School" is a superb use of space, it is exciting, creative and a very structured learning environment for all children. The staff leading and facilitating the activities were modelling excellent practice.
- Happy learners were observed, they confidently asked questions and the teacher's responses were consistently very supportive and encouraging – "no problem at all, I'll come back to you in just a minute..." Some outstanding skillful questioning was observed in Years 1, 2 and especially 6 which encouraged and challenged children to think more deeply and further develop their thinking skills. On some classroom displays there was some impressive questioning modelled too.
- Some excellent practice was observed where the children were set a task to challenge each other, another where the teacher asked a child to answer a question directed at the teacher and in a Year 2 class there was no lost learning time transitioning from one activity to another based on the strategies used by the teacher, she continually asked questions and children clearly understood the expectations.
- The school have introduced GL Tests for all Year groups from September 2017 as a tool to provide more data and track progress. The tests are standardised and are taken in September and May, the data is analysed and any emerging issues/gaps addressed. The school are also involved with PiXL especially for Year 6. The data generated from tests, along with teacher's assessments and professional judgements are used to identify the more able learners. Progress meetings use the data generated to discuss and demonstrate progress as well as expectations and to challenge individual learners.
- The school uses ARBOR as a management tool to benchmark, analyse data, track progress... and they will be looking at the GL data in parallel with the data on ARBOR.
- The quality of work in the books provided was very high from Years 1 to 6 of the more able students, some was very impressive.
- Kender is a stunning environment in which to learn and the schools' values and culture shines throughout the school!

Key recommendations

- Throughout the day there was some outstanding practice observed but it would be beneficial to all staff and children if some of the great ideas were regularly shared via briefings or meetings. This would facilitate greater consistency especially across year groups, it would be excellent CPD and would empower the staff sharing to feel more confident and improve their self-esteem.
- Explore the possibility of facilitating the opportunity for all staff to take part in Learning Walks as they will then be able to observe other practitioners and this will potentially have a positive impact on their teaching

skills as there is so much excellent practice to see and ideas to be shared. This is an idea that the school is already exploring through the use of Peer Observations.

- Explore further the capacity of ARBOR to ensure its' use is maximized to support learning, progress, curriculum and generating student reports via focused statements.
- For greater consistency consider what should be on display in all classrooms, what is non-negotiable ie working boards, reference points, questioning, core values and the teachers can then be creative with how to put the displays together.
- Consider designating time on a daily basis for teachers to meet with their LSA's to reflect on www and ebi – this would support greater progress and increased challenge. If this were facilitated it would ensure greater consistency, clarity in relation to expectations and the role of the LSA.
- Monitor the use and access to IT to encourage more interactive learning rather than passive learning – this would potentially increase pace, flow and challenge for all learners but especially the more able.
- Think about whether some children should start with the “challenge” rather than all children doing the same activities initially and working towards the challenge as some who should get there may not? In some classrooms it would be beneficial for some children to differentiate via group work using the available adults to stretch, challenge and facilitate. Check whether children actually understand what “challenge” means in the classroom context as they regularly talked about challenge but do they fully understand the implications?
- Some questioning observed was outstanding but for some staff their skills could be developed further by observing others and encouraging children to think before answering a question and giving them time to do so, possibly providing the children with some sentence starters...on display?
Flip some activities for the more able...ie writing a response to a persuasive letter written by a peer in a persuasive manner...
- Further develop reference boards as this would encourage independent learning, they are being used effectively but not consistently across the school.

Progress/comments regarding progress against action points

SLT are very passionate about the importance of the journey ahead for their children and for them to be inspired, challenged and fulfil their potential in an exciting effective learning environment, whatever their potential. They are keen and expect all children, but especially the more able not only to be challenged by staff but to challenge themselves ensuring more rapid progress and improved outcomes. Therefore, not only do they expect all to have very high expectations, which they have, but they want to further develop their learning culture where appropriate challenge is expected across all year groups in all learning situations.