

Questions for Hemyock Spring LGB 06.02.17

FOR EXECUTIVE HEAD

1. In relation to the board noting our comments, can they clarify that they stand by the Hemyock SEF? (PR)

AND

2. Are current assessments showing the expected progress? (PR)

Answer Q1 - HN is checking the board minutes that this is supported rather than simply noted.

Answer Q2 - Yes, the children are continuing to progress as they should be at this point in the academic year. Some children who are not making the expected progress, have been picked up through my data analysis each half term and put onto the intervention timetables in class for ks1 or across the afternoons in ks2. Some of these children are also children who have a provision map so that SENDCo can 'monitor' them. PR pointed out that this questions was largely in relation to recent staff changes. HS said that there have been some tweaks to things like book scrutinies but staff have been very receptive to these changes.

3. Could the H&S Governor view the H&S tracker mentioned please (page 3, para 4)? (DS)

Answer - Yes, as agreed at the governors meeting, you can be made aware of this at the next Health and Safety governor meeting where you fill in the reports. We are happy for you to see this sooner if you wish, however, it is changing weekly at the moment while the areas to be completed are being addressed.

FOR HEAD OF SCHOOL

4. What monitoring has gone on after the OFSTED recommendations for improvement in writing and spelling? (PR)

Answer - As part of the literacy focus week, Ella and I particularly focused on the spelling and handwriting within the lesson observations we did. We saw a huge improvement in teachers practice and the high expectations they had for their children's handwriting and spelling within their work. Ella specified her drop-ins on spelling and handwriting and in her place, Judith Thurgood will now be doing this. To ensure a smooth transition into improved teaching of handwriting and spelling, there is now a policy available for both of these areas for teachers to refer to and for new teachers to be given to follow.

Within books scrutinys, Ella was and Michelle is now focussing on ensuring children's books show the correct use of the handwriting and spelling policy and that there is evidence of the teachers marking towards this correctly. There is also now a book scrutiny each half term that focuses on seeing progress across single year groups books and across each year groups books. This went well in autumn half term and the high expectations in each class were evident in that the progress of children's ability, presentation and responding to marking could be seen across the classes and the school.

The staff meetings throughout the year have been planned with the school improvement objectives in mind. Therefore, monitoring and staff training opportunities for writing progression, handwriting and spelling are included in this. JH explained that the new literacy lead is dropping in on classes to help to share best practise and to aid professional development with staff.

5. On the success criteria, is there any of the four proving harder to achieve than the others and if so why? (PR)

Answer - No, there isn't one that is seeming harder to achieve. I have a rigid staff development plan for staff meetings and individual staff going on CPD to help promote our school improvement plan objectives. We are making good progress to impacting on all of the

success criteria. Teachers are all following the new policies in place and are working collaboratively to share ideas across the key stages, particularly for those children they have to provide provision for from a lower year group.

6. **Please clarify attendance figures. The report says you did not meet the target but it looks to me we exceeded it last year and are just on target this year? (PR)**

AND

7. **Have you seen better attendance with pupils after some of your measures listed? (PR)**

AND

8. **What was the attendance target the school should have met (text states 'did not meet the attendance target)? Ref: 2015/16 target was 97.1% and 2016/17 it was 97.1% which is also the actual figure. (DS)**

AND

9. **You say the school did not meet the attendance target for 2015-16, although actual was 97.3%, and the target was 97.1%. Please explain? (RW)**

Answer - I do apologise. This is my mistake after correcting figures after discussions. This will be adapted before the document goes live. PR pointed out that the school is on target currently. HS agreed and said that usually the school would be above target but there is a new child at school with historical attendance issues currently. These are being addressed. JH asked what the current position is regarding authorisation of term time holiday. HS said that the school is not allowed to authorise without exceptional circumstances although the legal issue is quite grey at the moment.

We are currently working very closely with a specific family at the moment who has very low attendance the EWO is now involved. We will continue this relationship until the attendance returns to what it should be. The escalation letters that go out now, always work well with families. As you can see from my figures, we have little holidays taken in term time. Although some of the unauthorised absences will account for some holidays where parents have not put in a holiday form. I think this happens because families know holidays are not authorised within school time.

10. **Re. Board Update - Does the HOS feel that the 'funding envelope' approach will be a good and effective process for budgetary control for Hemyock (page 4, para 3)? (DS)**

Answer - This approach certainly has its advantages. By having more control over the budget, HoS's can have more control over their budget priorities including staffing, curriculum budget and staff training and how this is spent to suit the specific needs of the school. To help accommodate this, training is already being booked for admin and heads of schools on specific programmes that are used to support the school budget. This will aid this year's budget work and also support next years. One area for discussion, is whether there are any statutory criteria for staffing, eg: how many hours admin in the office work.

11. **Re. Safeguarding Report – Will parents be provided with information in advance of the genograms work and why? How will this information be treated? (DS)**

Answer - This activity is very simple and not dissimilar from activities that children would do within the PSHE curriculum work. The children will only be expected to input the family that are close to them and that they want to put on there. These will be kept in the children's files and move up with the children each year throughout the school. This can then be used and referred to, if necessary, throughout the year in any sensitive cases for example safeguarding, if this became applicable and the children can build on this each year.

JP asked if this type of information would be passed on to secondary school and HS suggested that it would be unlikely to. JH pointed out that often children who have struggled at Primary School might thrive at Secondary School and it's important that a paper trail does not have a negative impact on this.

12. What were the main points from the visit by Bristol and Birmingham TRIAD programme? (DS)

Answer - The main highlights the two visitors found from being in and around our school were; children were engaged and on task, staff had a positive attitude and a clear team moral, children had pride in their work through high expectations from teachers and support staff, children had a positive attitude and books were marked and up to date. They said the general feel of the school felt welcoming and like a real community. The children's behaviour was amazing and they commented on how respectful they all were towards each other and adults within the school. Within the visit, they were investigating the question of 'Why are our writing achievements not in line with our reading and maths achievements?' They commented on our creative curriculum approach to literacy and specifically writing and how they could see evidence of high quality writing across writing and topic books.

Their advice for possible next steps was to look at the literacy marking code and whether it was all applicable to the children as they didn't see evidence of this in all books. We had already discussed our marking code within unit meetings and very recently, adapted the marking code and removed codes that weren't being used consistently across the key stages and that we felt weren't needed or useful to the children. Another question they asked was with regards to our handwriting in school and what teachers followed to do this. As with the marking, this was something we had already identified, specifically as it was on our SIP. Since the visit, Judith Thurgood has written a handwriting policy for teachers to follow within their teaching, and resources are on order to support their handwriting lessons as it has clear activities for children to complete with high quality examples of how the single letters and letter strings should look. The spelling they looked at, along with the new spelling policy Ella Rice had written, showed all teachers had high expectations of marking spellings and children responding to these. They also saw high quality resources being used.

These visitors will be invited back to our school in the summer term to look at the progress that has been made across the school in relation to their ideas and my original question.

13. Could the H&S Governor be invited to review/attend the H&S inspection please? (DS)

Answer - Health and safety governor can most certainly meet with HoS and Maintenance caretaker following the inspection to review the findings.

14. What are the outcomes from the campus development work mentioned? (DS)

Answer - HN has got a campus development plan that has future ideas for the school. The aspect we lack is funding. By having this plan, we can try and work towards getting funding to support specific parts of the plan at a time. HN and HS are attending the Annual Parish Meeting to share out plans, specifically in relation to the parking concerns.

15. Is there a pattern as to the reasons why some staff are resigning? Does the HOS know and is she able to take or feed in correcting action? (DS)

Answer - All actions for resignations have been for personal reasons, including a complete change in career and relocation. There is no pattern.

New staff are Steve Collins in Year 4 previously working in large city schools and Kirsty Sampson is in Year 1, having previously worked at St. Andrews.

16. Re. Literacy Action Plan – Is there a homework feedback mechanism for parents to support the work on spelling tests other than parents evening? Ref Spelling Homework. (DS)

Answer - The homework for spellings is marked each week. Teachers will contact parents if they feel it is necessary but the spelling homework is to practice what the children have been doing throughout the week to reinforce their learning.

At the beginning of their books, it guides parents as to how they can help their child practice their spellings.

17. Why is the HOS doing the actions on page 2 and 3 on swimming pool options and steps? Is this not why there is a Premises Lead? (DS)

Answer - The premises lead will authorise any actions such as the ones listed that she can with the financial budget we have got. However with 12 schools she can't be completing tasks like this for each school. Also, due to this being a school premises development point, it is important that the HoS is heavily involved in this process. It is the HoS's role to develop the premises continuously.

18. Re. Management Accounts – Could you please explain the trip variance on budget? (DS)

Answer - As a school, we organise the London trip for five schools within Ventrus. Before Christmas, we were paying a lot of the balances for excursions. This will be put back into our account as the trip gets paid off by the other schools. This happens for all schools who arrange residential across the trust.

19. Re. Management Accounts – Could you please explain 'other supplies and services' variance? (DS)

Answer - This is due to our school buying bulk load of stationary at the beginning of the year, therefore, the figure will decrease as the year goes on and the expected spend increases and balances out. We have also bought a lot of yearly subscriptions for example, broadband, photocopier lease, paper resources for printing, engaging eyes (programme for children), Athletics (programme for children). Again, as with stationary scenario, this figure will decrease as the year goes on. DS asked if there is buying power by buying via Ventrus as a whole. HS said that orders are put in with Ventrus and so the likelihood is that they are buying in that way for the schools.

20. Re. Management Accounts – If there is a surplus, what happens to that? (DS)

Answer - After discussions with the Finance manager of the trust, she has confirmed the surplus would be retained by the school to use in the following year.

21. I'm very pleased that the HOSs acting term has been extended to 31.08.17 as this provides good stability for the pupils and Hemyock School. Please explain what will happen with regard to making a permanent appointment from 01.09.17 and timescales. (RW)

Answer - The process for this role has begun. Governors will be notified if there are any developments before the next governors meeting. PR pointed out that there are many Head of School roles to fill across Ventrus and it is hoped that these vacancies will be filled as soon as possible.

22. Is there a system in place (Hemyock School or across Ventrus) to assist families with the financial cost of school trips and residentials, or is this just for PP children? Do letters specify a 'cost' or 'voluntary contribution' per child? (RW)

Answer - Those children who aren't pupil premium are expected to make a contribution. For some families who we know struggle, we arrange payment plans for them. This may exceed

the time of the actual trip but they do pay in smaller chunks. For residential, it is expected that all children pay. For smaller trips, we ask for a contribution of a specific amount. When we are costing the trips, we are prepared that some children may not pay and have a reserve to run the trip using part of the curriculum budget. We do consistently chase payments for those who haven't contributed towards the trip.