Developing our curricular offer by empowering subject and senior leaders

**Spotlight on Manor Park Primary School**

Why did the school get involved?

Historically, the teaching of English and Mathematics, at Manor Park Primary School, has been strong. Building on existing strengths, we were keen to further develop our curriculum offer and raise the profile of other subjects. We wanted to be ‘outward facing’ and use this as an opportunity to challenge ourselves and seek external support to really deepen our understanding of curriculum design.

We were excited to attend the Coventry Headteacher Conference with Whole Education in June 2019 and go on to take part in the Leading a Whole Education-Primary programme as for us it was tailor made and exactly what we wanted to work on.

What has been most helpful working with WE?

Needless to say that the national networking and collaboration element of Whole Education has greatly benefitted us.

Our staff have attended numerous ‘WE Inspire’ school visits throughout the year and find these to be really useful opportunities to reflect on their own practice and bring new ideas back to school! A couple of examples of things we have implemented as a result of these visits include how the learning journey is presented in children’s books and a new approach to engage subject leaders in CPD.

During the Covid-19 global pandemic Whole Education’s virtual curriculum has been astonishing and it’s been great to learn from other schools through the weekly virtual sessions we’ve been involved in. We have continued, through this new way of working, to learn from and collaborate with school leaders throughout the country to respond to the challenges faced during partial school closures and how to continue to offer a high quality whole education.

Context:

Manor Park Primary School, Coventry is a three-form entry school.

The last full Ofsted inspection was November 2012 and the school was judged to be Good.

Typically, when they join the Nursery, children’s skills and understanding are below the levels expected for their age.

At the end of KS2 87% of pupils are meeting the expected standards in reading, writing and maths, with 14% of pupils achieving at a higher standard.

The number of children known to be eligible for pupil premium is below the national average.

The number of children with SEND is below the national average.

40.5% of pupils have English as an additional language, well above the national average.

“It has been incredibly powerful to develop links with new schools to receive extra support. We have learned something from every aspect of this programme!”
What did the school do in their project?

As part of the programme ‘Leading a Whole Education-Primary’, a range of our staff have been able to visit lots of different schools beyond Coventry and this process enabled us to consider a variety of ways to structure our team to best meet our school improvement priorities.

We started by re-establishing roles within our Senior Leadership Team. We also focused on establishing clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities for Middle Leaders. We agreed that Middle Leaders should lead on specific subject areas and be supported by what we now refer to as ‘Subject Ambassadors’ whose role it is to support Subject Leaders. As teams, Subject Leaders and Ambassadors developed a clear understanding of their areas and were also able to discuss what ‘deep dives’ into their subject could look like.

Some of our Higher Level Teaching Assistants became Subject Ambassadors and, as result of CPD and increased confidence, are now supporting teachers with the delivery of specific subjects, thus bringing more specific expertise.

We completed an audit of staff skills and confidence levels and have planned and implemented a CPD programme in response to this. This approach is tailored to the subject knowledge our teachers needed to deliver high quality lessons in all subjects. Rather than having a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, we have developed a sub-team approach, whereby smaller groups can meet to focus on specific areas, relevant to their needs.

We also wanted to ensure that our support staff were as involved as possible. We have made provision (changing the day of our weekly CPD meeting and paying staff) to enable our teaching assistants to come into school before the start of the school day or attend CPD after school from September.

We have merged and condensed our curriculum ‘topics’ from six to three per year. Middle Leaders and Subject Leaders have re-written all learning objectives and tracked their progression across the school. We have made changes to the way in which the children will record their learning as in the past there has been too much writing and not enough practical learning.

Our next step is to embed the curriculum planning that has been developed this year to ensure that this planning is reflected in consistently high quality teaching and learning. We have added an additional Assistant Head-Teacher to the staffing structure next year to offer bespoke support in classes through the modelling of outstanding teaching and learning.

Impact so far:

Our sense of team and collaboration has greatly improved and this is having a noticeable impact in terms of the way we operate across the school.

Being able to gain insights beyond our own school and beyond Coventry has really helped us. Being able to get a national picture of what great practice looks like was invaluable. Not only has it helped us in terms of the content of what we teach our children, but it’s also helped us in terms of how we approach the CPD our staff receive.

We are keen to continue our learning in the future through our engagement with a national network and share our expertise with schools to enable the USP of Manor Park Primary school to shine through.

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