

Reporting a Governor visit to Kea School

Name Rachel Bateman	Date May 2018
Purpose: To observe PHSE in particular the concept of "growth and fixed mindsets" and to become more aware of this new approach to teaching and the impact it has on the children and lessons.	
Links with the School Improvement Plan/ 20 Questions Q 12: How well do we listen to, understand and respond to our pupils? Q 16: Do Governors regularly visit school to get to know it and monitor the implementation of the school strategy?	
Governor Observations and Comments I attended PHSE for both years 2 and 5 consecutively. Year 2: Year 2's lesson was underway when I arrived. I observed that the children were sat on the carpet listening to their teacher (Fleur McPherson (FMc) who was introducing the topic of growth and fixed mindsets. There were 2 TAs in the room who were lesson prepping and sorting through children's books behind the children. The children all said "good afternoon" to me as I was introduced to them and several waved and smiled. FMc was making use of PowerPoint presentation to explain the concept of fixed and growth mindsets to the children. During each PowerPoint slide the children were asked questions and all children engaged in working towards figuring out whether a particular statement demonstrated a growth or fixed mindset. At one point, a child became a little distracted and began talking but this was dealt with quickly and with minimum fuss by FMc, who simply asked the child what their thoughts were about the particular question. This re-engaged the child and didn't bring any undue attention, adverse or otherwise, to the child. I thought it was a great way to get the child to think about the topic and to get interested in it. I was impressed at the handle FMc showed with respect to this particular issue that could have escalated but wasn't given any legs by the teacher. When children were asked questions, they put their hands up to answer and did not shout out. They waited their turn until FMc asked them for their answer. Given the age of the children, I was impressed by their patience and respect for their teacher. The children were then asked to return to their desks and in small groups of 3/4/5 have a look at the various statements that had been placed on their desks and say whether they think the statement demonstrated a growth or fixed mindset. I went round to all tables to hear what their thoughts were. The children had obviously been listening, but more than that, they were backing their answers up with sound and reasoned arguments. Whilst not all were correct, they were thinking about what they had learnt and applying it to day-to-day activities and were really thinking hard. Even quieter children were engaged in the activity and were happy to give their thoughts when I asked them.	

I was very impressed by this lesson and what the children got out of it. The level of confidence and language used by the children was fantastic and it was a pleasure to see the children engaging in a life lesson.

Year 5: I came into the lesson part way through and the children were just being told what was expected of them. Lorna Drzymala (LD) was explaining that she wanted the children to use 20 lego bricks to build an object that could be any shape, structure, size they wished, that would stay intact when dropped from a metre height. There were a couple of TAs present too. LD mentioned on a number of occasions that she knew a particular child would be great at this as the particular child was very good at building and was strategic and she knew that they would just ace the task. As I know LD, I knew that she would not single one child out in this manner and knew that it was part of the growth mindset experiment.

Prior to the instructions being finished by LD, a couple of children were playing with the Lego precipitously. LD dealt with this quickly by saying that she would not continue until all children were concentrating on what she was saying rather than playing with the bricks and distracting others. This was immediately effective and LD was able to continue without any further issues.

All children had drawn up tables to note down how many attempts it took them to drop the brick structure without it breaking. After each attempt they had to note down how many bricks stayed intact.

The children enjoyed this task and were really encouraging of each other. One child did the task straight away and was happy to give advice to other children and also carried on the task to see if it was just a fluke! The children were all helping each other which was lovely to see. There were many comments like "why don't you make it less tall to see if that helps it stay intact", "ahh that was close, I reckon you will do it next time", to name a few. If any child felt a bit downhearted about not being able to do the task, there was another child reminding them of growth mindset and that they simply couldn't do the task yet, but that they would with further attempts.

I could see that the purpose of the lesson was to put the growth and fixed mindset into practice for the children and it really did work.

At the end of the lesson, LD said that the reason she singled a child out at the beginning of the class was to ensure that child had a growth mindset, that he could do the task that was being asked of the class. LD said that she had no idea at the start who would be able to do the task and who wouldn't, but she knew that everyone had the potential to do the task provided they had the right attitude and were prepared to keep trying after every "failure". The children mentioned on a number of occasions that a FAIL was a First Attempt At Learning and that there are positive fails that we all have that we learn from.

This class clearly respond very well to their teacher and have a respect for her too. Any potential disruptions were dealt with early on to minimise their impacts and to keep the particular children engaged. This worked well and only had a positive impact on the class from what I saw. LD made the lesson fun, made sure everyone understood what they were doing and asked the children questions during the lesson and at the end. The TAs also helped make the lesson fun

and interacted wonderfully with the children. There's a lovely rapport between staff and children in this group. Children wanted to be part of the lesson.

This was a great insight into how growth and fixed mindsets are taught at various stages in the school. The children responded well to the positivity of a growth mindset and quickly start regurgitating the spiel to their peers if ever one of them felt that they can't do something. A very empowering message to all students and I felt pretty positive myself afterwards!!

Behaviour

I was seriously impressed by the behaviour of the children, especially year 2 who are so young yet spoke and interacted with adults above their years I would say.

The attitude to learning was great and the children wanted to do well in this lesson.

Safeguarding.

No issues relating to safeguarding.

Any issues for the governing body

None, but I was extremely impressed by the positive attitudes shown towards learning and the behaviour of the pupils, especially year 2 who are only 6 and 7 years old.