

Upperwood Academy – Governors’ Week

Week Commencing 25.11.19

Upperwood Academy Governor Visit Report

Name	Catherine Fish – Parent Governor
Date of Visit	28.11.19
Focus of Visit	To oversee learner special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). To look at reading and phonics in both key stages observing quality of teaching and with some intervention sessions, using embedded phonic practice, and more recent reading structures in Key Stage 2. Then how pupil progress is assessed and monitored in this area, using the YARC reading scheme.
Classes / Staff Visited	Katie Hirst – SEND Lead Ange Charity – Deputy Head Various class sessions including: Phonics session Echo reading Comprehension Sensory Circuit Nurture room
Summary of activities, e.g. observing classes, talking to staff and pupils, looking at resources, had lunch, etc. Firstly, I met with Mrs Hirst to understand the flow of how nurturing needs are identified, how and how frequently they are assessed and what is in place. I observed some sessions to understand the quality of teaching and learning, how to see how accessible it was and where the benefits can be achieved. With Miss Charity I viewed and discussed the documentation types, the process flow and electronic tools used to record data on profiling.	
What I learned as a result of my visit I learned a great deal about the types of intervention in place that help with reading accessibility for children in school. Particularly the use of phonics in the initial stages of learning used to decode before reading can be understood and how this can be used to assist SEND pupils in their learning as well as the assessing process to identify for additional support for their learning. Assessments are carried out termly to allow for learning to be established, before assessing learning	

levels to see where change is measured and additional needs required (including type of need).

It was interesting to understand that use of the York Assessment of Reading Comprehension (YARC) assessment tool does not get used until KS2 predominantly due to the development and learning progression of children.

YARC is used for those in the bottom 20% at school. Pupils are assessed to create a benchmark level which feeds into the YARC tool breaking down attainment levels into Accuracy, Rate and Comprehension. Once this data has been established it may be found that a pupil can do well at comprehension, but not at rate (fluency). Nurture groups have been set up for each of these 3 aspects to support pupils to focus on their particular area of need to bring them up.

Intervention groups are Echo reading for fluency and Rocketeers.

Another intervention observed was the Sensory Circuit. This is a short palliative session for those with sensory needs for example who may be hyperactive, fidgety, have difficulty settling down to learn or those who may have hyper sensory or prohibitive sensory needs along with those who seek out contact.

Activities are controlled, calm and confidence building, activities include:

Strength activities: climbing/pulling on ropes or elastic,

Balancing and core strength: balance beam, wiggle cushion balance,

Pressure: squishing (with gym balls),

Enclosure: crawling through tunnel,

Light: light bouncy balls

Sound – music was on in the background.

These activities focus on a controlled physical sensory aspect to allow pupils to explore in a safe way.

Positive comments about the focus

The Sensory Circuit – you could clearly see how engaged the children were and what skills the session gives. The children listened, were patient, explored calm, judgement of movement, confidence in physical ability, speech and explanation, balance and strength along with meeting their sensory needs.

Nurture room provision – from my previous visits along with this one, it is clear the provision is a huge positive, allowing a place where nurture exercises and groups can take place, it is inviting and a safe place for those experiencing issues where a 'time out' safe place is required.

With understanding how all the interventions feed into overall attainment for pupils, the school have justified the need. Pupils can be focussed on their specific areas of need in order to improve their personal performance and enhance their lifetime opportunities. Without these provisions' pupils would continue and struggle with their learning and life skills, become disengaged and unhappy. In turn this would disrupt learning for others and provide a large negative strain on the schools' resources.

Aspects I would like clarified / questions I have

The Sensory Circuit clearly provides a very positive therapy for children where children's ability is benchmarked and improvements recorded. I would like to understand how data can be pulled from this provision to evidence the improvement to pupils overall learning and life skills to clearly justify the reasoning.

Any other comments & link to governor decisions

I would next like to see a pupil's specific intervention plan to link Sensory Circuit to learning attainment.

I would like to visit and observe a Rocketeering group to see how that works and how the children benefit (as it was assessment week, this session was cancelled at the time of my visit).

Have last year's recommendations been implemented & witnessed?

- 1) I would like to better understand the accessibility of information from the parent's/care givers point of view and to visually see what interventions 'look like' in practice at school – **Completed by visits to the school since.**
- 2) I would like to understand information provided to the child and their understanding of their circumstances and to reassure myself that risks to the child are adequately managed. – O/S This could be done by viewing the questionnaire provided during parents evening and through visits.
- 3) I would like to see how information on the website can be made more accessible to a varying audience. Currently there are only some worded documents. – **Completed, Mr Budd has put a clear video on the website explain resources available.**

Signed C Fish
(Governor)

Signed _____
(Principal / Coordinator)