

School Effectiveness Adviser Visit Report

School	Rickmansworth Park JMI	Number	708	Date	23.11.2023
Present:	Jane Linch, Headteacher, Natalie Catalano, Deputy Headteacher and music subject leader; Lesley Muriss, mathematics subject leader; Hazel Harrison, humanities subject leader; Linda Hardman, District School Effectiveness Lead for Three Rivers.				

Length of Visit: One day in school visit plus preparation and report writing

Purpose of Visit: To review elements of curriculum provision in Mathematics, Music and History across the school.

This visit consisted of:

- discussions with various subject leaders to learn about the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum
- learning walks to all classrooms to see the implementation of the curriculum in a variety of different areas of the curriculum
- a view of shared documentation and accessible information on the school website relating to the curriculum

Contextual information

- Rickmansworth Park JM School was last inspected in October 2018 ((Section 8) and confirmed to remain good school.
- Information taken from the current ISDR (Inspection School Data Report, December 2023) shows that the school serves a rich and diverse population with the following communities represented: White British = 64%, White, any other white background = 11%, Mixed White and Asian = 6%
- Other characteristics of importance include:
 - Pupils in receipt of FSM (free school meals) = 6% which is well below national average
 - Pupils in receipt of SEND support = 10% which is below national average.
 - Pupils with an EHCP (Education Health Care Plan) = 0.5% which is well below national average
 - Main presenting needs include SLCN - speech language and communication needs, ASD -autistic spectrum needs and SpLD - specific learning difficulties There are 4 children with multiple vulnerabilities including SEND, pupil premium and/or a child protection plan. The recent additional school visit – ASV - for SEND commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council (May 2023) identified that the elements of provision explored as part of this review were exemplary.
 - Pupils with EAL (English as an Additional Language) = 27% which is above national average
- There are a number of areas of interest highlighted on the current ISDR. This relates to attendance and outcomes:

2022-2023	School	Comment
Absence	4.6%	Lowest 20% of all schools nationally
Persistent absence		
FSM		Highest 20% of all schools nationally
SEND		Lowest 20% of all schools nationally

In addition the following outcomes are recorded as significantly above national standards

Assessment	Classification	Percentile
Phonics	Significantly above national	95 th percentile
KS1 Reading EXS	Significantly above national	95 th percentile
KS1 Writing EXS	Significantly above national	95 th percentile
KS2 Writing progress	Significantly above national	90 th percentile
KS2 Reading EXS	Significantly above national	91 st percentile
KS2 Writing EXS	Significantly above national	95 th percentile

*EXS = Expected Standard

Main observations:

- The curriculum at Rickmansworth Park JMI School is extremely well planned and organised. It has been personalised to challenge the learners at this ambitious setting. Staff are aspirational for all learners and demonstrate skill in adapting the curriculum so that all children can achieve the ambitious endpoints. This begins in the early years setting where highly skilled staff secure the foundations for successful learning across the broader curriculum. Children make an excellent start to the learning journey in the EYFS provision at this school. This is confirmed in the high level of achievement in all early learning goals and the GLD - Good Level of Development, all of which exceeds national and the higher local standards.

Communication and Language

		School	National	Herts	Comment
E01	Listening, attention and understanding	100.0%	82.2%	83.4%	Above national and local standards
E02	Speaking	100.0%	82.8%	84.3%	Above national and local standards

Personal Social and Emotional Development

		School	National	Herts	Comment
E03	Self-regulation	92.6%	85.1%	85.4%	Above national and local standards
E04	Managing self	92.6%	87.6%	87.3%	Above national and local standards
E05	Building relationships	92.6%	88.4%	88.1%	Above national and local standards

Physical Development

		School	National	Herts	Comment
E06	Gross motor skills	92.6%	92.1%	92.3%	Above national and local standards

E07	Fine motor skills	92.6%	86.0%	86.9%	Above national and local standards
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Literacy

		School	National	Herts	Comment
E08	Comprehension	100.0%	80.6%	82.3%	Above national and local standards
E09	Word reading	85.2%	76.2%	77.1%	Above national and local standards
E10	Writing	85.2%	71.1%	71.9%	Above national and local standards

Mathematics

		School	National	Herts	Comment
E11	Number	85.2%	78.9%	80.7%	Above national and local standards
E12	Numerical patterns	85.2%	78.3%	80.0%	Above national and local standards

Understanding the World

		School	National	Herts	Comment
E13	Past and present	92.6%	82.1%	83.1%	Above national and local standards
E14	People, culture and communications	92.6%	81.8%	82.6%	Above national and local standards
E15	Natural world	92.6%	85.3%	86.4%	Above national and local standards

Expressive Arts and Design

		School	National	Herts	Comment
E16	Creating with materials	96.3%	87.4%	88.2%	Above national and local standards
E17	Being imaginative and expressive	96.3%	87.0%	87.9%	Above national and local standards

GLD	School	National	Hertfordshire	Comment
	77.8%	67.3%	67.7%	Above national and local standards

- There is an embedded understanding of expectations of the requirements of the current education inspection framework. The staffing structure at the school enables professional challenge and growth and there is a wide range of expertise evident within the remit of all leaders. This was strongly evidenced in discussions with subject leaders for music, mathematics and humanities as well as the Lead Practitioner.
- There is strong and effective representation of the complete curriculum on the school website. The information posted provides detail around the broad and specific areas of the curriculum alongside the extensive opportunities for personal development offered by the school. This is exceptional and of the highest quality. The school is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School (gold standard) and the entire curriculum is carefully aligned to the underlying principles of this accreditation.
- A particular strength is the introduction to each of the subject leaders at the school which details what their work involves in promoting the area of learning they hold responsibility for. This is highly informative and demonstrates how well leaders commit to responsibilities to support staff development and pedagogy as well as designing an inspirational curriculum that inspires and engages the learners.
- There are clear statements relating to each distinct area of the curriculum which explain the rationale and intent for each subject area. Curriculum journey maps are in the process of being developed and those that have been shared show the learning journey from reception through Year 7 in specific strands of learning for each subject. For example in PE we can see the progression of a number of elements such as Gymnastics and Dance. These are helpful visual prompts that remind staff of prior and future learning for each element of the curriculum.
- Each subject has a comprehensive progression of skills document where the planning builds upon prior learning. For example in MFL the progression in oracy (speaking and listening and literacy – reading and writing skills can be seen across the whole of KS2, along with stories, rhymes and songs and grammatical feature. These are detailed and supportive to teacher planning and implementation. Nothing is left to chance in the planning of the progression of skills documents. All members of the teaching team know exactly what needs to be taught when.
- Leaders have prioritised the teaching of subject specific vocabulary. These have been very clearly identified for each subject area and provide clear direction on how this is to be embedded into the learning opportunities. For example, in DT the vocabulary to be taught is defined for Reception through to Year 6 relating the design, make and evaluate process and well as the specifics relating to structures, mechanisms, textiles, electrical systems and food and nutrition.
- There is rigour in the planning of all activities relating to reading and writing. The school’s choice of Read Write Inc as its chosen systematic synthetic phonics programme has secured highly effective foundations to the early reading process, which is strongly reflected in the consistent track record of excellence in the outcomes for all elements of literacy from entry to exit at the school. This was confirmed in the high quality practice observed during the learning walk for phonics and reading. All outcomes exceed national and the higher local standards as we can see below:

EARLY LEARNING GOALS

Communication and Language

		School	National	Herts	Comment
E01	Listening, attention and understanding	100.0%	82.2%	83.4%	Above national and local standards
E02	Speaking	100.0%	82.8%	84.3%	Above national and local standards

Literacy

		School	National	Herts	Comment
E08	Comprehension	100.0%	80.6%	82.3%	Above national and local standards
E09	Word reading	85.2%	76.2%	77.1%	Above national and local standards
E10	Writing	85.2%	71.1%	71.9%	Above national and local standards

PHONICS	School	National	Hertfordshire	Comment
	96.2%	79.1%	79.6%	Above national and local standards

KS1 READING	School	National	Hertfordshire	Comment
Age related + %	86.7%	68.3%	69.5%	Above national and local standards
High %	46.7%	18.8%	23.4%	Above national standards

KS1 WRITING	School	National	Hertfordshire	Comment
Age related + %	80.0%	60.1%	60.9%	Above national and local standards
High %	23.3%	8.2%	10.5%	Above national standards

KS2 READING	School	National	Hertfordshire	Comment
Age related + %	90.0%	72.6%	75.6%	Above national standards
High %	36.7%	29.0%	33.9%	Above national and local standards

KS2 WRITING	School	National	Hertfordshire	Comment
Age related + %	90.0%	71.5%	70.2%	Above national and local standards
High %	36.7%	13.3%	15.8%	Above national and local standards

KS2 GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION, SPELLING	School	National	Hertfordshire	Comment
Age related + %	83.0%	72.3%	75.3%	Above national and local standards
High %	33.3%	30.1%	34.3%	Above national standards

- Curriculum newsletters are prepared to inform the parent body about the focus for teaching in each area of the curriculum on a termly basis. This communicates clearly what is being taught and provides supportive information regarding what parents can do to support their child's learning. For example in Year 3 Science, in the unit on Animals including Humans incorporating healthy eating, parents are prompted to support their children to look for hidden sugars on the packets of your food and find different names for sugar. This consolidates and extends the learning for each child.
- Children are provided with an extensive range of curriculum enrichment opportunities at the school which have been summarised in detail for the whole school and each specific year group. The

opportunities are very well considered and exceptional in the quality and additional opportunities this provides for the learners. In addition there are an exciting range of extra-curricular opportunities for the children to engage with which provides exciting and innovative opportunities for further learning.

Learning Walk

This visit enabled the opportunity to review elements of the phonics, mathematics, music and history curriculum. The learning walk around the school to see different elements of the curriculum being implemented confirmed:

- The foundations for early learning are skilfully enabled in the high-quality early years provision. Thoughtful opportunities are provided to enable children to explore and develop curiosity which then enables them to demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning. This then serves as a springboard enabling children to rapidly accelerate their learning as they progress through the school.
- Behaviour for learning is exemplary across the school. Teachers reflect carefully on how they structure learning for each child, and this then enables a high level of engagement and enjoyment in the learning process.
- High quality provision in teaching and learning was observed in every classroom. Staff – teachers and teaching assistants - are highly skilled practitioners. Training has been timely and relevant and high aspirations are consistently communicated.
- Early reading is prioritised and taught systematically and with fidelity to the chosen phonics scheme. The effectiveness of this enables children to access a wide range of additional opportunities because reading skills do not present as barriers for children. Where children are falling behind this is promptly identified and addressed. The rigour around this is a significant strength.
- Good use of specialist expertise is being used to enable best quality teaching and learning in specialist areas such as music. The experience observed in upper KS2 was joyful.
- The teaching of subject specific vocabulary is prioritised and introduced appropriately – for example in music, dynamics, fortissimo in Year 5 and pulse, beat rhythm syllables, tempo and pitch in Year 6
- There is a systematic and rigorous approach to gap analysis and staff are highly proficient at identifying and addressing these needs. No child at this school will ever slip under the radar because of the precision and forensic approach to the analysis of needs.
- Staff demonstrate expert knowledge in their teaching of the different areas of the curriculum. They possess a high level of subject knowledge. Subject leaders and the Lead Practitioner are highly effective at sharing their expertise and demonstrating a high level of subject knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Prior learning is being revisited effectively in order to shape the new learning input.
- Information is presented clearly and this then enables all children to understand the key concepts being taught.
- The quality of discussion opportunities in the classrooms enables pupils to consolidate and explore their understanding.
- Assessment for learning strategies are very well used and help children to embed the knowledge and use this fluently. This means that staff have a clear overview of what children know and remember and can therefore identify next steps in learning effectively.
- Staff identify misunderstandings effectively and correct these providing clear and direct feedback
- Staff model high expectations and as a result children talk articulately about their learning.
- Working walls support learning as do the accessible resources.
- Teaching is well sequenced. The new knowledge builds upon what has been taught previously.
- Staff are skilled in questioning techniques to probe understanding and develop thinking skills.

Mathematics

- The subject leader is highly skilled and works to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics across the school. A particular focus is on the use of stem sentences in maths to support mathematical thinking and consolidation, promoting the use of manipulatives and concrete, pictorial and abstract representations. This is clearly highly effective as demonstrated in the mathematical outcomes the school achieved, all of which exceed national standards and most exceed the higher local standards.

EARLY LEARNING GOALS

ELG	Mathematics	School	National	Herts	Comment
E11	Number	85.2%	78.9%	80.7%	Above national and local standards
E12	Numerical patterns	85.2%	78.3%	80.0%	Above national and local standards

KS1 MATHEMATICS	School	National	Hertfordshire	Comment
Age related + %	86.7%	70.4%	70.7%	Above national and local standards
High %	43.3%	16.3%	18.5%	Above national and local standards

KS2 MATHEMATICS	School	National	Hertfordshire	Comment
Age related + %	80.0%	72.9%	74.5%	Above national and local standards
High %	26.7%	23.8%	28.2%	Above national standards

- There is a clear vision for excellence in mathematics. The expectation is that all children will be mathematically literate and be able to spot connections and patterns, they will be challenged and use mathematical language in a skilled and appropriate way.
- The maths subject leader has engaged with valuable professional development opportunities which have served to further enhance her expertise and leadership of the subject. Most significantly the work with the Mastery Hub means that strong and effective practice has been developed to support teachers and teaching assistants in the delivery of the curriculum.
- Maths has remained a priority focus on the school improvement plan and the leader can articulate very well the improvements and refinements that have been made to provision over recent years.
- The teaching of specific mathematical vocabulary is a high priority and is clearly observed in practice across the classrooms visited. Vocabulary used is ambitious and clearly identified for each year group. This is then reinforced through the use of stem sentences, the mathematics working walls and observed on flip charts. Teacher subject knowledge is well supported by the subject leader through modelling, resource support and informal guidance.
- The school website contains a range of supportive documentation relating to the mathematics provision at the school. This includes the progression of skills and vocabulary from Reception to Year 6. White Rose is used as the basis for the maths curriculum at the school.

Music

- The children at Rickmansworth Park JMI School are provided with a range of wonderful opportunities to extend their musical intelligence, experience and appreciation. This was observed first hand during this visit through the skill and expertise of the music specialist. The aim is to ensure the school offers a high-quality music education which engages and inspires children to develop a life-long love of music, increases their self-confidence, creativity, and imagination, and provides opportunities for self-expression and a sense of personal achievement. The school offers opportunities for children to develop their talents in all aspects of music including composition, singing and appreciation. There is an explicit Singing Strategy and children have access to playing instruments – for example brass, and Proms in the Playground was a wonderful school led musical event in the summer. There are curriculum maps which show the learning journey for different elements of the music curriculum such as composition, exploration and creation, performance, sharing and playing and singing. The progression of skills and the explicit teaching of subject specific vocabulary is clearly defined in the planning documentation for all year groups. Children have access to a wonderful range of enrichment opportunities in music. This includes performing at Watford School of Music, learning samba, participating in “Rickmansworth Park’s Got Talent!” and attending music sessions at the feeder secondary school.
- The school currently used Charanga as the scheme of choice. This is because it is a spiral curriculum and builds upon prior learning. The subject leader supports staff to implement the curriculum and liaises with all of the external music staff who contribute to the vibrancy of the curriculum offer in this area,

- On this visit we observed high quality teaching and learning provision in both upper KS2 and EYFS. The youngest children were interpreting pulse and beat using tambourines, maracas and triangles. They were learning vocabulary such as pulse, beat, rhythm, syllables, tempo and pitch. The oldest children were using trombones to develop rhythm alongside musical accompaniment and exploring notation and 4/4 rhythms. Very impressive! Children at Rickmansworth Park JMI School are exposed to wonderful musical opportunities, thanks to the vision, commitment, passion and dedication of the leaders with assistance from the highly supportive parent body.

History

- The history curriculum is exciting and engaging and places the highest priority on valuing the local heritage. Great care has been taken in personalising the learning opportunities for the children so that the content is highly relevant and engaging. The highly skilled subject leader ensures that staff are supported to implement the history curriculum to a high standard in each classroom. This happens through dissemination of current updates, providing supportive resources and modelling ambition and a love of history. The learning journeys are well defined and show the progression in the key elements of learning such as invasion and settlement, leadership, trade and legacy. The curriculum is carefully sequenced and this can be evidenced in the progression of skills documents. The subject specific vocabulary to be specifically taught in line with the different units, has been defined for each year group. There is a clear view of the intent, implementation and impact of the history curriculum. The subject leader has undertaken training relating to designing the history curriculum and how to make it relevant and meaningful. This has been impactful, and the learning has been applied to the careful planning of the history curriculum at the school. The vision for excellence is to ensure that all children are excited about their learning, and this then encourages them to study further. The aspiration is for children to be critical thinkers who can scrutinise the reliability of sources and ask relevant historical questions. This is a clear illustration of the high pitch the school is aiming for in this area of learning. Foundations for the history curriculum are carefully mapped in the EYFS provision and largely are explored through the Understanding the World strand. Much of their work relates to stories and celebrations. The school has chosen to use a combination of resources to design the history curriculum rather than rely on one scheme. Key questions for exploration are identified to promote the skills of historical enquiry. The subject leader maintains a portfolio which demonstrates examples of progression. The school offers enrichment opportunities to bring history learning alive through visits to Verulamium, for example, as well as virtual activities exploring portals to the past.

Recommendations:

To further build upon existing highly effective practice:

1. Clarify and summarise assessment processes in the foundation subjects.

These prompts may be helpful:

- What assessment practices are currently being used in your subject?
- Do teachers use quizzes and spaced retrieval practice to check progress and revisit learning?
- How strategic is the questioning and is it linked to the sequence of learning?
- What is the purpose of your assessment/s? For example, are you using a test or assessment task to provide a high-level 'monitoring' overview or to inform specific classroom decisions?
- What happens as a result of any assessment?
- Do teachers act on it, in all subjects?
- If summative assessment data is submitted in foundation subjects, what is done as a result? If 20% of pupils are working below curriculum expectations in x subject, how will this inform the next x unit?
- What will the receiving teacher do to help pupils reach curriculum expectations?
- How will you act as the subject leader on this information?
- Does the assessment information make it clear what needs to be done next?
- How are pupils supported to catch up and keep up if assessments show they are not meeting curriculum expectations

2. Refine pupil voice activities:

- In pupil voice activities use the following prompts, aligned to the current inspection framework to learn about how well children are progressing through the curriculum. (This is applicable to all subject areas)
- Do children know more and remember more?
- Explore pupils' current learning
- Explore links with earlier learning from the planned curriculum
- Exploring subject disciplinary knowledge

3. Review the aide memoires and keep up to date with any of the recent Ofsted webinars relating to discrete areas of provision in the primary school setting.

- These define very clearly what the current expectations are of excellence in each area of assessment. Knowledge is power.

School Effectiveness Adviser: *Linda A Hardman*

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