

Crosby on Eden Church of England Academy

Governor Learning Walks – Special Educational Needs

Topic: Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Date: 3 March 2017 (9.15am to 11.15am)

Governor: Elspeth MacKay

The morning was split between time with Miss Weston, Head Teacher SEN Coordinator (SENDSCO) and observing a one to one teaching session between Mrs Harding and a Year 5 pupil.

Learning points from the morning:

Education Health and Care Plans

There are currently 2 pupils with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), there were formerly known as Statements of Special Educational Needs (SENs). One pupil has 21 hours of support and the other has 12 hours. Currently the school funds 7 hours and 11 hours respectively, but from April 2017 the school has to fund the first 11 hours for each child. This will have an impact on the school's budget.

This change in Government Policy causes concern for schools financially, but more importantly because it could have an adverse impact on the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream education. We do not want this to be the case at Crosby on Eden, as there are significant benefits for all children of having this inclusive education for all e.g. social integration, inclusiveness, recognition and acceptance of differences. We looked at the support arrangements in place for each child, to meet their particular needs, including:

- 1 to 1 Teaching Assistant (TA) sessions;
- separate teaching and learning focussed on the child's needs.
- Involvement in whole class activities both within and outwith the school – benefitting the child, the other children in the class and the whole community
- Support / joint working / collaboration with other agencies (some of which are funded by parents).
- The importance of the school and parents working together in the best interests of the child.
- Recording and measuring progress and outcomes for each child in relation to a range of things including academic, behaviour, social, emotional and speech and language skills. The joint working of the Teacher and TA is important to monitor the progress of each child. The progress of each child is based on their own abilities.

- SEN or EHCP Support Plans – there is a formal plan in place for each child and plans are reviewed regularly in line with the needs of each child. They are reviewed at least every 2 terms, but more frequently if required.

There is one other child in the school currently going through the EHCP application process. This is an important process which seems to be very paperwork and time intensive and can cause frustration because of delays by the County Council in progressing applications. In one case an “early intervention” process took the Council from May to November to progress. The School does not wait for the process to be completed before putting interventions in place and an SEN support plan has been put in place for the child with appropriate support and intervention. However, it is important to go through the process to ensure the child receives the support they require not just at primary school but also for moving forward in future into secondary education.

Additional Support for other children

Within the school there are other children who have been identified as requiring some additional support or intervention because of learning, social or behavioural needs. The children are not on the EHCP register or going through the application process, but just need some extra support. We looked at the process for identifying and recording the need and putting in place appropriate support and interventions, within current school resources.

Support plans are put in place for any children requiring them – the School does not just do this for children with an EHCP, support plans can be put in place for any children.

Logging of Incidents / Needs / Interventions / Outcomes

The school has a very good system in place for logging these for every child in the school, as and when they arise. This is extremely beneficial for early identification of any patterns of behaviour or issues and allows appropriate interventions to be put in place and the success of the interventions to be assessed.

It was useful to see instances where early identification and intervention had resulted in significant progress of the child.

Support / Interventions

Depending on the particular needs of the individual child, a variety of different support or interventions can be used, including:

- 1 to 1 teaching/learning time with a qualified Teaching Assistant;
- nurture groups;
- small group work on specific tasks;
- play time with other children, as an important part of the socialisation process;
- assistance with social and personal care – teaching independence;
- involvement in whole class and whole school activities;
- support in preparing a child for the next step/transition in their future e.g. moving up a school year or moving to secondary school.

Tracking Progress

I have mentioned above the tracking of progress of children with an EHCP. This is set within a whole school context of having thorough tracking of progress of every child in the school. This tracking enables early identification of issues, and appropriate support/interventions to be put in place as required.

SEN and Disability Policy

We looked at the Policy which had been updated in February 2017. The Policy is formally reviewed annually by Miss Weston, working with the relevant Teachers and TAs. The Policy is also kept updated throughout the year to reflect any changes to legislation and national guidance.

SATs

Children who have an EHCP or SEN do not usually take the SATs, but they are still counted towards the final results, which can have a significant impact on overall results in a small school with small class sizes. However, in my opinion, the benefits of inclusive education for all outweigh any concerns about impact on SATS results.

Careful consideration will be given to what children with particular need will do when other take the SATs, in order to avoid any feelings of isolation or difference.

Record keeping / Paperwork

All paperwork is carefully filed and stored. Although some of the historic paperwork was lost during the floods (electronic records were accessed and printed where possible), all information in relation to current pupils is fully up to date electronically and paper copy. It was good to see the level of detail being recorded for each child, which not only illustrates the importance of record keeping but more importantly shows care for every element of a child's life.

Staff Roles within School

There are a number of roles within the school which are all important in relation to SEN/EHCP:

SENCO – Special Education Needs Coordinator – Miss Weston is the SENCO. This is a vital and important role with significant implications. The role involves a significant time commitment and an enormous amount of paperwork. The experience Miss Weston has in this area has been invaluable to the school and we should note that many other individuals would not have this level of experience. We, as a Governing Body, need to be aware of:

- the need for the SENCO to keep current knowledge and practice up to date – and the challenges of doing this while managing a school
- many other schools have this as a separate function with 1 or 2 days a week.

Miss Weston may report on this to a future meeting as appropriate.

Teacher, Teaching Assistants and Other Staff

It was clear to me that staff within the school provide above and beyond the support they are required to provide – being prepared to put themselves out and use their own time to prepare resources.

Teachers, TAs and the SENCO work well together with close communication. TAs play a crucial role and often go above and beyond the support they are required to provide. They benefit the individuals they support and also the wider classroom.

One to One Teaching Session Observation - Mrs Harding and one pupil

Watching this lesson was one of the highlights of my time as a Governor and it brightened my week and my outlook on life. It was a real joy to see how a lesson was tailored to suit the needs and requirements of the individual child. The lessons had involved a significant amount of preparation by Mrs Harding, including the preparation of resources specific to the child.

The lesson was based on the story of the Gruffalo and involved reading portions of the story together orally and using some sign language. The lessons started with a focus on the need for good listening, good looking and good sitting and moved on to build on progress and learning in previous sessions. The lesson involved elements of identification of characters and locations, recall from previous lessons, predicting what would happen next in the story and finding the Who, What, When, Where ? and 'tell me more' words. Each lesson also has an element of play using the Gruffalo characters and a fun time when the child was allowed to be the teacher! The child took great joy in ensuring that we were following the Good Listening, good looking and good sitting rules!

The lesson observation summed up well the ethos of the school of *Helping children to fulfil their God given potential.*