

## Governor Visit Record

**Date of Visit** :February 5th 2019

**Visiting Governor/s**: DIANE CAROLIN

**Focus of Visit:**

LOOKING AT ENGLISH CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOMS IN ACTION.

**Evidence gathered** :

On my recent visit with the new Head of English, Claire Dobson, it was uplifting to see the classroom practises were varied, innovative and how well (and happily) the pupils in each year group embraced their tasks. Children interacted with staff, class assistants and visiting students equally well. In addition they helped each other when they realised the person next to them seemed confused or just needed a spelling or even in Year 1 , a little encouragement. The staff had identified the particular needs of their pupils and then designed distinctive English lessons to meet those needs. None had chosen the easy path of just downloading lesson plans and schemes of work from the internet, each had considered the particular characteristics of their own learners. I saw an innovative curriculum with emphasis on structured group work and use of texts to reflect the syllabus and reinforce the Beach school activities (Noi and the Whale.) The class reading of The Firework Makers Daughter had the class so entranced they did not even notice our presence. The staff had worked hard to promote reading through a well-balanced mixture of activities and access to class texts as well as Library books. I witnessed rigorous attention being paid to developing speaking and listening' and the use of systematic phonics in teaching reading, writing and spelling. The school is an area where a lot of the pupils have very little exposure to an extended vocabulary and all staff were correcting use of tense and using and explaining new words to their classes as they went along. I saw many strengths in the teaching and no weaknesses:

- \*a good subject knowledge, in both staff and assistants.
- \*creative use of displays, well designed resources and activities generating pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment
- \* effective use of phonics and and correct pronunciation and sounds.
- \* good maintenance of pace in the lessons, nothing over-planned
- \* differentiation used effectively to match pupils' specific learning needs.

Ms Dobson informed me they were in talks with the new English Hub to see if involvement was appropriate for Beaconhill. Also a Book Fair as she was in talks with Scholastic Books. Upcoming World Book Day was to be based around the book 'The Day the Crayons Quit'. Pupils were to come as their favourite colours, cartoons or book characters. A masterstroke to involve fully all pupils as it reduces the competitiveness among parents, especially in an area where some of the families are cash-strapped , as everyone will have a coloured garment reducing the pressure to come up with (after a long day at work) a fullblown Harry Potter outfit. Staff were also going to participate. I was pleased to find the Y6 displays were filled with the work of the children and creatively displayed, giving the room a warmth and the children a sense of belonging. The children chatted eagerly about the World Holocaust Day studies they had undertaken and when I mentioned I had lived in Amsterdam for four years I was inundated with questions. I left wanting to take them all their to see the house for themselves! Congratulations to the class and the teacher on their recent class win in an Anne Frank essay competition.

**Recommendations:** A look at small group activities for the more academic students when they have completed their lessons for example: more intensive creative writing groups. Them helping other students with tasks perhaps in other year groups also. Greater use of appropriate Thesaurus' with the classes to extend their vocabulary in their written work. Otherwise as always this school never ceases to impress those who visit it and see the wonderful work being done by amazing staff and helpers. Congratulations.