

Gillespie Learning Committee 06.10.2021
Minutes

Present: Jodie, Claire, Mark, Katrina, Sarah, Lynne, Ashley, Mandy

Mark introduces priority key areas. Including emphasising new child engagement

Parental Engagement: Claire would like to see thinking on how we bring parental engagement in curriculum/learning in woven in more explicitly throughout the SIP, building on good relationships, knowledge and capital developed in the pandemic as discussed and last Learning Committee. Mandy notes that there is a lot engagement around online platforms - parents are a bit confused about how much to involve themselves. Some parents would like to understand more what level of detail they should engage with. Tied to shift to online learning. Mark has some ideas, e.g. around phonics, re-engaging and surveying and learning volunteers, reviewing new homework policy. **Mark will have an SLT meeting and discuss the parent engagement point with teachers and try and capture further.**

Purpose of the plan: Ashley notes the tension with the SIP – is it an operational plan for teachers or high level for governors purposes? Feels more like former. Could be slimmed down for latter. Suggestions for making priorities shorter - and moving more into detail into other parts. Mark notes that it's both! Shorter than it used to be. Focused more narrowly on priorities.

Mark gives introduction to the plan that sits beneath each Priority and governors discuss – all governors were asked in advance to read one area of the plan in detail and lead feedback.

Priority 1.

Mark notes key change here is the significant reduction of catch-up plan. Same process of using in-house staff, 30 targeted days on Y5 and Y6.

Ashley feels this section looks good. Observes some disjointed in language between front and blue boxes. Can the format be strengthened so success criteria relate to specific actions? Claire agrees - evidence for outcomes could be more specific in places.

On 1.1. have the pupils already been targeted and what's the criteria for choosing pupils. Mark notes it is the same systems as have always been in use - need identified in summer assessments. Writing and older children were identified. Will be updated termly. Ashley will send annotated version with his comments.

Claire asks if the targets are ambitious enough? Mark acknowledges that with some of the classes the targets are not as high as they have been in the past, but the targets had to relate to what the individuals have achieved. In these terms the school is not going to be less ambitious than ever have been. But got to be realistic – e.g. GLD used to be based on 70%+ and now 63%. Group of children in Y1 who find things difficult. EYFS has been moderated. **Mark said he would check in with targets to check ambitious enough.**

Priority 2.

Mark notes new role of Senior Curriculum Support leader - Shelley "to take an interventions approach to ensure all subjects supported effectively" - esp. where not direct leader of a subject.

Claire: p17 in success criteria - what will we see, "school maintains % of pupils" - but should be "increasing". Sounds very static. See Mark's point above in relation to Priority 1.

Priority 3

Jodie reflected this is a strong part of the plan, particularly welcomes the strengthening focus on pupil engagement and the fact the schools is returning to some of the issues identified in the pupil survey conducted independently in 2019.

Jodie suggested that another survey be conducted now to provide a baseline enabling us to see the impact of planned initiatives – rather than relying on the 2019 survey and waiting to assess again in the summer term as currently suggested. **Mark agrees, he will change this and another pupil wellbeing survey will be conducted asap.**

Jodie questioned the exclusion of detail on dealing with mental health issues that arise, referrals to CAMHS etc, especially given the context of deterioration of mental health more broadly since the pandemic – the focus is clearly on wellbeing and prevention. Claire suggests this is not an improvement priority as the school is already already doing okay. Mark says responding to children with clear mental health needs is a core Gillespie priority, but is captured in other ways - such is in School safeguarding committee.

Discussion followed about different approaches across age groups. Mandy asked how approaches were differentiated to take account of different needs at different ages and stages. Sarah explained for example that Y6 get less of My Happy Minds but they do journals and focus on transition to Y7. Sarah will do some of the Y5 lessons.

Priority 4

The importance of this priority – and the significant challenge in improving staff wellbeing whilst also delivering so much for pupils in the wake of the pandemic was noted by governors.

Mandy noted that she is pleased to see a commitment to fewer meetings
Mark explained this is partially being achieved through incorporating directed time meetings into other things.

Mandy noted the bottom of p25. reference to changes not impacting children - e.g. marking practice – and asked how this would be checked. Mark and Katrina explained the processes in place.

Claire particularly welcomed 4.2 and focus on the adult happy mind. However, success criteria seem vague in places. Should targets should be here somewhere.
How do we reconcile priority 2 and priority 4?

In conclusion Jodie commented that the SIP was a strong document but that in a number of places **more could be done to simplify and clarify success criteria.**