

School Improvement Visit: Summary Report

Name of school	Lapford Community Primary School
Visit dates	05/11/24 to 06/11/24
Consultant	Neil Swait
Key Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject reviews in early reading / phonics, mathematics and history were undertaken over the two days.• Activities undertaken to explore subject effectiveness included visits to lessons, work and planning scrutiny and discussions with pupils, teachers and subject leaders.• Discussions were held with leaders to explore curriculum design, implementation and impact; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; provision for pupils with SEND; and the EYFS.• An extensive range of school documentation was scrutinised before and during the onsite visit including the SEF, SDP, behaviour logs, attendance data and school monitoring records.

Leadership and Management

Strengths

- Leaders have created a happy and caring environment in which all pupils are effectively supported to achieve well. Strong relationships between pupils and staff reflect the school's positive and respectful culture. The school's values of compassion, ambition and teamwork are clearly apparent in day-to-day life.
- Leaders have an accurate and realistic understanding of the school's strengths and next steps. They base their evaluations on a broad range of evidence sources. Leaders have made strong progress in tackling the areas for improvement that were identified in the last inspection. They have provided the school with effective and determined leadership and galvanized the support and commitment of their staff.
- Staff report good levels of support for their wellbeing. They agree that leaders are considerate of their workload and the pressures that they face and take this into account when implementing new initiatives. Staff feel valued and well supported. They agree that leaders protect them from bullying and harassment.
- Leaders ensure that teachers receive targeted professional development that is closely linked with school improvement priorities. As a result, staff at the school are well equipped to undertake their work successfully. This translates into improvements in teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- The quality of subject leadership is strong. Leaders undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively with a clear focus on securing the best possible outcomes for all pupils.
- Discussions with leaders and checks of school documentation show that there have been no incidents of off rolling. The school is committed to maintaining a highly inclusive culture. Leaders aim to ensure that all pupils, including the most disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, successfully complete their programmes of study across the curriculum

Areas for development

- The school should continue with the planned actions to secure a highly effective curriculum offer across the wider curriculum subjects.

Quality of Education

Overarching strengths

- The school's curriculum aligns with the ambition and expectations of the National Curriculum 2014. Leaders have carefully considered the essential knowledge and skills that pupils need to cover and the order in which this should be taught.
- Teachers demonstrate a confident subject and pedagogical knowledge and understanding of the areas that they teach. They set high expectations for the use of subject specific vocabulary. Teachers have a common understanding of the school's curriculum intent and what it means for their practice.
- The curriculum has been carefully designed to meet the needs of pupils with SEND and the most disadvantaged. As a

result, most access the same learning content as their peers and progress well from their individual starting points.

- Teachers use assessment effectively to help pupils to embed and use knowledge fluently, check understanding and inform teaching.
- Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. It is prioritised to allow all pupils access to the full curriculum offer. Most pupils make strong progress in reading over time, often from very low starting points.
- Lessons are effectively designed to ensure that all pupils have frequent and well-focused opportunities to discuss and debate their learning. The school places significant importance on developing pupils' oracy skills, starting in the EYFS.
- Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND have the same opportunities to participate in the school's ambitious curriculum as their peers. They work closely with parents and external agencies to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the help they need. Staff identify pupils' needs swiftly and effectively support them in lessons. Targets on individual learning plans closely align with pupils' key areas of need.
- Subject leaders monitor and evaluate their subject areas with appropriate efficiency. They demonstrate a precise understanding of curriculum implementation and impact and play a key role in raising standards across the school.

Subject specific strengths

Early reading and phonics:

- The school is determined that every pupil, regardless of their individual starting points, will learn to read with fluency and confidence. The teaching of reading is fundamental to the school's improvement year-on-year.
- The Phonics Lead sets high expectations for staff and pupils. She has an accurate understanding of what good quality phonics teaching looks like in the classroom. The Phonics Lead demonstrates a strong capacity to sustain and further build on the school's effective provision in early reading and phonics.
- The school is well focused on making sure that any pupils who struggle with their reading are given the time and support that they need to catch up quickly. Approaches linked to the adopted scheme are delivered by the most experienced staff. Additional support sessions are carefully designed to address gaps in phonic knowledge and improve pupils' skills in segmenting and blending and reading fluency. As a result, the weakest readers make strong progress, and most catch up quickly.
- The school's adopted phonics scheme (Twinkl) provides a rigorous and sequential approach to the reading curriculum, ensuring that pupils develop their accuracy, fluency and confidence. Staff ensure that the expectations and approaches of the scheme are delivered with fidelity, maximising the number of letters and sounds that pupils can learn over time. All phonics sessions start with a speedy sound retrieval exercise to ensure that pupils remember the letters and sounds previously covered.
- Children start learning their letters and sounds from their first day in Reception, building on the learning that has previously taken place in the Nursery. No time is wasted in ensuring that all children get off to a strong start in developing their skills in early reading. By the end of their first term in school, children in Reception should be secure on approximately 40 letters and sounds.
- Accurate and timely assessments ensure that the weakest readers read books that are closely matched to the letters, sounds and common exception words that they know. Consequently, they experience a good level of success, reading with a suitable degree of fluency and understanding. The weakest readers, including those with SEND, apply their recall of phonemes / graphemes successfully when segmenting and blending unfamiliar words. They draw effectively on the decoding strategies that they have been taught.
- Leaders have prioritised staff training in early reading and phonics. All teachers and teaching assistants are trained in the delivery of the school's adopted phonics programme. Consequently, staff demonstrate a good level of skill and expertise in their delivery of the scheme. Typical strengths that were observed in the phonics lessons visited included high levels of pupil participation; pupils' secure and accurate recall of previously covered letters, sounds and common exception words; well-paced and active learning; teachers' swift interventions to address misconceptions and misunderstandings; and pupils' confidence and accuracy in segmenting and blending unfamiliar words.
- The school ensures that promoting a love of reading is a top priority. Teachers read to their classes daily, selecting from a set reading spine that exposes pupils to a broad range of literature covering fiction, non-fiction and poetry based text.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and the books they have written. Their love of reading is clearly apparent. Pupils agree that their teachers read to them daily. They value this experience and talk about the stories they have heard in detail, commenting on key events and characters.

Mathematics

- The Maths Lead provides strong leadership and direction for this subject. She is determined that all pupils should be supported to achieve well in maths.
- The school has secured a suitably ambitious and well-structured curriculum offer in mathematics that aligns with National Curriculum expectations and starts in the EYFS. The curriculum design ensures that new material is broken down into manageable steps, lesson-by-lesson. Leaders have considered the needs of mixed age classes, ensuring that

all pupils access age appropriate content.

- Effective CPD has ensured that staff deliver the maths curriculum with a good level of consistency. Teachers demonstrate a strong subject knowledge of the areas that they teach. Learning is carefully planned to enable all pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in a logical order, building on what they already know. Teachers model and explain new procedures clearly. They select the most appropriate concrete apparatus and pictorial representations to enable pupils to make secure links with more abstract concepts. For example, in Year 1 pupils use cubes and ten frames to explore number bonds to 10.
- Most pupils with SEND work towards the same challenging end points as their peers in maths. A range of adaptive teaching approaches, including the use of additional resources and equipment and additional adult support, ensure that there is a focus on keeping up, rather than catching up.
- The design of the school's maths curriculum ensures that there is a clear focus on developing pupils' use of mathematical vocabulary alongside key facts and methods. As a result, pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of a broad range of mathematical terms and use these confidently when talking about their learning.
- Pupils achieve well in maths. Evidence in their books shows that the planned curriculum is being enacted with learning content aligning with age related expectations. Pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop their fluency and consolidate new concepts before applying these in problem solving and reasoning tasks. Pupils successfully draw on a wide range of prior knowledge. They set their calculations out neatly to avoid any careless mistakes. Teacher feedback and marking are alert to misconceptions and misunderstandings. Pupils demonstrate a confident grasp of the mathematical content that has been covered. The quality of learning in maths books is of a consistently good standard.
- Assessment and retrieval tasks are suitably focused on revisiting and checking the most important mathematical knowledge, concepts and procedures that pupils need for future learning.
- Pupils articulate a confident and accurate recall of the essential knowledge and skills they have previously covered in maths. They are self-assured when verbalising their mathematical understanding, making good use of subject specific terms.

History

- Leaders have considered the essential knowledge and skills that pupils need to cover in history from the EYFS up to the end of Yr 6. Medium term planning ensures that learning is coherently planned and sequenced and builds step-by-step towards clearly defined end points that align with National Curriculum expectations.
- Teachers demonstrate a confident knowledge and understanding of the historical content that they cover. Their explanations are clear and precise. Targeted questioning is used well to check for misconceptions / misunderstandings. Learning activities align with lesson intent. Pupils are clear in their understanding of the main concepts being taught and use historical language correctly. They benefit from purposeful opportunities to discuss and debate their learning in this subject. Pupils with SEND typically access the same history curriculum as their peers.
- Evidence in pupils' books shows that the planned history curriculum is being enacted. Learning content matches with medium term planning. It is clearly sequenced.
- The history curriculum in the EYFS is designed to ensure that children develop their understanding of the past through story. They have the opportunity to learn about their own personal history as well as learning about a range of significant people, places and events that are covered in greater depth in KS1.
- Pupils are confident in their recall of the historical content that they are currently learning. For example, they provide some interesting information linked to Ancient Greece and World War II, using appropriate historical terms (e.g., Athens, Sparta, D-day, invasion, Blitz, evacuation, Allies).
- A range of enrichment opportunities extend beyond the classroom, including memorable moments that are closely linked to the unit themes.

Quality of education: areas for development

- To further improve the quality of education provided the school should:
 - ensure that teaching and learning across the wider curriculum takes into account the needs of mixed age classes by ensuring that learning tasks and outcomes are better aligned with pupils' different starting points and year groups.
 - ensure that a more precise and systematic approach to retrieval is in place to enable pupils to successfully recall learning that has been undertaken in previous terms and years. Subjects, such as history and geography, which are delivered on a half term rotation resulting in sustained breaks in learning should be taken into account as part of this work.
 - ensure that the quality of pupils' written work across the wider curriculum improves by raising teachers' expectations and increasing the focus on feedback and marking to swiftly address basic errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting.
 - continue to further develop adaptive approaches to teaching and learning across the wider curriculum to support pupils with SEND.

Early Years Provision

Strengths:

- The EYFS curriculum takes into account barriers to children's achievements. Aspirations are suitably high for all.
- Learning content has been clearly identified and sequenced in order to meet the expectations of the EYFS framework. Developing children's early skills in reading and personal, social and emotional development are top priorities.
- Leaders ensure that teachers and teaching assistants are well trained to undertake their work in the EYFS. There is a strong focus on ensuring that staff have a good level of expertise in supporting the development of children's early skills in speech, language and communication.
- Most children with SEND access the same learning content and activities as their peers. They are actively immersed in their learning and play.
- Parents / carers are effectively supported through a range of opportunities to engage in school events and workshops. They receive key information to help with home learning and ensure that school expectations and approaches in areas such as phonics are well known and understood.
- Teachers ensure that activities across the continuous provision have clear learning objectives that build on children's current and prior learning. No gender bias in activities is evident. The continuous provision reflects the topics and themes that children are currently learning about.
- Children are very well behaved. They appear happy, safe and well looked after. Interactions between adults and children are highly positive.
- There is a strong emphasis on promoting language development. Adults routinely ask questions, provide explanations, verbalise what children are doing and correct errors in language. Children have regular opportunities to develop their vocabulary through lots of talk, conversation, and description. They make appropriate word choices when talking about the activities they are engaged in and express their ideas in simple but coherent sentences.
- The EYFS environment provides children with a bright, welcoming and well organised space in which to learn and play. Effective use is made of the outside area with children benefiting from free flow between indoor and outdoor activities. The continuous provision is carefully laid out and managed with a focus on adult directed, child initiated and enhanced learning opportunities.
- Books in reading areas are carefully selected to meet children's needs and interests. Phonic displays align with the adopted scheme.
- Staff are knowledgeable about the areas that they teach. They work in close collaboration to ensure that all children have the opportunity to get off to the best possible start with their education.
- Children demonstrate positive attitudes to learning through good levels of curiosity, concentration and enjoyment. They are well motivated and eager to join in. Staff ensure that children understand the importance of taking turns and sharing.

Areas for development

- Not applicable

Behaviour and Attitudes

Strengths

- Pupils behave well both in and outside of lessons. They display consistently positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils follow the school rules carefully, ensuring that lessons run smoothly and are not interrupted by inappropriate behaviour. No low-level disruption was observed in any lessons visited.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and considerate. They readily engage in discussions about their learning and speak to each other and to staff in an appropriate manner.
- Pupils agree that their peers are usually well behaved. They know what bullying is and say that it is not a problem at this school. Pupils agree that adults can be relied upon to address any inappropriate behaviour quickly.
- Staff feel very well supported by leaders in managing behaviour. They agree that effective systems, processes and routines are firmly established.
- Pupils enjoy their time spent at Lapford Community Primary. They feel happy, safe and well looked after. Pupils agree that they have a trusted adult that they can go to with a worry or a concern who will listen and take them seriously.

- Pupils' good levels of attendance over time show that they value their education. Current in year attendance for all pupils combined is close to the latest national average. However, the figure has been slightly distorted by a pupil on a part-time timetable and a further pupil who has recently left the school but remained on roll for an extended period.
- Leaders undertake their analysis of attendance with sufficient rigour. They focus their attention on identifying any emerging trends and patterns linked to individuals, classes, significant groups and the days of the week. Leaders have an exact understanding of the root causes of poor attendance and are working tirelessly to tackle them. Attendance is everyone's business all the time at Lapford.
- Pupils with the most complex behavioural needs are well supported. Detailed, individualised behaviour care plans ensure that staff are alert to the possible triggers for inappropriate behaviour and how best to respond to them.
- Leaders ensure that behaviour incidents are logged with precision. Their analysis of pupils' behaviour over time swiftly alerts them to any emerging concerns.
- The school ensures the permanent exclusion is only ever used as a very last resort. No pupils have been permanently excluded within the last year.
- Five pupils have been suspended within the last 12 months, totaling 11 fixed suspensions. Leaders have well established practices in place to manage suspension including the use of notification letters and reintegration meetings that involve both the pupil and parents. Work is sent home when a pupil is suspended to ensure that they do not fall behind with their learning.

Areas for development

- Not applicable.

Personal Development

Strengths

- The school provides pupils with a broad variety of experiences. Pupils have access to a good range of after school clubs, activities, trips and residential that are designed to broaden their cultural capital and develop their interests and talents. Recent enrichment opportunities have included trips to the Tiverton Museum, The Eden Project and The Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter. Disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND, are subsidised to ensure that they do not miss out on any of the opportunities on offer.
- The school ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of fundamental British Values and how these are lived out in day-to-day life. As a result, pupils discuss these with confidence and understanding, recognising the significance they have in modern Britain.
- Pupils know that to stay healthy they should eat a balanced diet, stay hydrated, get plenty of sleep, wash regularly and brush their teeth. They demonstrate a secure awareness of online safety and know that you should never agree to meet with someone you have met online or share passwords and personal information.
- Pupils say that there are a good range of clubs and activities to choose from including choir, dodgeball, recorders, Lego club and Forest school. They value these opportunities.
- The school ensures that trips and visits are carefully planned to align with curriculum intent and enhance pupils' learning experiences.
- Pupils have routine opportunities to discuss and debate their learning across the curriculum. All pupils, including those with SEND, are encouraged to express their views and ideas.
- Coverage of SMSC, RHSE and the protected characteristics have been secured through an adopted PHSE scheme.
- The school provides pupils with meaningful and carefully planned opportunities to understand how to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society.

Areas for development

- The school should ensure that the curriculum enables all pupils to develop a secure understanding of different religious beliefs and cultures.
- The school should continue to further promote and support the take-up of the extra-curricular activities and clubs by the most disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND.