

Staff involved

Deputy Headteacher Lindsey Moran, Subject Leader Leanne Quarry-Ellis, Year Leader/English Teacher Ruth Day and Link Governor Lyn Eaton

Reason for visit

This was the third visit of this academic year to check progress with teaching and learning in respect of English provision at Liscard. Phonics teaching in early years, Phonics Screening Tests, KS1 English SATs and recent moderation were considered.

Key points

- RD explained in some detail how phonics is taught in the early years in 4 phases ie phase 1 in F1 where speaking and listening skills are developed through fun and interactive activities and phases 2 and 3/4 in F2 where children are introduced to letters and their corresponding sounds. As children become more confident they begin to blend and segment words. Again, children are taught in a fun, active multi-sensory, explicit and systematic way with opportunities to reinforce their phonic knowledge across the curriculum. Children are organised into 4 ability groups with aspirational planning for all children but with group 4 being the smallest group with enrichment provided via targeted TA support which results in these children making accelerated progress.
- The recent Year 1 Phonics Screening Tests administered in June each year with 50% real and 50% pseudo words resulted in 76 of the 89 children entered being successful (i.e. 83%) so only 13 will have to be retested in Year 2. Given the low starting point for many of the children the results show that significant progress has been made, while in particular the ability to blend has improved. These tests are important as they demonstrate that the children have decoding skills that they can use to decode most words and so successfully progress through school.
- In respect of Writing more children are off track (following the pandemic with perhaps fewer opportunities to practice) however improvement of this skill will now be prioritised.
- KS1 SATs are taken at the end of Year 2 and staff thought that the papers were fair. Results are not published as with KS2 and these children take the tests in a low stress, low key way as befits their age. Although externally set they are marked internally by school staff. In respect of Reading 75% of children achieved Age Related Expectations (ARE) and this is in line with the last validated 2019 data, while an impressive 18% achieved Greater Depth (GD).
- The Subject Leader is a Local Authority (LA) moderator so has a developed knowledge of what is required in setting up and operating the moderation process at Liscard; this knowledge is shared with colleagues. Consequently and unsurprisingly the recent moderation visit from the LA resulted in an extremely positive report with the organisation and planning of the visit commended as well as the staff's excellent knowledge of the children while importantly there were no challenges to the judgements made by staff. The school also additionally and voluntarily engages with Cluster moderation with St George's and New Brighton Primary schools; this activity provides an opportunity to share ideas and best practice.
- KS2 SATs outcomes will be published in July 2022 so will be considered in detail at the next meeting in September.
- Senior staff continue to read with children who have been identified as requiring this form of support; this exercise provides an opportunity to monitor progress with the teaching of reading generally and with the most fragile learners particularly.
- Within the English department staff morale remains high as end of term approaches despite an extremely busy recovery year with staff working tirelessly to get the children back on track after the pandemic.
- While the re-establishment of parent/carer activities to support reading strategies has been an aim post pandemic, and given the many competing priorities to address, this activity will be rebooted in the Autumn term when there will be an opportunity to additionally engage the new intake of parents/carers.

Next visit will be during the early part of term 1 during mid/late September 2022