

WHITEFIELD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policy on School Improvement

1 Introduction

1.1 This school improvement policy follows guidance from both the DfES and Ofsted on school self-evaluation. It involves the following processes:

- auditing our present performance and practice;
- agreeing our priorities and setting targets for improvement;
- action planning to ensure that resources are deployed appropriately;
- implementing change;
- monitoring and reviewing the progress made;
- setting targets for pupil achievement – ‘Guidance for Governors’ (DfES, 1997).

2 Aims and objectives

2.1 In our school, we aim for excellence in all we do. Our most important aim is to enable every child to reach his or her highest possible level of individual achievement. To this end, we implement a policy of school improvement. We aim to be a self-improving school, although we naturally take account of all external evaluations, such as an Ofsted inspection or an LA review. While we celebrate success enthusiastically, we nevertheless submit ourselves to critical self-evaluation. In other words, we are continually looking for ways in which we can improve the educational provision in the school. We involve all members of the school in this process, including the children, whom we regularly invite to comment on decisions which affect their education.

3 Auditing

3.1 We ask ourselves the following questions when auditing our current performance:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we compare with similar schools?
- What more should we aim to achieve?
- What must we do to make it happen?

3.2 All monitoring judgements are recorded on the Self-Evaluation Form (SEF). This document is updated termly, so that records are kept up to date, and the school is prepared for an Ofsted inspection at any time. The SEF contains school judgements about our own performance. It also contains references to where the evidence exists for our judgments. The SEF is a key document, as it sets out what we as a school do well, and where we want to improve.

3.3 Standards of attainment

We carry out an annual data analysis during the autumn term, when we study the school's National Curriculum test results, and teachers' assessments, in each of the core subjects. We use the data provided on Raiselonline to find out how well children in our school are achieving, compared with children in similar schools. We analyse the statistics to help answer the following questions:

- What are the trends over time in each core subject, and are standards rising in line with our expectations?
- Do pupils perform better in some subjects than others?
- Are there significant differences between boys' and girls' performances?
- Is the progress of the pupils good across all Key Stages?
- How well are the more able pupils doing, and do enough pupils achieve the higher levels?
- Can we identify any groups of pupils who may be underperforming?

This statistical analysis is carried out by the senior team, and a report is prepared for discussion with the governing body. Further analyses are carried out in the Spring and Summer terms to evaluate progress, and reports on this are submitted to the Governing Body on Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

3.4 The quality of teaching

The headteacher, deputy headteacher or subject leader observes all teachers working with classes at least once a term. The criteria that we use have been agreed by all teachers, and are part of our teaching and learning policy. Teachers negotiate the observation date and the focus of the observation reflects an agreed whole-school focus that is linked to the school improvement plan. The teacher and the observer follow the observation with a discussion. The observer notes the strengths and areas for development, and gives a copy of this information to the teacher. The headteacher uses the information gained from this monitoring process to help to identify common development points which can be addressed in the school's training programme for continuing professional development. This evidence is also used to inform the judgements included in the SEF.

3.5 The quality of children's learning

In the course of their lesson observations, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders gather evidence about the children's attitudes to work and the standards that they are attaining in lessons. The school carries out regular scrutinies of pupils' work, and these enable us to make evaluations about the progress being made by the children.

3.6 The quality of teachers' planning

- Teachers give their medium-term planning to the appropriate subject leader at the beginning of each term. The subject leader records any common issues, passes on information about these to the headteacher, and gives verbal feedback to the teachers.
- Weekly Planning Files are reviewed on a regular basis by the Senior Leadership Team and any comments or suggestions are fed back to the teacher concerned.

4 Establishing priorities and target-setting

4.1 The school sets itself challenging but realistic targets, always aiming for the highest possible standards. These targets are based on the evidence and data gathered through the monitoring and review process. Pupil performance targets are based on Fischer Family Trust (FFT) contextual value-added data, so that the school has ownership of them. The targets are agreed by the headteacher with the governing body in the autumn term. The targets are also shared and agreed with the School Improvement Partner (SIP).

4.2 All children have personal learning targets for literacy and numeracy. The teacher reviews these when appropriate, depending on the age of the child. The teacher also reviews the children's National Curriculum levels at the end of each school year, and sets the targets for the end of the next school year. The headteacher (or deputy headteacher) and the class teacher review these targets, and the progress that the children are making, after the November and February assessments.

- 4.3 The auditing process and target-setting inform the priorities for the Single Integrated Development Plan (SIDP). Where a subject has been identified in the SIDP as a priority area, the subject leader observes all relevant teachers once a year as they teach the subject in question. Each year, we identify two subjects as priority areas. Subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching in their subject and select a specific focus for the observation. This gives feedback about the progress of specific actions in the school improvement plan.
- 4.4 The headteacher gives the governors a termly report in which s/he identifies progress against the targets within the SIDP. Governors make regular visits to the school as part of a planned programme of monitoring, and, together with the headteacher, they agree the focus of these visits when formulating the school improvement plan. Governors focus on one particular curriculum area or aspect of the school, and the headteacher supplies them with monthly budget updates. This allows the governing body to monitor and evaluate spending patterns against the priorities for improvement as identified in the school improvement plan. The planning cycle involves the governing body in evaluating the progress of the current school improvement plan as part of the development of the next plan. This gives governors a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

5 Action planning

- 5.1 We plan for our school improvement on a three-year cycle, and our planned actions are set out in the school improvement plan. The plan is reviewed and updated annually by the senior staff and governing body. The SIDP is outcome-focused, in that it sets out clearly what our priorities are, what we are aiming for in terms of pupil achievement, and how we plan to deploy the resources available to the maximum benefit of our children.

6 Implementation

- 6.1 Each priority identified in the SIDP has a named person responsible for its implementation. This involves organising staff training, disseminating new practice, and monitoring the process of change in the school. A report on progress will form part of the school's monitoring and review process, and will be discussed by governors in their annual review.

7 Monitoring and evaluating progress

- 7.1 Monitoring is the means by which we gather information. We do this systematically across a range of activities within our school.
- 7.2 Evaluation is a judgement on the effectiveness of actions taken, based on their impact on the quality of children's learning.
- 7.3 We regularly monitor the actions we have taken, so that we are in a position to make a judgement about how effective our actions have been. This gives us information on which we can base future decisions about the development of our school.
- 7.4 The senior team and the governors annually review progress against the targets set out in the school improvement plan.

8 Key tasks in the improvement cycle

- 8.1 In the autumn term, we analyse performance data, and review how the children are doing in our school compared with similar schools. We first analyse the trends in our school performance, using RAISEonline. We then:
- examine national summary results;
 - examine national value-added information;
 - make comparisons with similar schools.

- 8.2 We determine end-of-Key-Stage targets, both for the whole school and for individuals, and we agree statutory targets with the governing body.
- 8.3 During the autumn and spring terms, we implement the SIDP and gather data on the quality of teaching, and on pupil standards, through lesson observations and work scrutinies.
- 8.4 We buy into the LA high quality data service and in the Autumn Term using this information to form the basis of our analysis to set targets and inform Govrnors.
- 8.5 In the summer term, we review progress made and adjust the SIDP accordingly.

9 Performance management

- 9.1 The Performance Management Cycle provides a framework for implementing the processes of target-setting, planning, monitoring and evaluation from the School Improvement Cycle for each teacher and each class on an annual basis.

10 Monitoring and review

- 10.1 This policy will be monitored by the chair of governors in conjunction with the headteacher. It will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier, if considered necessary.

Signed:

Date: