



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT 2020 -2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Despite the challenging year with lockdown and class isolation, we have continued to work hard on priorities set out at the start of the year to ensure that St Vincent's continues to move forward and ensure the best possible education for your children. Below is a summary of what has been achieved during this year:

Priority 1: Vocabulary, spelling and reading

- New vocabulary, in all areas of the curriculum, is now introduced to children in a much more structured way to ensure they have greater understanding and use this vocabulary in their discussions and learning.
- Vocabulary development is now a strong focus during reading and writing lessons.
- Spelling is taught in a more systematic way, with the introduction of Spelling Shed so that homework can better link to class work and spelling progress is tracked more closely.
- Children are using technical and subject specific language much more regularly and accurately in lessons and writing is starting to show broader use of more ambitious vocabulary.
- Despite lockdown, reading outcomes are now much more consistent across Key Stage 2.

Priority 2: Responsive Teaching (feedback and assessment)

- Staff have been involved in a package of development focused on using evidence-informed teaching and learning practices to secure even better outcomes of children. The final element of this professional development has focussed on responsive teaching – the impact of feedback and assessment on progress.
- Teachers are now using a range of strategies within lessons to give children feedback to move their learning forward, shifting the focus away from marking and written feedback and towards feedback which can have an immediate impact.
- To embed these strategies and make sure that they are having maximum impact in all classes, we have 2 staff trained as instructional coaches so that they can provide long-term 1-to-1 coaching to continue to develop all of our teachers to be the best that they can be and support children to achieve their best.

Priority 3: A review of teaching and learning policy

- In order to draw together all of the learning that has taken place through the Transforming Teaching programme led by Ambition Institute, we have now re-written our Teaching and Learning Policy so that it provides a clear framework of expectations for all staff. It is underpinned by our Mission Statement aims and objectives, and provides a clear vision for teaching and learning and intent for our curriculum, based on cognitive science (the science of learning) so that we can help children to know more and remember more. It outlines the evidence-informed strategies to be used by all staff across 4 key areas: climate for learning, planning and preparation, effective instruction and responsive teaching.
- We are very excited with the work that has been done and now work towards embedding this in practise consistently, providing ongoing coaching and development for staff.
- This policy will now guide and inform other policy developments moving forward too, all to ensure that children are making strong progress across the whole curriculum, building on prior knowledge, learning more and remembering more.

Priority 4: COVID recovery

- This area has 2 areas of focus:
 1. The safe, secure and happy return of children to full-time education
 2. To establish where children are up to in their learning following lockdown 1, and map out how to secure progress and get children back on track
- We adapted timetabling to give high priority to children's physical and mental health and wellbeing when they returned in September, with a daily time at the start of each day allocated to activities focussing on these areas. This was to ensure that children were ready to learn when learning started, and any issues could be identified quickly and support given as needed.
- The children have returned to school brilliantly – we are so proud of them! They have also dealt with the further disruptions of this year incredibly well, adapting to remote learning with positivity and high levels of engagement.
- Plans in terms of learning recovery were impacted further due to lockdown 2 and then class isolations during this year. However, due to the hard work of staff and parents/carers, remote learning ensured that children's learning continued throughout this year so that impact was minimised.
- In Key Stage 2, reading and maths progress is back on track for the vast majority of children.
- In Key Stage 1, some gaps in learning remain in reading and maths, but particularly in phonics so this will be a focus next year.
- Across the school, writing is the one areas where lockdown and isolations have had an impact in relation to pace and stamina for writing at length, presentation and accurate application of grammar and punctuation in writing. This will be a priority focus next year.
- In terms of the wider curriculum, all gaps which emerged in coverage following lockdown 1 were built into the curriculum for this year so children are now back on track to return to our planned curriculum. Any knowledge gaps which remain or emerge as children access new learning will be addressed within the planned learning.

As always, your continued support and feedback has been very much appreciated, even more so during the complexities of the past 2 years.

We look forward to 2021-2022, in the hope of a return to something closer to “normality” in school.

Many thanks,

Dominic Vernon

Head Teacher