

**Bringing it all back home: a review of curriculum implementation at Longton Primary School.**

**LYNSEY AUSTEN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

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| **Summary of evidence.** |
| A total of seven lessons were visited, for a total period of 30 minutes per class. During this time:-   * I spent time talking to children, discussing with them their work * I observed the delivery of the lesson * I often popped back to see where the learning had moved on to.   I met with two groups of mixed ability children, who kindly brought their work with them:-   * Years 1, 2 and 5 (six children) * Years 3, 4 and 6 (seven children)   During these discussions, the children shared their work, and we made links with different aspects of the curriculum, including history, geography and science.  At all times, children were respectful of each other, and talked with much pride about their achievements. They were able to listen to children of different ages and from different classes. The older children particularly were able recall when they had covered various subjects and topics in previous years. They also politely reminded me when they had learnt some subjects at home during COVID.  I gave collective feedback to all teachers in groups of three. I think I should have done this individually, so that each received the detail that I describe below, including some of the developmental points. |
| **Description of what was reviewed** |
| Year 6: Settlements (Geography). Children were learning about human settlements in four contrasting locations (Russia, China, Brazil, USA). They were familiar with types of settlement (hamlets, villages, towns, and cities). IN discussion children referred to previous topics about Longton and Preston. On maps, children pointed out each country, and specific cities in Brazil. Some children were beginning to hypothesis as to the predominance of settlements on the coast as opposed to inland where there might be mountainous areas, extreme cold or Amazonian forests. Using maps, conversations were beginning to refer to the Artic Circle, the equator. A good balance of teacher input, Q&A and independent tasks.  Reception: Past and Present. Children were reminded of some story books they had met previously, including the Gingerbread Man and Goldilocks. We looked at sources of light in the story in the past (a candle) compared to now (a light), as well as modes of transport then and now (horse vs a car). The IWB was used as a stimulus to discuss past (eg Remembrance Day, the Queen, summer term in school, the current Y1) contrasting with now (eg King, autumn, getting wet on a trip this week, this class). A high emphasis was given to vocabulary and reinforcement. Activities planned for later included a washing line, role play and construction to further reinforce these concepts. A short and well structured delivery, with EY children on task and fully engaged.  Year 3: Supply teacher Volcanoes (Geography). The lesson started with a recap of previous learning. Orally children were asked to state the four countries that make the |United Kingdom, as well as the capital of England and Scotland. The children were also able to recall the middle sections of the Earth (crust, mantle, inner and outer core). The lesson then moved onto the main input. The children were asked to identify on a A4 sheet the location of approximately 10 volcanoes. Differentiation was provided with some more able children asked to identify all the volcanoes, while the less able children identifying a smaller number. I presume this differentiation was on geographical ability? The teacher demonstrated how to use Google to type in the names using ipads. Children were then encouraged “to problem solve” where the volcanoes were. This caused some difficulties for most children, in that when they did this, the search engine took them to a written description of the volcano, with a small map of its location. Unfortunately this was very small scale and local, giving children little chance to identify a coastline, a country, let alone a continent. Children were unable at this point in the lesson to diminish the scale of the map to give a more general view. In addition, the print quality of the A4 sheet for the more able children was poor, so that identifying volcanoes in southern Europe was difficult. The AT deserves credit for identifying these issues and quickly demonstrating to small groups of children how to reduce the scale of the maps. I left the lesson early but returned later to see where and how the lesson had progressed. It was obvious that the teacher had given a little mini-plenary to support and enhance children’s skills.  Year 4: Human and Physical features (Geography). Following a short PPT session to recap the different human and physical features, children were given individual photocopies and asked to list some of the features. This was generally successful, in that children individually and in pairs discussed and identified these appropriately. There was then a short input from the teacher with a larger photograph and a written summary. The main task was to use a Venn diagram to sort through different features, with the middle section to identify features that could be either rural or urban. Children were also very interested in talking about old, older and more recent maps of Longton. I liked the working wall, which included a time line and key vocabulary. They made references in class to previous years when they had visited the Brickcroft.  Year 2: Animals (including humans). I was unfortunately a little late into class and the lesson had started. I sat down and listened to the children talk about and then do a task involving the five stages of our life (sketches of a baby, a child, teenager, adult and then OAP). Children in groups then had to match this up with a written description. This took about 25 minutes (assuming a prompt start at 1.00pm). Having looked at books, this recap seemed to mirror previous learning from last week; something to check perhaps. The main activity was described as an investigation. After a quick reminder about what an investigation was, children were given a dice with 6 key questions, which were then to start a sentence that they could investigate (eg shoe size, teeth, height).  Year 1: Human and Physical features (Geography). There was a brief introduction about what these concepts were, followed by a selection of visual pictures of the school grounds that showed either. There was plenty of reinforcement and appropriate use of vocabulary. Children were able to correctly identify which photography mainly fitted to each category of feature. Interestingly, some children were saying “a bit of both”. I wonder whether that could be an avenue to explore. Although now two months ago, several children spoke about the map they had shaded, and were ale to point out where the features were through the window. That I found to be impressive.  Year 5: Early civilisations: Islamic Empire (History). Again my visit took place with the lesson underway. Children were making notes about different people and (I presume) their place in a social hierarchy. Children were mostly able to talk about a Caliph, discuss the probable layout of Baghdad. The teacher used a TV programme to explore the different classifications of civilians, for example the market trader, someone who might be able to climb up socially. Children were certainly interested (eg are slaves allowed to quit, are you better off as a servant? What is the difference). One young lady, when asked what would life be like, made an interesting observation by immediately saying “it would depend who you were. There was a lot of stimuli for the children, prior to the children then being asked to write a diary. For some, children immediately took to writing, using the verbal prompts of the teacher (eg how many books were in the library). I did wonder when the children had last experienced diary writing. Some children made a good link with the Roman civilisation, and we discussed common features (eg invasion, religion, slavery). It might be worthwhile exploring a sense of numbers in each layer of society, or (apart from the Caliph), was there an order in Islamic society. Perhaps this is on its way! |
| **Children talk** |
| A delightful time!  Yrs 3, 4, 6: Y3 and Y6 children listened to and discussed the learning from Y4 Geography. Y6 commented on rural and urban features, with one Y3 girl referencing this to work they had done in Y2. Y3 shared their volcano work with the other children. Y6 were describing their understanding of plate tectonics, with Y4 using their hand movements to describe how it work (rubbing together gives earthquakes etc). Y6 started to talk about their work on the 4 countries, what it might be like to live near the equator or artic.  Yrs 1, 5. Yr 1 children showed the pictures they had classified as human or physical features. All were able to tell which were which and why. Y5 children commented on the times they had done this aspect of geography, including a bird’s eye view of the area (y4 geography), and the pictures of different types of settlement. We discussed Y5 history topics, and we drew parallels between Roman and Islamic civilisations. The older children stated a preference for Islamic maps over those drawn in Europe, as they were more accurate and had a better sense of scale. Again, we discussed the social hierarchy, and the similarities with Romans. |
| **Main Findings: bringing it all back home** |
| Common features:-   * Delivery of the curriculum matched that published on-line for parents (and visitors). * Recap on previous learning: of my lesson visits which included seeing the start of the lesson, there was always some form of recap. * There was a high profile given to key vocabulary. This was taught, it was repeated, and children encouraged to use it. Children were able to talk me through this and what it meant. * Children were able to draw comparisons to their learning in other year groups (eg similarities and differences, chronology with other periods in time, a sense of place which was a reoccurring theme, a local point of interest (Brickcroft: mentioned in three different year groups at least). * A sense of world geography, starting locally and expanding to meeting continents and countries abroad.   **The curriculum is carefully thought through and well-planned. It develops and progresses through the age groups. It reflects the local area. Children return to key concepts and ideas, and they are able to verbalise similarities and differences. They speak with enthusiasm about what they have learnt.**  To explore further:-   * Recap: to ensure that the recap is limited to the essential knowledge and vocabulary included in the next lesson * The use of timelines to emplace chronology (I understand this is in hand) |