

Education Adviser Note of Visit
First Visit

This report is the department's **confidential information and is used to inform the RSC's office and the school/trust following the EA visit.**

Academy name	St Joseph's Primary School
Academy type	Academy Converter
URN	140764
Sponsor/ MAT	Plymouth CAST
Open date	01/04/2014
Date of visit 1	22/01/2018
Education Adviser	Jonathan Bishop
DfE Official (if applicable)	Giles De Rivaz
Chair of Governors (& email)	Dennis Anderson sandydaa13@gmail.com
Principal (& email)	Brendan Gill gillb@st-josephs.plymouth.sch.uk
CEO of MAT (& email)	Karen Cook (Interim CEO) Karen.Cook@plymouthcast.org.uk

WHERE IS THE SCHOOL RIGHT NOW		
Phase of development: Improve		
Question	Comment	Evidence
What are the school's strengths? What are leaders and the school doing well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear, systematic and well-delivered approach to the teaching of Phonics and Early literacy delivering better outcomes in Phonics testing in Year 1 and Phonics across KS1. • Consistent leadership through a core group of Governors, the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and English leader over a few years has brought about more approaches that are consistent and expectations towards behaviour, learning and the teaching of reading and literacy. The school has secured a good Ofsted judgement. • A clear vision for ensuring there is a wider curriculum offer where writing across the subjects is developed with the same expectations for improving outcomes in reading and writing. • A review of marking and feedback practices is underway, this aims to manage teacher workload and help teachers use their time more effectively to ensure children's next steps are identified, and better progress achieved. 	Discussions with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Governors, Teachers, Year 5 & 6 children and documentation such as SEF, SDP, cohort data.
Accuracy of self-evaluation and quality of school improvement planning	The self-evaluation and the school's development plan show a clear and accurate focus on those areas that the school has identified as requiring improvement. There is a good focus by the senior leadership team in their discussions around where the school is, and its priorities for securing good outcomes for all children.	SEF, SDP and discussions with the Headteacher and Governors.

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Build capacity and expertise within the Governing Body to: use school performance data to challenge the school leaders; form the basis of the School Improvement Plan; ensure early intervention to address the needs of specific children and cohorts; and ensure good succession planning.
- Review the impact of time focussed on the literacy programme in order to allow for higher quality teaching of writing across the broader curriculum, to develop extended pieces of writing and greater depth writers. Embed the use of the 'learning challenge curriculum' to support this objective.
- Embed the new structured approach to the teaching of reading to develop children's vocabulary and comprehension skills to ensure better progress for children across KS2.
- To implement consistently the new assessments in reading and Maths. To validate teacher judgements, identify areas for focus and feed through into rigorous pupil progress meetings, school improvement planning and governance monitoring.
- To review and implement a consistent approach to the teaching of Maths that identifies gaps and misconceptions and provides good challenge that ensures concepts are well embedded.

ACTION BEING TAKEN AND CAPACITY FOR IMPROVEMENT

Question	Comment	Evidence
<p>What action is being taken to address the identified areas for development at</p> <p>a) school level</p> <p>b) MAT level?</p> <p>Are the actions appropriate?</p>	<p>The School and Governing Body have identified areas for development within the SEF and SDP and have implemented a number of strategies to address these. They are continuing to make a good level of progress in making change.</p> <p>The Headteacher and Governors valued the support of CAST in their school improvement work to help them secure their 'Good' Ofsted judgement, but they consider that the more recent changes within Plymouth CAST have led to less support.</p>	<p>Discussions with Governors and Headteacher.</p> <p>Review of SDP and SEF.</p>
<p>Is there sufficient capacity to drive improvement at</p> <p>a) school level</p> <p>b) MAT level?</p> <p>Is support sufficient (is it having the necessary impact)?</p>	<p>There is a strong focus on school development from within the leadership team and Governing Body. However, careful consideration should be given to the succession planning for the Deputy Headteacher who is looking to move into another role. This may inhibit some of the plans the school has regarding school development, as the Deputy Headteacher has been a key member of the leadership team in ensuring the aims of the School Improvement Plan have been driven through.</p> <p>It would be beneficial to ensure there is continued training and development of local Governors around the use of a range of data sources so that they can hold the leadership team to account.</p> <p>There is a feeling that there has been little support provided by Plymouth CAST recently due to a large amount of uncertainty at MAT level.</p>	<p>Discussions with Governors and Headteacher.</p> <p>Review of SDP and SEF.</p>
<p>Is the school receiving any additional support beyond the MAT? Is this appropriate?</p> <p>What impact has there been?</p>	<p>The school utilises external support from CAST Subject Leader Hubs as well as a local Teaching School Hub network. With the recent uncertainty around the MAT, a number of these hubs have ceased to operate. Being newly formed, their impact is difficult to ascertain, particularly in light of many new agendas being discussed; e.g. the National agenda for teacher workloads; marking and feedback processes; the broader curriculum; and the teaching of writing and approaches to achieving greater depth within Maths.</p>	<p>Discussions with Governors and Headteacher.</p>

	NEXT STEPS	WHAT WE WILL EXPECT TO SEE IN 12 MONTHS TIME <i>(if effective action is taken)</i>
Next steps to be taken (agree approx. 3-5 clear targets to work on). What is the expected impact of these actions (please make these as specific as possible)?	1. Utilise the performance data analysis packages purchased to provide a greater insight into children's needs on a class and whole school basis. Provide CPD and support to the Governing Body to strengthen their skill-sets to analyse and challenge the school performance data to drive improvement where required.	1. Accurate and regular data provided to Governors by the leadership team, where good analysis of pupil progress and achievement is allowing regular challenge and support to the leadership team.
	2. Embed through training, mentoring and support the use of the 'learning challenge curriculum' to ensure the literacy programme provides opportunities for the extension of writing across the broader curriculum and the greater depth writers.	2. A greater number of children achieving greater depth in writing and Maths as evidenced through work moderation exercises both internally and externally.
	3. Develop children's vocabulary and comprehension skills throughout KS2 through a more structured approach to the teaching of reading, building upon the successes of the phonics program in KS1.	3. Significant improvement in the progress children make across KS2 with better achievement outcomes by the end of Year 6.
	4. Ensure greater focus on the use of assessment data by teachers within reading and Maths to support the half termly review cycle.	4. Assessment tools are used effectively by teachers, and the leadership team, to inform pupil progress meetings, school improvement planning and governance monitoring.
	5. Review the teaching of Maths to ensure any gaps and patterns of children's misconceptions are identified and a school improvement plan for Maths is put in place to address any identified issues.	5. More consistent quality of Maths teaching across the school ensuring better outcomes for children in their mathematical knowledge and understanding.

SUMMARY AND STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE

The School has had a period of growth, with an influx of children, often with higher needs, from local schools since their 'Good' Ofsted rating.

There has been a steady and consistent leadership team in place for the past 2 to 3 years focused on School Improvement work. This is evident within their Self-Evaluation, School Improvement Plan and through the learnings walk and conversations held with staff and children.

There are some clear next steps to ensure a secure outcome is achieved where the children are less susceptible to staffing changes. These focus on the rigour around the use of accurate assessment data in reading, writing and Maths and ensuring there is a clarity and consistency in the teaching of these subjects.

There is a need to ensure good succession planning for the Deputy Headteacher who is looking to move on in his career towards Headteacher.

The strengthening of skills on the Governing Body to sustain the School Improvement journey through recruitment and training would be advantageous.

HIGH **MEDIUM** **LOW**

RECOMMENDED FOLLOW UP

Please put a cross in the relevant box

Academy has made improvements; follow up visit may be appropriate;