***Orrets Meadow School***

***Governor Report***

***Wednesday 16th March 2022***

***Class Visit – Focus Phonics and Sensory Circuit***

Firstly, I would like to say how lovely it was to visit my adopted class today. It is always a pleasure to see the children and witness how they engage in their learning. A big thank you to the Bears class, all the wonderful adults and children for making me feel welcome and included.

The focus of this visit was to see how the delivery of phonics was being undertaken since the introduction of the revised Phonics Programme.

During a recent curriculum meeting governors were introduced to the new revised way of delivering phonics that would meet the needs of the children more appropriately. Governors were given a comprehensive presentation of how the new improved way of teaching phonics would support learning. Reading the new version and seeing first-hand the way the lessons are structured gave me a much better understanding why the school had chosen this particular way to teach the children. Lots of over learning and reminders with lots of support and encouragement.

I joined the class a little early and was struck on how calm and settled the classroom was. Calming music, combined with the children being able to eat something before lessons set the tone. Mrs Williams took the register, and every child had the opportunity of informing her how they felt. Each child scored themselves on the mood level 1 being the lowest with 10 being the highest. There were some 10 scores so off to a good start to the day. Some children did score themselves lower, however, the staff acknowledged that this was how they felt and said they would work hard to improve the score as the day went on. In addition, each child was given the opportunity of stating what they wanted for their lunch, this gave them a voice as to what they wanted to eat. The menu is changed daily and sounded delicious.

The phonics lesson began with the use of an alphabet arch, each child had one on their desk and they put the letters for a to z in their own arch. The whole class did the alphabet song and the activities that followed involved several different methods to improve and embed the use of letters and the sounds they made. Blending different letters, identifying vowels and explaining how some words sound the same but are spelt differently and have a different meaning. The whole class worked as a group and then later the adults worked in small groups on their tables with the use of flash cards as well as the alphabet arch, white boards, pupil books as well as post it notes. All the children were happily engaged in their learning and the atmosphere was one of challenge and support. It was such a lovely atmosphere and all the staff who work in the class are very skilled at making it that way. The adults played the part of pixies to remove letters from the alphabet arch, children could not look. It was fun for them, and they loved it. At the end of the session, they had time to choose a book for pleasure and I asked one pupil if they found doing the activities helped him recognize words in the book, he said it did. I asked the adults if they had noticed a difference in the progress of the children and they all said the progress was much better and the children enjoyed learning. No activity was too long and so children always had another fresh idea to overlearn the same thing. It was well planned and structured. I can appreciate better now how the Reading Deck in the programme fits into the delivery in the classroom.

The session lasted about 45 mins and then I was able to go with them into the hall to see the sensory circuit.

Using the sensory circuit allowed children to focus on something completely different, fast paced activities delivered by Kieran were well received, lying on a body skate and scooting along the floor was particularly enjoyable for a couple of the boys. The session then flowed on to walking on a beam and clambering through a tunnel. It finished off by lowering lights and playing calming music, some pupils had weighted blankets. It completely changed the environment, and you could feel the children calming down. It is very skillful how the session is planned, and I felt it was a huge improvement form a sensory circuit I had seen before covid. My thanks for Kieran for allowing me in to see how the circuit works in practice.

Unfortunately, all too quickly it was time to leave but I have been told all about the eco garden and since I am a keen gardener will grow on some seeds for the children to use and will pop in to see how the garden is going.

I am looking forward to returning to school soon as it is such a pleasure to be able to return to school.

My thanks to all the staff and pupils again for making me feel so welcome.

***Cindy Cooper***

***Bears Governor***