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Strengthening staff understanding, consistency and self-regulation strategies across a rural federation

Supporting learners with SEMH needs through a whole school approach

School/Background Context

This rural schools federation comprises three small village primary schools located in the West Midlands area. Each school operates mixed-age classes and serves a modest number of pupils:

- **School A:** Approximately 45 pupils, with 13 on the SEND register across three mixed-age classes.
- **School B:** Around 100 pupils, with 25 on the SEND register across four classes.
- **School C:** Roughly 75 pupils, with 11 on the SEND register across three classes.

Across the federation, there is a notable proportion of pupils with SEND, reflecting the inclusive nature of the schools and the need for tailored support in small, rural settings.

The Challenge

Our Federation Learning Improvement Plan (FLIP) outlined that outcomes of assessment and data were needed to improve the provision for SEND pupils. This would be facilitated by supporting teachers to deliver adapted learning appropriate to the needs of those pupils.

Thus, the impact would be better SEND provision and teacher understanding of SEND pupils in each class. There would be improvement in progress for SEND pupils.

The initial focus of the project changed due to incidents of physical assault on staff & pupils. Staff were struggling to understand complex children with SEMH needs.

Therefore, my project became closely focused on improving teacher knowledge and skills to better understand the needs of SEMH children and improve their learning outcomes.

Due to incidents of physical assault on staff & pupils, it became apparent to me that staff were struggling to understand complex children with SEMH needs. I discussed this with my executive headteacher, who is my line manager, and she agreed that this needed to be addressed and was part of the FLIP.

I identified that the issue was improving teacher knowledge and skills to better understand the needs of SEMH children and improve their learning outcomes.

What They Did

I developed and delivered CPD through PowerPoints and handouts on understanding the functions of behaviour across the Federation to all staff at staff meetings in November 2023. This was well received by all teachers who were on board with my vision. This incorporated introducing the Zones of Regulation as an approach across the Federation to address SEMH needs and develop self-regulation.

On 8th January 2024, a teacher training day, I delivered this training to all the TAs in the Federation alongside attachment and PACE approach training as it became clear that that knowledge about attachment was limited. This was well received and staff were onboard with my vision. In January, I revisited the zones of regulation with teachers, alongside attachment and PACE approach training. The Zones of Regulation were implemented in Loxley & Wilmcote from Reception to Y6.

As the Colour Monster approach is used and well established in Early Years and KS1 at Snitterfield, I introduced the Zones of Regulation to all children and incorporated the Colour Monsters into each of the zones which the children responded well to. I introduced this during assemblies in each school which was received positively by the children. Regulation Station displays have been put up in each school in communal areas where all the children can easily access them when they need to.

Outcomes and Anticipated Impact

The teachers have informed me that the children are sharing with them what zone they are in and seeking adult support when they are not in the 'green zone' or ready to learn.

When I visit each school, the children are keen to tell me what zone they are in and what they need to do to be 'ready to learn and in the green zone'. This is lovely to see.

Boxall Profiles have been conducted for the focus pupils (one per year group) in each of the schools. This will be repeated at the end of the year to measure progress with attitudes and behaviour.

Data will be analysed at the end of each of term to measure progress.

Pupil voice interviews and staff interviews will also be conducted as evidence of impact at the end of the year.

Next Steps

All the training I have conducted with staff needs to become embedded practice. I need to monitor practice through observations, drop-ins and learning walks. Early identification and intervention of pupils with SEMH needs is crucial.

Coaching/mentoring around using the Boxall Profiles for targets on PLPs (Personal Learning Plans) will be timetabled as a next step for teachers as well as any support that any staff requires around SEMH. I have an 'open door' policy with staff if they require any support from me.

All children with SEMH needs will be baselined using the Boxall Profile from next academic year.

Pupil voice interviews and staff interviews will also be conducted as evidence of impact at the beginning and end of each academic year. I intend to conduct parent surveys about the zones of regulation at the end of the year and then offer a parent meeting if they would like to know more.



More inclusive ethos/culture in the setting



Improved mental health and wellbeing of learners with SEND