



Link Governor Report

Name of visiting governor	Kamran Arshad
Date of visit	Wednesday 8 th February 2023
Governor's area of responsibility	Safeguarding
Member of staff visited; role/responsibility	Head Teacher
Purpose/objective of visit	To review safeguarding at Grove
Links with School Development Plan	Strengthen the capacity of leadership team

Summary of activities:

- My visit today began with a 'breakfast' walk around the school with Jonathan (Deputy). The breakfast initiative provides our children with toast and juice each morning, throughout February. On such a cold morning it was so warming to see the children happily chomp away at their toast whilst engaging in all manner of conversation. The whole feeling of 'togetherness', from staff to children epitomised what Grove is about and certainly sets up everyone for the day ahead. A truly brilliant idea!
- I then spent time with Michelle (Admin) walking around the classrooms to double-check absences for the day. I say double-check, as everything is logged electronically and is fed through to the Admin team at the start of the day, but this is a manual checking system to ensure we have captured everything correctly. It is also an opportunity to speak with staff that may have concerns.
- I then spent time with Justine, talking through safeguarding and absences and other related areas.

What I've learnt from the visit:

Having strong links with Grove for many years, I was confident that my visit would reinforce my beliefs that we have strong safeguarding practices at our school. I left the school today, not only having reinforced my beliefs but having also witnessed how robust our safeguarding policies and procedures are. At Grove we are pro-active in monitoring and maintaining safeguarding issues and adhering to our policies and procedures for safeguarding.

A big plus for Grove School has been the longevity of our staff, that has not only enabled us to showcase continuity, but help forge and build relationships and most importantly trust, with primarily our children, our parents and our colleagues and the wider community. The ability for our staff to identify any potential issues with absence, knowing the history of our children is a vital tool in ensuring we are at the forefront of safeguarding. These issues are subsequently highlighted to the SLT, so they can take appropriate action, if necessary. Another example of being pro-active, rather than reactive, which surely sends a signal of reassurance throughout the school. Grove has and should always remain a safe haven, an oasis of calm in Handsworth, an inner-city area that has several crime/vice related issues as well as high unemployment. Grove has and continues to put the safety and well-being of our children at the forefront of their mission and with continued training will ensure our staff can identify any potential safeguarding issues at an early stage.

Absences for this time of year have been higher than previous years and we have had a significant increase in NOC (notice of concern). Nationally that pattern is evident, and the increase in absences can



be associated with 'the calming of Covid' and the normal resumption of seasonal flu and colds. Coupled with this, and what may be linked directly/indirectly to increase in number of NOCs is the current financial situation the county is in (cost of living crisis). Areas such as Handsworth will have a larger proportion of families that will feel the cost of living crisis to a greater effect. Are families able to heat their homes...is this linked to increased absences such as colds etc? Is this taking it's toll on parents/families and affecting the 'moods' at home? We have to remember our children are young, sensitive and developing, both mentally and physically, and any (even small) changes in their home life can have substantial effect on them both physically and mentally. We have to remember we have only just come out of a bleak covid period, so this is no doubt a challenging period for all stakeholders. At Grove, we have always been conscious of situations like this and will always step in where there is a safeguarding concern, but even if there isnt. It is something we have to continually monitor.

With regards absences we also discussed the issue a lot of us are having getting Drs appointments at present. Where in the past we could get an appointment the same day/next day, we often cant even get them to answer the phone. This, in some cases is leading to our children being absent longer and may be contributing to our higher absence rates.

We also discussed what no doubt is a big part of safeguarding and that is online safety. It isnt something that is minimal as we all know the reliance on the internet and the digital world as a whole is growing at an alarming rate. As wonderful as the internet is, it also has a dark side, and this is what we need to focus on. We need to help, educate and protect our children from social media, from online gaming and all other vices that are so easily accessible. We ran a workshop for parents, which I understand had an excellent turnout and helped educate them on things like 'parental controls', what to look out for, privacy settings and so on. We are firmly in the digital era, so workshops like this should become a regular occurrence as well as sending out info to compliment the workshops. The speed at which the digital era is moving will require us at Grove to remain on top of this, and ensure our children are protected, through ongoing training for our staff as well as further workshops. As much as it is the schools duty to safeguard our children, parents are also stakeholders and must be more proative in this.

Aspects to be clarified/questions remaining:

Comments from pupils involved in the visit:

Comments from staff involved in the visit:

Focus & date of next visit;



Signatures to agree the content of this report;

Governor: Kamran Arshad

Staff member:

Head Teacher: