

# Reedley Primary School



Deputy head Kerry Gorrell (left) and Sarah Bell (right)



We achieved Primary School of the Year in the East Lancashire Education Awards in July 2017

With 90 per cent of their students having English as an additional language, Reedley Primary School have adapted their curriculum to meet the needs of their students. This has involved creating “knowledge organisers”, which are banks of information and facts that allow students to become accustomed to the vocabulary they will need in an upcoming topic, ensuring that they are able to focus on developing skills. Since being appointed in January 2016, Headteacher Sarah Bell and Deputy Headteacher Kerry Gorrell have overseen significant improvement in both attainment and progress across all areas of learning. They tell *The Parliamentary Review* about the importance of the school’s ethos and their work with a local cluster of schools.

We are a two-form entry school, having expanded over the last three years to 420 pupils. In total, 24 per cent of our students are eligible for the pupil premium, and 90 per cent have English as an additional language. We received our first Ofsted inspection in April 2017 and attained a “good” judgement after overcoming a variety of barriers, including improving the quality of teaching and learning, consistency of staff across the school and the personal development and wellbeing of pupils and staff. To drive this change, we established high expectations across the school, which were recognised when we achieved Primary School of the Year in the East Lancashire Education Awards in July 2017.



We set high expectations for all of our children and staff

## The importance of our values

Central to our school life are our values and ethos. We focus on these different values in all classes and display them prominently around the school. We are always looking to see these values in practice and have organised weekly awards to reward those who demonstrate them. We have high expectations for all of our children and staff, and these cover academic work, behaviour and conduct. It is vital that both children and staff attain the best that they can, through both achievement and progress, and we have developed a culture of learning from mistakes. We have very supportive parents who are closely involved in the life of our school.

The professional growth of our staff is important to us, and we have a focus on continual learning. Central to this are peer support groups in which staff address personal areas of development. This involves a collaborative cycle of “plan, teach, review” and enables staff to reflect on their own teaching practice and the impacts that they have on the children’s learning. We use this as an opportunity to trial new strategies and develop a sense of collective ownership of their pedagogy.

We were appointed to lead the school shortly after the introduction of the revised national curriculum, and there was a sense of uncertainty about this change. To adapt to this, we trained our staff in new systems and made sure that our curriculum focused on our children, placing them at the heart of all we do. The curriculum is tailored to the individual needs of our children and their prior learning, instilling a sense of uniqueness in our provision. As an example, we have a significant focus on vocabulary due to the large number of EAL pupils in school. In 2016/17, 50 per cent of our children achieved the expected standard for reading at the end of Key Stage 2. In one year, we managed to raise this to 69 per cent, with 29 per cent achieving the greater depth standard.

## Adapting to the needs of our learners

Reading is key to accessing the curriculum; as many of our children struggle with comprehension, we have implemented a “Reciprocal Reading” programme. This involves children discussing texts with their peers and becoming involved in monitoring their own comprehension and understanding. We have also

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created a “Reading Buddy” system in which year 6 children receive in-depth training to support EAL learners in year 1, delivering one-to-one sessions to develop their decoding and comprehension skills.

One of the biggest changes we have made is supporting a focus on reflection. We have worked hard to promote a positive mindset throughout the school and use mistakes as learning opportunities, viewing them as part of the wider learning process. We have also created “knowledge organisers”: banks of knowledge and facts about a topic that we give to all children to immerse them in their new learning. This allows them to have a base of knowledge so that they can focus on developing

Our curriculum is tailored to the needs of our children



skills. This is particularly helpful for our EAL learners, as they can become accustomed to the necessary vocabulary before the topic begins while enjoying independent research. Crucial to this is their immersion day before the start of each topic, in which children identify the areas that they would like to explore in greater depth, taking into account their prior knowledge.

### Working together to negotiate challenges

We collaborate closely with a cluster of local schools, whose strapline is “diversity, friendship and community”. Staff from 13 schools work collaboratively to provide opportunities for the children to spend time together, ensuring all children experience time with others from diverse backgrounds. Our staff conduct joint training, meeting regularly to share best practice and reflect on teaching and learning. The cluster recently hosted a leadership conference to analyse and evaluate our impact on the curriculum and to share effective practice across the county.

One of the main challenges we face as school leaders is managing our budget, and we are always looking for ways to do more with less. We are committed to ensuring that our curriculum remains broad and will continue to maintain our programme of school trips and visitors, which is essential to the richness of our school.

As we look to the future, we are focused on maintaining our progress and providing high-quality opportunities for all of our children and staff, focusing on both the academic and the pastoral. We ensure that our children are ready for the next step in their lives, underpinned by our school motto: “achieving today for tomorrow’s world”.