

## Actions speak louder than words

By Suzanne Howden (DHT at CPS)

It's been a few years that we have been on this journey of change: a move towards the knowledge rich curriculum and refreshing our teaching practices to enhance the learning experience for our pupils. The last few years have been hard work but also incredibly rewarding as I have worked alongside my Headteacher (James) and led my team to implement a new curriculum. I have read a few books, followed a few blogs and taken on board everything colleagues within the school have shared from their own research and visits, but the defining moment for me happened just a few weeks ago when I got to visit where so much of what is now happening with regard to curriculum design and delivery all started.

Two and half years ago James went to visit a school in Bradford: Dixons Trinity Academy (DTA) and was inspired so much by what they were doing and how it aligned with the changes that we were making at CPS, and it was this school that I got the opportunity to visit this month. DTA doesn't hide its high expectations; they are, literally, written all over the walls. Every routine is practised and every message communicated again and again and again. What I really enjoyed about my visit to DTA was the feeling of satisfaction of how far we have come and how close we are to achieving something amazing. We've all been there, sat in a room writing a list of all the things you need to implement when you return to school. I didn't! I looked around and I felt proud of what we have worked so incredibly hard to achieve at CPS.

We are clear on our culture at CPS: every member of staff knows what we are trying to achieve and how we are going to achieve it, the children know it. They know that we walk in school because it's safer; they know that they want to do well in school, not because then they can get House Points but because they want to be the best version of themselves and they know that together we are a community and we support each other when we fall down, get something wrong or want to try something new.

Okay, I have to be honest - I did write a list! But my list included tweaks and nudges not sweeping changes. One for the children - more opportunities to 'brain dump'; we use a lot of retrieval practices but they are more structured and I want them to have the opportunity to be more flexible in their recall of knowledge. One for the adults - continue returning to purpose: it reinforces clarity 'if you read you fly' - think of the opportunities it affords you. And one for me - when implementing something new, what can we stop doing? Going to be harder than it sounds!

We don't always get it right at CPS and we are still on that flight path, but we are determined to get as close as we can because after all the purpose is providing our children with a GREAT education. 'Was I better today than yesterday?' Let's hope so!