Adapting supports for Covid Recovery - St Ninians Primary

How did we identify who needed support?

Initially as pupils returned to school our priority was to identify those who needed support and the type of support they required. We gathered information on wellbeing from pupils and their families using the wellbeing indicators. Some pupils had experienced bereavement or were struggling with anxiety around returning to school and fear of catching COVID-19. We also identified pupils who had limited engagement during lockdown. Initial formative assessments identified reading as the main gap across the school. Primary 2 and Primary 5 were identified as stages needing most support. Ongoing classroom assessments were used to review and refine identified groups.

How did we provide Covid secure intervention and support?

We knew our interventions worked well in our school, but due to COVID-19 restrictions we had to think creatively about how we would deliver these interventions. Our support continued to be delivered in two ways:

1. Support staff assisting in class, directed by the class teacher.

2. Support staff group interventions, directed by the additional needs coordinator and based on need.

Other aspects of our model for support did not change. We recognised the confidence that our pupils gained from learning with support staff and that this time spent on interventions should continue to be valued and not rushed.

We looked at the barriers we faced now to delivering supports and mitigated these barriers through adapting our approach.

Barriers	Adaptations
* Less support staff time available due to demands on staff to deliver staggered breaks for pupils to facilitate social distancing	* Carefully managed timetables ensured that support staff time was maximised and that all time was effectively spent. * Careful timetabling also ensured that staff worked within identified bubbles.
* Ability to work 1:1 with a number of pupils across a day	* Pupils were grouped within existing bubbles instead of 1:1. * Previously used individual reading interventions were adapted to suit group work and modelled for support staff. This allowed support staff to work with more children within set bubbles.
* Previously learning materials would have been be stored and collected by support staff. Contamination was now a concern	* Pupils are now required to be more independent, managing own resources. Support staff direct the use of resources through specific oral instruction.
* Limited ventilated space in school & staff sharing these spaces	* Staff are allocated a working space, used only by them.

Who else was supporting recovery?

In addition to support staff, the school used some pupil equity funding (PEF) to pay for additional teaching support. This resulted in three part time recovery teachers. Recovery teachers were used to release class teachers to work with small groups and individuals. Teachers reported that this support was invaluable in allowing them to truly understand where children's gaps were and how they could support them. Teachers also used this time to work with support staff, planning and modelling supports that the support staff would be delivering over the following week. While support staff time had been reduced due to COVID-19 demands, teachers reported that this additional planning time lead to more effective supports. The only intervention that was offered directly by the recovery teacher was bereavement and/or anxiety support, as staff were given specialised training in these interventions. Supports are reviewed on a six weekly basis.

What progress has been made?

Pupils across the school have made a good recovery with most pupils now achieving their expected levels. Primary 5 pupils who were one of the year groups identified as requiring the most support have also returned to their expected levels. Initial reading interventions helped support pupils to regain any lost learning but also regain their confidence upon returning to school. Primary 2 pupils who were also flagged as needing more support have also made good progress but continue to require further recovery support as they secure their understanding of phonics.

What lessons have been learned?

- Valuing and protecting the support staff time was key to successful recovery support. Where possible, we ensure that staff absence/supervision did not impact on the support offered.
- The model of class teachers being released to deliver interventions and plan with support staff has been very successful and this is something we plan to maintain beyond COVID-19 recovery.
- Support staff continue to seek training opportunities. As training has moved online, more support staff have sought these opportunities and we will continue to facilitate this.
- Creating detailed plans to ensure that timetabling meets the needs of pupils while complying with COVID-19 restrictions.