

MINUTES OF THE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE OF ST MATTHEW'S GOVERNING BODY, HELD AT SCHOOL ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY, 2015 AT 5.30 P.M.

Present: Carole Mills (Chair), Jill Tuffnell, Emily Barratt, Gavin Ayliffe,
Tony Davies (Headteacher), Anne Maskell (Clerk to Governors)

1. Apologies for absence

ACTION

Apologies for absence were accepted from Mark Tinkler.

2. Declaration of pecuniary interests

Governors had no additional interests to declare relating to items on today's agenda.

3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 20th November, 2014, were agreed as an accurate record.

- Benchmarking (item 6). Some governors felt it would be particularly relevant to compare results with other local schools that are facing these challenges successfully and discover what makes their practice particularly effective. Tony said that he will talk to our Assigned Inspector Alison West to identify schools where EFSM children are making very good progress.

Tony

- Improving achievement of girls at Level 4 in numeracy (item 6). Tony said that Caroline Bailey has arranged family learning workshops for maths and is about to announce dates to parents. He also understands that she has been in contact with Parkside about further mentoring sessions, which were very effective previously. Tony will also talk to Caroline about the idea of bringing in adult female role models who have a particular facility for maths and to Alison West to see which other schools have good practice in this area.

Tony

- Training of volunteers for specific projects. Jill said she was concerned that this was an area which was overdue for development. Tony said that there is new guidance on arrangements for volunteers and we are formalizing our practice accordingly. Regular volunteers will now need to complete an application form and references will be obtained. It was agreed that a more focussed plan for training volunteers, including an induction protocol, needs to be put in place and it was hoped that a proposal could be put in place for September.

Tony

- Tony said that the first phase of building the new website is nearly complete and he will plan a Meet the Head to discuss this and launch E Comms.

Tony

- Assessment (item 7). Senior Leadership Team members are currently exploring a range of options and this will then be a focus for a training day in September.

- Communicating test results to parents (item 6). Gavin said that he wanted to be sure that the idea of providing a 'distribution curve' of results as suggested by Sarah at the last meeting, was seriously considered and, also that if this was not appropriate, possibly a histogram could be used instead. After some discussion, governors all agreed that a face-to-face meeting with parents to set a child's results in context was far more useful.

- Carole said that she is coming in to a staff meeting on maths and will undertake

a follow-up link governor visit.

4. Art update and link governor report

The report from Jill's link governor visit with Lowri Chatfield had been distributed with the agenda. During their discussions they looked at how the curriculum interfaces with other subjects, progress within the current SDP, requirements of the new National Curriculum and areas Lowri would like to develop further, in particular outreach with other local groups, more frequent 'arts weeks' in school and working with other schools in our cluster group to share ideas and good practice. Lowri is also currently undertaking an audit of materials held in school. There is some concern that the curriculum has been too much project-based and that skills progression has been sidelined to a certain extent. Art is likely to be a focus of the new School Development Plan.

Lowri and Annabel Lee are looking at exploring links with local museums. Gavin said that he had contacts within the university who may well be happy to undertake outreach with local schools and that he is happy to investigate this further.

Gavin

5. Music update

Emily reported that St Matthew's Church had kindly given a donation to school which enabled the purchase of a new upright electric piano. We have also been offered another piano by one of the Cambridge colleges and are looking into this. Former governor Ben Bradnack has donated a cello and harmonica to school.

The new Charanga programme for music has been well received by teachers and the feedback very positive. Teachers are feeling more confident in structuring lessons and both pupils and teachers are enjoying using the technical vocabulary! The orchestra had its first performance at the end of last term, to KS2 children and parents. Tony said that Mark Tinkler's projects of the community choir and community orchestra are also proceeding well, and both performed at Cambridge United's ground at Christmas.

We have a good take-up of music lessons via Cambridgeshire Music at present and are considered one of their highest profile schools. There have also been visits into school by the English Pocket Opera (EPOCH) and the Cambridge Buskers. Sing Fest will also take place again but we are uncertain of the timescale at present.

Governors congratulated Emily on all the progress in this curriculum area.

6. ICT update

Jess Hurst is the ICT co-ordinator and is about to go on a number of training courses. We are working to update the E Safety and Acceptable Use policies and the E Safety curriculum. Tony said that curriculum questionnaires had been sent out to all staff (he circulated a copy) and the feedback on ICT was generally good. Jess is currently looking into Rising Stars and Barefoot Computing – two software items which can help diversify programming. She also hopes to investigate what children are undertaking online in their spare time. This will be a key area for the new SDP and there are likely to be some resourcing issues, e.g. replacement of laptops.

7. Any other business

Gavin asked how the effectiveness of The Big Write programme will be assessed. Tony said that this programme, which compares with the VCOP programme which has been used very effectively previously, results in the children undertaking more focussed and targeted work, and it is hoped that this will be reflected in the termly assessment results.

We are now coming to the end of our current SDP and this would be a good time for our link governors to undertake a final visit. It would then be valuable for this committee to look at emerging priorities for the next SDP (an additional provisional meeting will be timetabled). It was agreed that we should at least have link governors in place for Literacy, Numeracy, Early Years, SEN and ICT. It may be sensible for governors to consider doubling up on link areas.

8. Date of the next meeting

Wednesday, 17th June at 5.30 p.m.

| Provisional additional date of 29th May at 5.30 p.m. agreed but subsequently cancelled due to the number of other essential meetings it is necessary to accommodate in May