

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
(to be called in future Teaching, Learning and Outcomes Committee)
OF ST MATTHEW'S GOVERNING BODY,
HELD AT SCHOOL ON WEDNESDAY, 14TH OCTOBER, 2015 AT 5.30 P.M.

Present: Carole Mills (Chair), Jill Tuffnell, Gavin Ayliffe, Neil Perry, Emily Evans, Mark Tinkler
Tony Davies (Headteacher), Lis Silver (Clerk)
Katie Spencer-Allen (Early Year's Leader), Liz Steel (Deputy Head) attended to present Agenda item 7

Carole welcomed Katie and Liz to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

ACTION

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declaration of pecuniary interests

Mark Tinkler indicated that he had a pecuniary interest in Item 9 since he works for two organisations that provide music services to the school (Music Development Manager for Cambridgeshire County Council and CAMS Music Trust).

Carole Mills advised that she runs an Early Years publishing company that has been involved in the provision of Early Years resources.

3. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

It was agreed by the Committee that the usual practice is only to elect a Chair for Committees and that if the Chair was unable to be present for any reason that the Committee would elect a replacement Chair for the meeting. Carole was asked if she was willing to be re-elected and she confirmed that she was. Jill nominated Carole for the position of Chair and Tony seconded the proposal.

The Committee unanimously agreed to elect Carole Mills as Chair for the year.

4. Agree Terms of Reference including consideration of new name for the Committee

The Committee agreed that abbreviations should only be used in documents for governors if it is clarified what the initials stand for on the first usage. In the terms of reference the abbreviation SEF is included for Self Evaluation Form. Schools are no longer obliged to have a SEF in a particular format. The school uses the term "School Development Plan" now, not "School Improvement Plan". It was agreed that this bullet point should be changed to

- To contribute as appropriate to the review and reformulation of the School Development Plan and play its role in the self-evaluation of the work of the school.

It was agreed that the Terms of Reference for this Committee (and the Resources Committee) should include a reference to the Committee's work on making recommendations to the Full Governing Body on relevant St Matthew's policies. It was agreed that listing the policies was not required since these are identified in the Policies document that also goes to the Full Governing Body.

- To review and make recommendations to the Full Governing Body regarding appropriate St Matthew's school policies on a regular basis and assess their impact on different groups as outlined in the "St Matthew's Policies" document.

It was agreed that an additional point should be added to reflect the work of the Committee in identifying areas of the school where there should be Community links.

- To support the identification and development of Community Links for the benefit of the Curriculum

The Committee also considered whether the current name of the Committee described the full range of work undertaken and after discussion it was agreed that the Committee should in future be called the Teaching, Learning and Outcomes Committee.

The Curriculum Committee recommends to the Full Governing Body approval of the Terms of Reference with the following changes

- **The Committee will in future be called the Teaching, Learning and Outcomes Committee (TLOC)**
- **Three documented changes should be made to the list of work undertaken by the Committee**

5. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the Curriculum meeting held on 17th June 2015 were agreed with the following changes:

Page 1 b) Gavin advised that his contacts were with the Athena Swann foundation not “Women in Physics Foundation”

Page 2 f) Gavin asked for the minutes to be amended to clarify that it had been agreed that he should take on the Literacy Link governor

6. Matters Arising and agreed actions update

Page1 a) Tony advised that further work had been done to look at the cross over between Ever Free School Meals (EFSM) and Special Educational Needs (SEN) children which indicated that when children with SENs were taken out of the statistics that all children were making the expected progress in Reading and Maths. It is some of the children who are part of both groups that are not making the expected progress. Tony advised that a detailed report is being written which will come to the Governors.

Action: Tony to follow up progress on report and ensure that it is presented to governors in a timely way.

Page 1 b) Gavin advised that he had contacted the Athena Swann foundation – an organisation whose primary focus is to advance women in University departments but they were keen to explore what they could do.

Action: Gavin to provide a contact number for the school to follow up.

Page 2 e) Gavin confirmed he had contacted Cambridge Union regarding possible visits to their debating chamber which is set up in the style of the House of Commons. It was agreed that this would be an excellent venue for a Year 6 visit but consideration needed to be given as to whether the location would be better for a Year group visit (60 pupils) or for 2 class visits. Mark advised that some of the children are visiting this location in March 2016 when the choir perform in this venue.

Page 2f) The meeting noted that Anne had circulated the NGA paper on governor visits

Page 2 ICT Update – The meeting were advised that Jess is now in contact with local companies. They were also advised that the reference to scant details refers to the National Curriculum Programmes of study that are provided nationally and not to the planning within the school.

7. Training Update: Presentations on Early Excellence & Target Tracker

The meeting were advised that these two training presentations are regarding two new assessment systems that are now being used routinely in different parts of the school.

Early Excellence

Katie Spencer Allen gave a detailed presentation about the new Early Excellence Assessment system. The purpose of the assessment is to establish a baseline for attainment of children on entry to the school that can be used to track their progress through to the end of KS2. Initially the Early Years staff had concerns about carrying out assessments at this time at the start of the year since this is a critical time for ensuring children settle well in the school and formal tests may not give realistic data. However the establishment of a baseline will become mandatory in Sept 2016 in order to enable progress of children to be tracked. The school was given the opportunity to look at 6 providers but only Early Excellence (referred to as EXxBA-R) seemed to fit well with the ethos of Early Years at St Matthews. It has been developed by a private company and will be accredited by the DfE. Other providers had developed systems for 1:1 assessments with individual children but this system is different with no pre determined tests so it is less disruptive to the settling in routines when the children are new to the school. Staff find the first few days are critical in establishing routines and roles and so did not want to have to spend time out of the classroom doing 1 to 1 assessments. This system is based on observation of everyday activities and assesses against clear criteria with exemplars included in the software, in line with what is already done at St Matthews. Staff feel that this gives them a tighter version of what was already being done to assess children on entry leading to a more accurate reflection of attainment at entry. Assessment is done against 47 statements; which are not just about Literacy and Numeracy but also look at ability to learn effectively and to persevere at learning and other key areas of Personal Social and Emotional Development (PSED) which are good predictors of future success.

Kate noted that whilst assessment has always been done in the first half term that the new deadlines require the work to be completed two weeks earlier so there is time pressure on staff to get the assessments done. But these assessments cannot be started until the teacher believes that the child has established a high level of well being in the new environment. For some children e.g. an autumn born girl who has transferred from the nursery then this could be achieved on Day 1 whilst for other children the teacher has to wait longer. The deadline means that a small number of children do not achieve a high level of well being in the time frame in which case the assessment is done close to the deadline and a note made that they were not ready. Staff are logging the date on a paper based system and then entering it in to the computer programme which automatically uploads the data, produces a report on the cohort and can transfer information to Target tracker. The paper-based system allows the teacher to record "Next steps" for every individual child. It is planned that 3 different assessments will be carried out each year:

September/Oct – Baseline

Spring – Ages and Stages

June – Early Learning Goals

The staff team will work together to provide moderation and liaise with other local schools, a number of which have also chosen to use Early Excellence. Parents will be given detailed information about the assessment system at the next "Meet the Head" meeting.

The Committee were advised that in addition to carrying out the assessments for Reception children (which will become mandatory) it is proposed to also assess using a Nursery school version – this will not be DfE assessed and the cost will be £3.10 per child.

Kate noted that currently the testing has to be done in English so this disadvantages child for whom English is a second language since they might be able to perform at higher levels if instructions were in their native language.

Target Tracker

Liz Steel advised the Committee that there is a change in methods of assessment and an end to assigning levels of attainment to children from the end of KS2 tests. From 2016 all schools will be using 'Scaled scores' to report national curriculum outcomes. This first cohort will be measured after studying 2 years of the new national curriculum. However the system is not yet fully developed so there is a limited amount of information to pass on to parents at this stage. It is planned however that a system of moderation will be used to give directly comparable results from year to year (but not directly comparable to the previous level based assessments). The new assessments will be based on achieving Age Related Expectations (ARE) on a number of different statements. Results will be given as below or above national expectations but with no indication of whether the child is just above or significantly higher. The Target Tracker (TT) software contains videos for every statement in English and Maths to help teachers to moderate their assessment of each statement and the software will be regularly updated. It is thought that about 20% of primary schools including many other local schools have chosen to use TT which will allow St Matthew's to moderate their assessments locally. TT records progress in bands with 6 steps within each band to show progress. At St Matthews it is planned to use paper to record assessments and then for the data to be transferred at the end of each term. Liz advised that the TT software covers all areas of the curriculum but it is planned initially just to use the statements for Writing, Reading and Maths. Expansion will be considered once the system is embedded in the school and the workload has been assessed although it was noted that the number of statements for some subjects could be very limited. This software will help curriculum leaders monitor levels of attainment in their subject across all areas of the school but there are too many statements to consider introducing in all areas at the same time. The Committee were advised that Target Tracker is based on software that was developed by Essex County Council and has therefore been in use for a number of years. Data has been imported into the new system for all current children but the difference in assessment methods mean that it is not possible to directly map across.

The Committee thanked Liz and Kate for their presentations and commended them and the teaching staff involved for all their hard work to get these two assessment systems established.

Mark asked about the implications of the changes to the assessment systems on League tables. He was advised that every school still needs to be able to demonstrate progress but there is now more freedom about how they choose to do this. Tony advised the Committee that whilst league tables are important the school can not be driven by them and the new systems will take some time to bed in. The introduction of the new systems was a point of much discussion at the recent Headteacher's conference. He noted that secondary schools would be sent the scale scores for the national tests in reading, mathematics and Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar along with the teacher assessments in writing. A major concern is the additional administrative workload that the introduction of the new systems will put on teaching staff. This is being closely monitored. It was noted however that the system can be used as part of the report writing process and may lead eventually to time saving at this stage. Governors agreed that it is important that teachers have sufficient time for inputting the data and resolving transitional issues. They also asked how the school would ensure that the information online was up to date (i.e. how regularly would teachers be able to transcribe information from the paper system online).

Neil Parry left the meeting at 6.55pm. Liz Steel and Kate Spencer-Allen left the meeting at the end of the presentation at 7.00pm

8. Link Governor Visits

Maths – Carole Mills

Carole presented the written report and noted that she had looked at both the identified Action Points, Actions related to the SDP and the use of Target Tracker during the visit. She noted that Target Tracker has no assessments as part of the package (it is for analysing data, not carrying out assessments) and whilst Abacus does have half termly tests they do not map directly to the TT statements so this will need to be done from scratch during the next academic year. In addition since there are some areas of the curriculum that have not yet been taught it is difficult to initially assess all areas at the start of the year or demonstrate progress in these

areas. Recently, the school has acquired a set of Abacus KS3 resources to stretch able pupils at the top of the school and it has been helpful for teachers to get an idea of where the learning will be going beyond KS2. In addition teachers have received Cuisenaire (coloured wooden rods) training and Numicom. Caroline (Maths Co-ordinator) is keen to promote atmosphere of conjecturing. She noted that the National Centre for Excellence in Teaching Maths and Nrich have many useful resources to support this on their websites. She noted that the emphasis in the national curriculum is that children should achieve mastery at each level rather than be rushed inappropriately through levels in maths; one of the dangers being that this focuses on particular areas whilst leaving gaps in other areas. Carole advised that the visit had been very positive and that a lot had taken place in the last year in terms of staff training, new assessment methods, family learning sessions and access to helpful resources.

Early Years – Neil Parry

It was noted that Neil had been unable to stay to present his report because of a conflicting appointment. However that it had been circulated with the papers and there had been lots of discussion about Early Years during the Training presentation on the “Early Excellence” assessment system. It was noted that Neil’s report had been very positive about the commitment that the Early Years team had to ensuring excellence in all aspects of their work including implementation of the new assessment system in the classroom.

Literacy – Gavin Ayliffe

The report from Gavin was tabled at the meeting due to the timing of the visit. TT together with Personalised Learning journeys are used to track individual students performances. Gavin noted that teachers were working on assessment and entering data with the introduction of Target Tracker and that this work is high priority.

The key areas for improvement is differentiating lesson planning around individual gap analysis. He noted that the initial feedback regarding the Big Write package is positive but the best evidence will come from improvements in Key Stage results. He also mentioned the YARP package that was purchased by Sarah (SENCO) but is available for all children as appropriate to allow tighter diagnostic banding for those who are falling behind in reading. In addition there are 2 TAs who are available in the morning in addition to those already assigned to year groups for intervention programmes such as to listening to readers who do not get the opportunity to read at home, with access through recommendation by the teacher. He noted that it would be good to expand the opportunities for reading in school by using a pool of volunteers of parents, post grads and retirees since students do not provide sufficient continuity. Jill suggested that the school should contact the University of the Third Age for volunteers who could be trained. In addition it was noted that many churches had elderly people who might be interested in volunteering and the local church St Matthews would be a good starting point or an advert in the publication “Across the City” which is distributed to most churches. It was agreed that the procedure for carrying out checks and obtaining system a DBS for each volunteer needs to be streamlined as possible so that enthusiastic volunteers can get started as quickly as possible.

Action: University of Third Age to be contacted regarding the possibility of providing volunteers for Reading with children

Gavin noted that more work needs to be done in the promotion of the library although the break out areas on each floor are better used than the main room itself. Ideas such as rewarding book reviews should be considered. Tony agreed that promotion and further development of the library is an area for improvement within the school. Governors noted that there are shops in town such as Heffers children's bookshop that could be approached for resources – old display models and posters would be useful. It was noted that the school did have a programme of getting authors to visit and this had been well received.

SEND – Lucy Walker

The report for the recent Link governor visit to look at SEND was also circulated to the Committee to inform their discussions. One of the governors asked if there had been a reduction in the number of TAs and Tony

clarified that there has been some reallocation and whilst there has not been a reduction in the number neither has there been an increase in line with the additional classes in the school. It was agreed that this was a critical area and that Lucy should be invited to the next Committee meeting and an item put on the Agenda.

Action: SEND to be on Agenda for next scheduled Committee meeting

9. Community Music report

Mark gave the Committee an overview of the Music offer in the school, which includes Charanga scheme, choirs, individual lesson tuition and in-school concerts. He advised that he would be very interested in seeing the statements relating to Music within TT to see if they would be useful for planning the Music curriculum. He advised the Committee that St Matthews has the highest number of instrumental take ups of any primary school in Cambridgeshire and the biggest challenge was finding rooms for teaching. To date there have been a number of meetings with Cambridge music and an extra piano has been provided in the Community Room. There is the possibility of a musical school becoming operational at St Matthews with instrumental tuition at the weekend and after school. The school is taking part in Singfest with other schools in the county and the School choir will be performing in the Cambridge Debating chamber in the spring. In addition the Headteacher had obtained funding for whole class guitar tuition. There is a school orchestra with 30 children involved, however for this to continue it may be necessary to make a small charge to participants – the total cost is £2000 per annum (for tuition and writing music etc.). Funding was raised last year through a grant and money raised by an end of term concert and a further grant application has been submitted. Tony advised that there has been a £500 donation from the PTA to provide this activity during the current academic year. Mark noted that Music is also very strong at Parkside and he is keen that St Matthews and the other feeder primary schools for Parkside build links with the new Music teacher. He is also planning to revise Music Club, to teach theory after half term.

Governors asked how this extracurricular activity translated into classroom teaching. The Committee were advised that classroom teachers are not specialist music teachers. The current teaching package, Charanga, allows children to access the music curriculum without requiring the class teacher to have in depth specialist knowledge of the subject.

10. New School Development plan

Tony advised that there had been detailed discussions at the Staff meeting the previous night to agree more detailed action plans. An updated version including this information will come to the FGB in December.

It was agreed that the Committee needed to agree Link Governor roles required for the year to monitor progress in key areas of the Development plan.

It was agreed that there needed to be overarching Link Governors in key areas who were responsible for checking progress on action plans:

Literacy (Reading and Writing) – Gavin

Maths – Carole

The Committee considered whether a governor should be appointed to review data but felt that key data would be monitored by these two Link governors (LGs) and there was no requirement for an additional role. The Committee noted that reviewing data is the responsibility of the Committee and the FGB and rather than one governor overseeing Data it is the responsibility of all governors to interrogate the data. The Committee confirmed that there should be a SEND Link Governor who would look at data for reading, writing and Maths for children identified with additional needs. The Committee considered whether a LG should be appointed to look at EFSM/Pupil Premium/English as a second language children and Jill was suggested this role.

It was agreed that the end of year data would be the key agenda item for the next Teaching, Learning and Outcomes Committee meeting and that this should be an open agenda item which all governors would be invited to attend.

The Teaching Learning and Outcomes Committee made the following suggestions for Link Governor areas: Literacy, Maths, Parents, PE, Art, Science and ICT plus consideration of how EFSM/pupil premium, Gifted and talented and Character Education is reviewed. In addition a LG should be appointed to review the new Assessment and Self Evaluation Processes for Foundation Subjects – monitoring how the process is agreed, implemented and working by meeting with Tony and the SLT.

The Committee discussed if it was appropriate to appoint a Link Governor to look at the area of “Gifted and Talented” provision or whether LGs in all subject areas should be asking about this provision routinely as part of their visit. Tony advised that Liz Steel had in the past looked after this provision and whilst he wasn’t sure that this was the best name he was about to give this responsibility to another member of staff. It is not just about curriculum attainment but also about ensuring there are suitable opportunities both in and outside school for able children. The Committee agreed that they would wait until Tony had discussed this area with his Leadership team and the appointment had been made before deciding how to proceed. The Committee reviewed the SDP to see if there were any additional roles linked to the agreed objectives. The Committee considered Outdoor Learning but agreed that this sits with the Committee as a whole. They also considered Character Education but decided that since this is still at an early stage of development that they should wait to see what is proposed before appointing a Link Governor.

It was agreed that all the proposals should go back to Zoe to enable her to amend the googledoc and then to the FGB for confirmation.

It was agreed that the only Link Governor visits which will take place before the next Committee meeting are in Music and PE.

11. Any other business

No items of other business were raised. Governors were reminded that the school photographer was in school the next day and they were asked to attend to have their photo taken.

10. Date for the next meeting

Wednesday 2nd December 2015 at 5.30 p.m. – to include an open agenda item on analysis of Statutory Assessment Key Stage data. Other proposed Agenda items to include update on School Development plan actions and agreed Link Governor Visit reports