

**MINUTES OF THE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE OF ST MATTHEW'S GOVERNING BODY, HELD AT SCHOOL ON THURSDAY, 20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2014 AT 5.30 P.M.**

**Present:** Carole Mills (Chair), Jill Tuffnell, Emily Barratt, Gavin Ayliffe, Mark Tinkler, Joanna Dean, Sarah Ransome, Tony Davies (Headteacher), Anne Maskell (Clerk to Governors)

**1. Apologies for absence**

**ACTION**

Apologies for absence were received from Neil Perry.

**2. Declaration of pecuniary interests**

Governors had no additional interests to declare.

**3. Election of Chair**

Carole was re-elected as Chair. There were no other nominations.

**4. Committee terms of reference**

The committee terms of reference were agreed without any further revision.

**5. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 18<sup>th</sup> June, were agreed as an accurate record.

Sam had circulated the link to the online form re the volunteering database as requested. Details of the database will be advertised via the website and to the local community in due course. Those interested can input their details directly on to the database, giving contact details, areas of expertise, etc. The current procedure for DBS checks was discussed – whether volunteers will need this will probably have to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

**6. Report on Performance in Statutory Assessments 2014**

Tony had prepared a comprehensive review of the performance of children in this year's statutory assessment tests, incorporating key data, significant statistics and key action points and also included an explanation of some of the terminology used. Comparative data against national averages is obtained each year from the RAISE Online report, and statistically significant variations are included in Tony's report. He has been through the data with our School Improvement Partner, Alison West, and she indicated that she felt that this year's results would be judged as 'outstanding' by OFSTED, and our results from the last 2/3 years overall would be on the cusp of good/outstanding.

Results for pupil premium children have been slightly lower than national averages in some areas, but their progress has been good overall. It is also encouraging to see good progress in areas we had particularly targeted, e.g. phonics testing in Reception and

Years 1 and 2. There is a gender difference in results for boys' writing and girls numeracy, but this does fluctuate according to cohort and can be affected by very small numbers of children.

Tony then led governors through his report via a Power Point presentation and highlighted key areas to note for each area of testing.

### Foundation Stage Results

Results from the summer term, which are above average in all areas. Tony said that he feels all staff now have a better understanding of the assessment process which has helped refine their practice, and that there are clear key descriptors in the Foundation Stage Profile which aid decision-making. This is a strongly moderated process, both within local schools and the Local Authority. Comparative data for national averages has yet to be received but we are well above the figures for the previous year. We are particularly encouraged to see a large increase in the number of children achieving GLD and a narrowing of the gap between boys' and girls' achievement.

### Phonics testing in Year 1 and Year 2 retakes

Performance has improved markedly and we are now above national averages, although Tony said that it will be interesting to see what long-term effects phonics testing has on children's reading and writing ability. There is also concern that over-emphasis on phonics may impact negatively on less able readers.

Tony said that performance of FSM children has improved, although it is still not as high as we would like. He said that, although there is significant cohort variation, many of the factors which make our FSM children vulnerable are due to challenging family circumstances. This is an issue for the whole of Cambridgeshire. St Matthew's has a very wide variety of family circumstances, which is perhaps not so marked at many other Cambridge schools. Mark said he has comparative data on the percentage of FSM children at different local schools which he could circulate to governors. Gavin suggested that we benchmark both gender differences and EFSM results against other schools, and that it would be particularly interesting to see how they compared against other Cambridge city Schools. There is still a major issue re the level of funding in Cambridgeshire which impacts on provision for children who need extra support.

**Mark**

Results from the Year 2 retakes have been very positive.

### Key Stage 1 testing

A very strong set of results with attainment above national averages in all areas except Level 3 mathematics. There is a marked gender difference in terms of boys' writing and girls' numeracy, with both significantly lower, and the issue of how we work to raise achievement in these areas will need to be considered. More male helpers in the classroom was felt to be a good motivational tool, and a repeat of peer mentoring from secondary school pupils could be very useful (Parkside pupils came into school to help with numeracy recently which was received very positively by our children). Governors asked if there are other schools which do not have this gender difference – it might be helpful to compare data. Tony said that it is possible that this is a cohort variation as we did not have this problem two years ago.

Tony said that he feels that teacher assessment can give a much more accurate picture of a child's progress, rather than purely relying on test results. Tasks undertaken in class inform teachers' judgement

### Key Stage 2 results

Results are at or above the national average in all areas, with 72% 'secondary school ready' – above the national average. We have achieved the best value-added scores since 2011, and the best ever value-added scores in numeracy. Our small group of SEND children performed well, given their specific needs, and all but two of them made expected levels of progress. Governors asked whether specially trained volunteers could have an impact on the progress on SEND children, and Tony said that this would be worth investigating. Level 5 writing results for boys was slightly below the national average – Gavin said that, in his experience, boys often respond better to more traditional methods of teaching. Achievement of girls at Level 4 in numeracy was 13% lower than boys. Sarah asked if there had been sufficient practice in class under test conditions, as she felt girls responded well to this. It has been noticed that girls tend to be more passive in numeracy lessons and it will be straightforward to change practice slightly to address this. Maths Advisor Jane Crowden came into school recently and did a 'learning walk' and the results of this will be shared with staff. Possibly some guided numeracy groups just for girls will be effective.

**Tony**

Tony summed up the key areas for development arising from all test results and the measures that would be taken to target these. Governors asked how test results are notified to parents. He said that the school is obliged to send our annual reports two weeks before the end of the summer term, although it is appreciated that this is sometimes too early to include SATS results. Governors felt that the report should specifically state that results are from teacher assessment, if this is the case. They also felt it might be helpful if more background is provided so that the results are set in context. Sarah suggested a 'distribution curve' of results. It was agreed Tony would discuss practice for reporting with staff. Governors felt it was important that parents were kept 'in the loop' about their child's progress and continually updated and alerted where help is needed. Perhaps the question as to whether parents felt sufficiently informed could be part of our next consultation with parents questionnaire?

**Tony**

### **7. Numeracy update**

Numeracy co-ordinator Caroline Bailey was unwell and unable to attend today's meeting so Tony gave a brief update.

Bookmarking and scrutiny is underway and feedback will be given in the Autumn term it is important that this is as clear as possible. Lesley Moore and Carrie Rice have attended 'Success at Maths' training', looking at suitable intervention programmes to be introduced across Key Stages 1 and 2. The Abacus teaching programme, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, is being put in place, and Caroline and Emily Barratt will be disseminating information from the recent training they attended. Very positive feedback from parents was received following the two maths family workshops run recently – two more are planned for the Spring term. 'Working walls' – a useful prompt system – have been put up in classrooms and are varied and updated on a regular basis.

We were delighted to have been in the final of the Year 5 LA maths challenge.

**8. New Curriculum and proposed changes to statutory assessments**

National Curriculum levels are being discontinued, although many schools are still using them. Five new descriptors for KS2 are being introduced to be used along with P scales, which are the only part of the current levels being retained. Tony said that he still needs to look at the detail, but there is a lot more still to come. The emphasis will be on testing rather than teacher assessment (although this will be retained for writing).

Tony said that we will need to tailor our current assessment system to fit with the new NC tests and will have to realign our practice. Consultation on the proposals ends in mid-December and the LA and Cambridge Primary Heads are making representations. Tony's view is that he would like to see the information circulated to all schools so that they can seek agreement on their views and present a united front.

**9. Link governor visits**

Carole said that she is planning a numeracy visit with Caroline Bailey, and Jill will contact Lowri Chatfield to arrange one for art. Carole and Tony will meet to discuss timetabling of governor visits.

**Carole/Jill/  
Tony**

**10. Any other business**

No items raised.

**11. Date of next meeting**

Already confirmed as 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2015 at 5.30 p.m.