

Minutes of the Teaching, Learning and Outcomes Committee, Thursday 13th June 2019

Present: Angel Gurria, Carole Mills, Rosa Mottershead, Neil Perry, Katie Hehir, John Parkin, Mark Tinkler, Tony Davies.

Clerk: Lis Silver

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence and all members attended the meeting. The Chair, Carole Mills advised, that as agreed by the FGB at the start of the year, that she was proposing to step down. Angel Gurria has offered to take over the position of Chair

The Teaching, Learning and Outcomes Committee members unanimously agreed that Angel Gurria should become the Chair of the Committee

2. Declaration of direct or indirect pecuniary interests relevant to agenda items

There were no additional direct or indirect pecuniary interests declared.

3. Minutes of meeting held on 7th March 2019

Governors reviewed the minutes from last meeting and agreed that they were accurate with correction of the following typos:

- Section 5 First line should read and looked **ed** at a new subject SEF for history.
- Section 5 – clarification that teacher's get one hour cover **per week** for half a term
- Section 5 – leading the way on the self- **evaluation** but that even for her less traditional subject area the format is **effective**. (evaluation in wrong place)
- Section 5 **complement** (instead of compliment)

4. Matters Arising

- TD advised that he was pleased to announce that the school's challenging target of 84% for Phonics had been met and that 86% had been achieved. Year 6 writing assessments are currently just being completed but the work is looking strong. However, for Maths the result is likely to be borderline. Feedback suggested that the children knew the Maths but not always what they needed to apply for a question and that more opportunity to apply maths in tackling questions similar to those in the tests would support improved performance.
- Governors asked for an update on the children mentioned at the last meeting with high level emotional support needs. TD advised that for one of the children there has been some progress and a meeting will be held shortly to discuss the situation however support would only be funded until the end of the academic year. For another child who attended St Matthews part time and another school part time he advised that the other placement had broken down before half term and sadly this week had also broken down at St Matthews since it is no longer considered safe for them to remain at the school. The future for this child remains unclear although it is evident that they need specialist provision for their ongoing psychological needs. In answer to a general question he advised the Committee that an Educational Healthcare plan is put in place for a child with this level of need which would recommend the level of support needed to enable the child to reach agreed targets. This plan would be sent to parents who could choose a suitable placement but there is no guarantee that this placement would be available.

5. Peer Review – St Matthew’s School Development Rubric

TD advised that it had been necessary to postpone the forthcoming Peer Review at St Matthew’s since he was unable to be present because of urgent surgery. He advised the Committee that the Peer review would need to be rescheduled in the Autumn term. He tabled a copy of the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting but governors had been unable to open or print.

In preparation for the Peer Review he had used a recent Staff meeting to get feedback from the staff about the areas covered in the document and which criteria they thought the school was achieving. For whole school areas a similar exercise was done by the Senior Leadership team. For the majority of areas reviewed staff highlighted some statements from established and some for leading. In just a small number of areas staff highlighted statements at the level of developing. This exercise can then be used as a starting point to decide which areas the school wants to improve. The staff governor confirmed that it had been a very useful exercise to do with staff from across the whole school.

Governors asked for further information regarding the suggested action points emerging from discussions about the rubric in the following areas:

- i) Point 1 – to be discussed in later Agenda item
- ii) Point 2 Development of Curriculum for diversity – it has been noted that as the full curriculum is revised there has been some loss of elements relating to diversity. One example of this has been the removal of the Year 6 visit to the Fair where children had an opportunity to interact with the travelling community. Revision of the curriculum is always necessary to prevent it becoming crowded and impossible to deliver but there is a need to review that overall no specific aspect is lost. It was noted that one of the Assistant Heads had recently reviewed books held in the school in the light of reports that diversity is dropping in children’s literature. As a result of this a number of books have been ordered including ones about influential women and black women.
- iii) Point 3 – consistency in implementing changes to the Marking policy (presented to the last meeting). The staff governor confirmed that the new policy is going well and seems to be a positive step forward in Maths however the full impact will only be confirmed with time when the impact of verbal feedback will be seen during book reviews and assessments. It is planned to purchase Power maths assessments so that regular more rigorous assessments can take place (Point 4)
- iv) Point 5 – Pupil voice and DART meetings - TD advised that there had been considerable discussion around the section on pupil voice including whether pupils should attend Parent’s evenings. It was noted that some parents value the opportunity to discuss matters that they would not raise in front of their children and also the timings of the meetings would have to change for children to attend. Currently each child has a 1 to 1 15-minute DART meeting each term with their teacher prior to the Parent’s consultation where the child is given an opportunity to think about what they have achieved against agreed targets. It was noted that the school have maintained this meeting despite the fact that it is expensive because cover has to be arranged to release teachers, but it is felt to be very important. Reductions in funding have already put the DART model under threat with proposals that these meetings are only held with children that are under achieving. The staff governor confirmed that discussions with children are different to discussions with parents and that currently this exercise does not add to the pressure because release time is arranged.

- v) Point 6 “More consistent application across the school of key elements of agreed pedagogy” – governors asked for clarification as to what this meant. TD explained that this was ensuring that tools and best practice is being understood and used consistently in every area of the school. He gave the example of handwriting books to help children size letters and noted that for children where this is a key problem then these books can be used for all writing subjects and this goal would be to ensure that this was being done consistently across all years and in all classes.

6. Link Governor Visits: Developing “Governors’ clear understanding of what standards look like in classrooms”

TD presented the paper “Book Looks, Learning walks and Pupil Interviews” which has been written to help governors develop a clear understanding of what standards look like in classrooms. At a recent staff meeting staff have reviewed the books from their own class as part of their training to help them as subject leaders to effectively review books across their curriculum area to show evidence of their own speciality within the work done e.g. evidence of History. The same paper is being presented to governors to help them to know what to look for in classrooms when they carry out subject Link Visits. It was explained that on a learning walk you would typically visit a number of classrooms spending 10-20 minutes in each room. The importance about being clear about the objective of the visit was emphasised to ensure that the appropriate evidence is gathered e.g. book checks, visibility of a subject, appropriate resources available and being accessed by children. A learning walk is also an opportunity to see the atmosphere in a classroom and speak to individual children or a focus group. It is not suggested that this walk is done for every Link Governor visit but could be useful if you are inspecting a new area or to alternate with visits when you spend time with one teacher outside of the classroom. Normally the governor would be guided by the subject specialist leading the walk but there would be opportunity to challenge or find evidence for what was presented. The meeting was advised by one of the governors that the importance of talking to the children at recently been emphasised at their recent Chair training session. Governors agreed that this was a helpful checklist to assist them in preparing for Link visits and ensuring they understand the subject they are looking at. Governors were asked whether this format could be used to look at a particular group of children e.g. SEND children and were advised that this was possible but that some adaption of the learning walk may be necessary in discussion with the Senior Manager responsible for the area.

8. Planning Link Governor Visits and Reports from visits since last meeting

RM presented her report from her recent Maths visit. She advised that she had looked at the Maths Action plan and then looked for evidence of implementation. There were 6 targets in this subject area in the SDP and the Link Governor had looked for evidence of progress in each area but noted that the effectiveness of the Action plan can’t be properly assessed until after the SATs results are published. She confirmed that she was happy that in each area progress was on track but will return in the second half of the summer term when SATs results are available. However, the full impact of the curriculum changes made in 2014 may not be seen in the results for the current Year 6 cohort who will not have had the full new curriculum so may have had some gaps in their knowledge. Booster sessions have been run since Easter to plug any potential gaps. The Maths Mastery approach which is now used throughout the school allows topics to be taught in longer blocks allowing children to develop a deeper more fluent knowledge of topics. Governors noted that there was concern about the potential Maths results for this Year 6 and asked about other years. TH

advised that the current Year 3 and 4 are strong cohorts having followed the full curriculum but that a similar problem may be seen next year.

A recent Meet the Head focussed on the new maths marking policy and there was lots of useful discussion about homework. Rather than additional homework it was suggested that parents should focus on learning Times tables.

Governors commended RM on a very comprehensive and useful Link Governor report.

A review of progress on Link Visits was done:

- AG confirmed that SEND and Literacy visits have been done and reports are still to come to the meeting.
- NP advised that he was planning to visit to look at Character Education including Equality and Diversity and hoped to also look at Pupil Premium children within the same visit. It was agreed that the Pupil Premium visit could be done before the next FGB but since the Head would be absent in the following week it would be better to postpone the Character Education visit.
- DL has carried out her Science visit and report will go to FGB
- JP to arrange visits for Early Years and Computing
- RM to carry out further Maths visit towards end of term or early in Autumn when SATs results available.

TD advised that there were a small number of errors regarding Committee membership on the Link Governor register that had been circulated. John Parkin and Kate Hehir sit on the TLOC Committee and Richard Warwick sits on the Resources Committee (not both Committees as suggested on the sheet)

TD advised governors that the NEU are currently balloting members about boycotting 2020 SATs exams

9. Future Meetings – dates and agreed agenda items

FGB - Wednesday 10th July at 18.15

Dates for Board meetings and Committees for next will be agreed at this meeting. The next TLOC will be in early November and is the open meeting, so all governors can attend if they wish, at which the SATs data analysis is scrutinised

The Head advised the governors of the following dates

19 July – School play

21 July – Mark Tinkler advised that there will be a performance of Carmen in the school hall

27 September – Headmaster's March to Parliament to highlight Reduced funding for schools followed by a number of Parent's marches across the country. A pack has been prepared to send to interested schools on organising a march.

10. A.O.B

AG advised that he had recently visited research being done at the Centre for Cognitive Research who are keen to pilot a project at a central Cambridge primary school and he wondered if St Matthew's would be interested. The project is looking at brain imaging and brain development and they are looking to trial material they have produced to get children interested in Science rather than carry out tests. TD confirmed that he would like to hear more about the project.

Action: AG to provide contact information to the Centre

Email and survey about traffic – this is still to be sent out

Action RM to follow up and ensure survey is sent out as soon as possible

TD advised that Fulbourn primary school has recently announced that it will be reducing the school week by 2 hours and closing one afternoon because of funding cuts. He is not proposing that St Matthews does this at the present time.

Interim performance review for Headteacher – has not yet taken place. It was noted that this is very late since this is so that adjustments can be made during the term. The next full Performance review will take place in the Autumn term and a third person is needed since this is a rotating group of 3 governors. Ideally this should be a representative from the Resources Committee, and they need to be appointed early so that they can attend the relevant governor training.

Action: RM, DL and AG to discuss possible dates with TD and agree whether it can take place before the end of term