

## Governors' Review of the School Year 2015-16

### **Learning is for life.....**

We want our children to become life-long learners, to build the skills and attributes that will enable them to tackle challenges and solve problems, relishing the opportunity to learn and recognising the satisfaction that comes with working on a problem and achieving a solution.

All children throughout the school are taught and encouraged to develop the characteristics of effective learning; 'Skill, will, thrill' and this approach is central to our schools focus on 'everyday excellence' in the classroom. The focus on everyday excellence and developing these vital learning skills is one of the overarching priorities in our school development plan and is also detailed in the performance management targets of all our teachers.

Resilience and working together is a feature of the 'pit of learning', staff have introduced children to this idea and it helps them realise that not knowing an answer is ok, it provides an opportunity to learn, by working together, trying new things and taking a risk you can learn. Both staff and children created visual representations of a 'pit of learning'; Those created by staff at a thought provoking inset day are displayed in the corridor outside the hall.

Further information is available on the curriculum tab of the school website.

### **A broad and balanced curriculum, inside and outside the classroom**

Our curriculum provides children with a broad range of experiences, covering the national curriculum requirements but very much tailored to meet the needs of our children. Following a successful trial in summer term 2015, whole school themes were once again used to inspire both staff and children; these were 'Who Pushed Humpty Dumpty?' in the autumn term, 'Conflict and Peace' in the spring term and in the summer term learning was focused on the Olympics, the Queen's birthday celebration and 'Healthy Schools'. These themes provided lots of exciting learning opportunities whilst also allowing children to develop their understanding of British values, for example in the summer term the children learned all about British culture and the Royal Family, as they celebrated the Queen's birthday.

Interfaith Week was celebrated in February with the aim of developing the school's community awareness of different and distinct faith communities and developing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs.

Visits enhanced learning throughout the year. In October Year 5 went to Pilgrim Day at Chester Cathedral taking part in workshops including stained glass windows and handbell ringing. KS1

visited the Cathedral in June 2016 when they learned about its history and features as part of their RE curriculum. Classes also visited Holly Tree Farm, the Hat Museum, The Manchester Velodrome and Manchester City Stadium, the Cheshire Show and the Llangollen International Eisteddfod children's day.

More local visits included a visit to Waitrose, the eco-council's visit to the Recycle First Education Centre in Winsford, and visits to Arley Hall for the Christmas tree competition and then in June to set up our school garden at the Garden Festival.

Our own school grounds continue to prove an invaluable resource, particularly our forest school area. As part of forest schools children learn about the outdoor environment and how they can have a positive impact whilst working in it. They undertake a wide range of activities including identifying trees and plants, setting fires, using tools and cooking outdoors. Mrs Osborne hopes to continue plans for an early years' forest schools area this year.

School memories many children treasure are those of the 'residential's, which were to Beeston for year 2, Kingswood in Staffordshire for year 4 and of course Menai for our Year 6s. The children learn so much on these visits, for many it is the first time they have stayed away from family overnight, not to mention the wide range of activities and experiences they also get to try for the first time.

### **Children's learning, progress and results.**

The significant increase in expectations of what children should know in the new national curriculum, launched in 2015 meant that for both staff and children, particularly our year 6 children, this was a challenging year. Children in year 6 were tested on the new curriculum, as though they had been studying it for the whole of their school life when in fact they had just 18 months to try and learn the extra skills and knowledge the curriculum demanded.

The staff and children worked extremely hard and with great focus to cover the new content in such a short time and Mrs Magiera made it clear in the end of year reports how proud she was of all the children who met the challenge with a positive attitude and were willing to work hard to achieve their best. Most importantly the children left our school in July well prepared to move onto high school and start the next stage of their education.

Changes to the way attainment was measured also meant that rather than getting a 'level' score in their report which made it clear how much progress they had made from the level they were at the end of Key stage 1, the children simply had to be graded as exceeding, meeting, or below expected levels. Unfortunately, this doesn't acknowledge the good and in some cases

outstanding progress the children made in their time at Witton Church Walk from their starting points in to the school.

This year attainment in the national Key stage 2 tests for maths, reading and writing were below national figures for percentage of children reaching expected levels, with maths being the lowest figure.

Two of the three overarching priorities in the school development plan relate to increasing the percentage of children reaching age-related expectations across all subjects and to achieve 80% of children making more than expected progress whilst at Witton Church Walk. Governors will be monitoring progress closely to ensure we achieve these targets.

The progress made by pupil premium children is monitored closely by Mrs Kenyon, who works with teaching assistants and teachers to ensure these children do as well as their peers. Our pupil premium governor Mrs Bickerton meets with Mrs Kenyon every half term to ensure this extra government funding is having an impact on children's progress and attainment.

Children with special educational needs have generally made good progress. Our Special educational Needs co-ordinator, Mrs Johnson works with teachers and teaching assistants to ensure the range of interventions are helping children to achieve their targets.

### **Keeping children safe and well....**

Safeguarding has the highest priority in our school, our family support worker Jackie and Mrs Parr have particularly important roles in school, Mrs Parr being our safeguarding lead. Everyone has a responsibility to keep children safe and governors have safeguarding on the agenda at every committee meeting. Mrs Parr provided a safeguarding update for governors at our 'Back to school day' in the autumn term, followed by more training on the 'Prevent' strategy in April, this is a government strategy which is designed to prevent our children and young people being radicalized.

In January, children and parents were given the opportunity of First Aid training. St John's ambulance spent a week in school delivering training to all the children from how to make a 999 call to resuscitation, a free session for parents was also included.

Years 3 and 4 learned about the NSPCC's 'Underwear Rule' in their PSHCE Lessons about relationships. This is an age appropriate scheme which helps children stay safe from sexual abuse.

In March Year 5 learned about fire safety. Members of the Fire Service talked to the children and gave them the opportunity to learn about what to do in case of a fire when they experienced a smoke filled room in the Smoke Busters tent. Year 6 went to an event featuring the 'Crucial Crew', which enabled them to recognise dangers and to learn how to make things safer for themselves and others around them in a fun and interactive way.

In the summer term children were involved in a mix of activities which gave them the information they need to make healthy choices for their mind, body and soul as part of our 'Healthy Schools' celebration.

School sports week was a focus for an exhausting list of sporting activities, continuing the high profile for school sport and competitions throughout the year. It started in September when Scooters, The Race Company came into school to spend the 2 days with us. They aim to keep children fit throughout their childhood through the use of their scooters, teaching children the correct techniques to safely and effectively operate a scooter. Sports continued with a Dodgeball Tournament in March, gymnastics and quadkids in May. The summer term included dance club, try it, tag rugby, quick sticks, tri golf, duathlon, tennis, rounders, and more quadkids.

### **That's entertainment**

Our school wants to provide children with a wide range of opportunities and experiences; last year this included:

- A whole school visit to watch the pantomime 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'
- Mr and Mrs Theatre Company presented the story of Jack Frost, a magical Christmas adventure of singing, dancing and acrobatics to nursery.
- Both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 visited St Helen's Church to 'Sing the Christmas Story' at the end of November. The singing was accompanied by a full orchestra and narration of the story.
- Our choir participated in the Young Voices concert on the 29th February 2016 at the Phones4U Manchester Arena along with six thousand children, celebrating 20 years of Young Voices.
- The Mighty Zulu Nation worked with our children and performed at a special assembly in June.

Our children also entertained audiences in school with the Christmas show being enjoyed by parents, carers and residents of Daneside Court care home. Our choir sang outside Waitrose, at Daneside Court and during the Christmas fayre. The Key Stage 2 performance 'Let loose' was enjoyed by all who attended in July.

**And finally...**

We were delighted to welcome Mrs Lystra Landon to our Governing Body in the spring term as a Foundation Governor. Lystra has three children, the youngest still being at Church Walk, and with a background in social work Lystra brings much relevant experience and knowledge to our Governing body.

In June Mrs Magiera sent out a letter and questionnaire to parents, carers and governors asking for feedback and ideas as we looked at drafting our new school development plan. Responses were compiled and taken into account and the resulting plan was agreed at the Full Governing Body Meeting in July.

Thank you for taking time to read this report.

Regards

Sarah Merison

Chair of Governors