

Governors' Review of the School Year 2014-15

Children's learning, progress and results: improvement continues

Key Stage 1 children achieved good results in their phonics test. 78% of children passed the test compared with a national average of 74%, though boy's performance was slightly down this year. This has been looked at by staff and actions have been put in place to improve this including work on improved teaching methods which has been very successful. In December 2014 the reading scheme books were reorganized to link with the phonic phases and £4,000 worth of reading books were bought to ensure the children have high quality texts to read, share and enjoy with their parents and carers.

KS1 Data: Data for KS1 children is generally in line with National averages across all subjects and there is strong evidence that our more able children are being stretched so that percentages achieving Level 2a and 3 have increased. As generally children start school below expected levels, then data shows that in Key Stage 1 children make good or outstanding progress.

KS2 Data: There was a significant improvement in mathematics, writing and spelling and grammar from 2014 to 2015. Again there was clear evidence that our more able children are being challenged with children achieving level 5 increasing for all subjects.

There was a slight dip in the percentage achieving Level 4+ in reading compared with the 2014 results (85 to 81%) and the reasons for this have already been studied and steps taken to ensure the results show an improved picture at the end of this year. One element of reading which will be focused on is the speed at which some children read as this impacts on how well they achieve particularly in a time limited test situation.

The percentage of children achieving Level4+ in reading, writing and mathematics has increased to 71%, well above the Government's 'Floor Standards' which was 65% in 2014.

Governors have already discussed all these results with Mrs Magiera and Mrs Parr and areas for further improvement have been identified. Further analysis and scrutiny will take place when the Governor's 'Teaching and Curriculum Committee' looks in greater detail at the Department for Education's RAISEonline data for our school. In particular governors will be looking at progress for all children as well as how successful we have been in narrowing the attainment gap between different groups of children, such as those with special educational needs or children for whom the school receives pupil premium funding.

New Assessment procedures in place.

The government has changed the policy regarding how attainment for children is measured, the old system of levels is no longer used and schools have had to develop alternative systems, as no replacement system was provided by the Department for Education. As Mrs Magiera explained in her letter to parents in October 2014, our school has implemented a new assessment tool which will allow us to track your child's progress and ensure they are meeting their full potential. In feedback from a visit by an external advisor in July the assessment methods and policy were viewed as excellent and he said he would recommend them as an example to other schools.

Governors found out about the procedures in more detail when they spent the day in school on 30th September.

An Outstanding Church School

Our Church school inspection took place in the Autumn term. During the inspection the inspector looked at Christian distinctiveness, pupils' achievement, leadership and management, collective worship and religious education. We were delighted to be judged outstanding in each of these four areas. This was a fantastic start to the school year and recognition of the hard work and commitment of the teachers and leadership team.

In the spring term the quality of RE teaching and learning in school was further recognized with the award of the 'Gold' RE Quality Mark, a wonderful achievement.

The importance of community links and visits is very important in ensuring children are fully aware of our multi-faith society as well as learning about the Christian faith and how Christian values underpin all we do in school.

The links with our Church St Helen's continue to flourish and become even stronger. Worship in Church is now at least fortnightly, and families are invited to join us for these services as well as the special services such as Harvest, Christingle and Easter which are always very well attended by families.

Classes visit the Church regularly, for example all children had an afternoon in Church in December to 'Experience Christmas'. Year 5/6 children visited Church to look at the memorial for those local men who lost their lives in World War 1.

Visits also took place to Chester Cathedral for Pilgrim's Day, and to a Mosque and Synagogue in Liverpool to enhance the children's understanding of these faiths as part of their Religious

Education Curriculum. Visits like these are also an invaluable way of fostering mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, part of our schools teaching of 'British Values'.

Sports focus

Following the introduction of the Governments PE Funding initiative the profile and importance of school sports has been raised as the value of regular exercise and competitive sports has been recognized. Miss Merchant leads PE and having looked back at the quantity and range of sporting events that our children have been involved with, her efforts should be commended. The list of sports events over the last year includes: dodgeball, Quadkids, netball tournaments, Kwik Cricket, Tag Rugby, Try it tournament, Duathlon, football, basketball, Hockey Quicksticks tournament not to mention gymnastics and all the sports which take place as part of the scheduled PE curriculum.

Exciting learning inside and out

Our school places great value in providing all children with a wealth and variety of learning experiences, both in school with the continued development of our creative and challenging curriculum and also through the use of our outdoor areas and the vast range of visits by children across all year groups.

Our school curriculum, whilst meeting the requirements of the 'National Curriculum', also encourages teachers to create an exciting learning experience which inspires our children to love learning. Whole school themes such as the 'Into the woods' theme from the autumn term proved particularly successful and have been extended in this academic year with whole school themes planned for each term. The importance of children knowing about 'British Values', something to which the Government has given a high priority, is woven through all curriculum areas and fits in very well with the existing focus on our schools Christian values, which is led by our school's ethos committee.

Outdoor learning has benefitted from the addition of the Yurt. This is a fantastic learning space which is used for forest schools related activities as well as providing a quiet contemplative space where children can work in a stimulating environment away from their usual classroom surroundings. The school grounds continue to be developed with a new 'tree house' and the continued use and development of our very popular forest schools area. Currently a multi-sensory path and plans for an early year's forest schools area are under development.

Over the last year children visited the Anderton Boat Lift, Dunham Massey, Dewa Roman Experience, Cinema, Norton Priory, Underwater Street, Delamere Forest and Petty Pool. Closer to home some children attended a Spanish workshop at the Grange School and children walked around Northwich and visited the library to find out more about our local area. The whole school enjoyed their usual pantomime trip in December.

In March our school Young Voices Choir joined children from all over the North West to sing to a packed audience at the Manchester MEN Arena, a fantastic experience.

Residential trips are a great learning and development opportunity and children from Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6 stayed in Beeston, Llangollen and Menai respectively.

We also had many visitors to school too including Filbert Artist who spent the day in school.

Keeping Children Safe

Safeguarding the children in our school is an absolute priority. A new software package 'CPOMs' was purchased following the recommendation from a local special school head and discussion at the Governor's Workforce and Community Committee in the Spring Term. Governors agreed that this new software system would help ensure that all information on child protection and safeguarding issues is kept safe and secure and that it would further strengthen our schools procedures.

Children are very much encouraged to think about their own safety and this year special events included road safety workshops for our Early Years children as well as E-Safety and Cyber Bullying Workshops for Years 5 & 6. In December the Fire Service talked to year 5 children about fire safety. Children entered the 'Smokebusters Tent' which allowed them to experience in a safe way what it is like to negotiate a smoke filled space in the case of a fire.

Part of the Community

Our school community is very much a part of the wider community in Northwich. Fundraising for charities over the last year included a coffee morning for MacMillan Cancer Care, Christmas Jumper Day for Save the Children and Den building in our Forest schools area which also helped this charity. Children and families were invited to help in 'Baking a Difference' for Children in Need with a cake sale to raise funds, furthermore throughout the day some children delivered cakes to the local heroes in our community at the police station, fire station, care homes and hospital to show our support and thanks for the fantastic job they do.

The Eco-committee joined the Wombles in October, tidying up the area around the Waitrose store in Northwich. They were supported by the local council, the Northwich Clean Team and Waitrose staff. They also joined the Northwich Clean team members for a litter pick in the area around our school on 'Big Tidy' Day in March.

Once again children and staff joined the Lantern Parade through Northwich before Christmas.

And finally...

The Governing Body welcomed Tim Lee as a Foundation Governor to our first Full Governing Body meeting of the year in November. Tim is a teacher at Hartford High School and so brings a lot of relevant skills and experience to our Governing Body as well as a commitment 'to support and nurture the younger members of our locality'. For more information about our Governors please see the 'Meet the Governors' page on the website.

All Governing Bodies had to look at their constitution last year, with new guidelines from the Government coming into force. Our Governing Body considered the skills we had and the work that needed to be done to make our Governance effective before voting on a new constitution at our Full Governing Body meeting in March. We now have 12 governors and are delighted that currently we have no vacancies on the Governing Body.

Governors are usually present at parents' evenings and also hosted an afternoon tea for parents and carers on the 30th September when we were in school for our 'Back to School' day. Please come and talk to us as any feedback, comments or suggestions are welcome. Alternatively please e-mail me at 'chair@wittonwalk.cheshire.sch.uk'.

Thank you for taking time to read this report.

Regards

Sarah Merison

Chair of Governors