

## **Governors' Review of the School Year 2013-14**

As I begin to write this review, I realise that the task becomes more challenging every year as the number of enriching and exciting opportunities which our children experience at Witton Church Walk grows and it is hard to know which ones to mention and which ones to leave out!

Looking back at minutes of meetings and newsletters, children, staff and governors have all had a busy year.

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

The proportion of pupils in our school who are eligible for pupil premium is above national average at 37% likewise the proportion of children who join the school with special educational needs is also above the national average.

On entry into nursery, many of our children have skills well below those typical for their age, however the rapid progress the children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 ensures that most are back on track and attainment is on a par with age related expectations at the end of Year 2, the vast majority of the children having made good progress and more than half making outstanding progress.

The year 1 phonics screening check shows that 73% of pupils reached the pass rate, this is a 10% increase on the previous year's result and currently broadly in line with national average 2013, 69%.

The end of Key Stage 2 National Tests for children who left school in July 2014, where a third of the cohort had additional needs, shows a greatly improved picture. When the data for children who receive full statements of special educational needs is taken out, the government floor standards were met.

Reading	92% of children making two levels progress
Writing	92% of children making two levels progress
Maths	76% of children making two levels progress

Level 4+ combined – 65% of pupils attained a Level 4 in reading, writing and maths

*This is a significant improvement on our results last year and we are very proud of ALL of our children. Mathematics is an area which we will be focusing on this school year to ensure the percentage of children making two levels of progress increases.*

It is the responsibility of the governors on the 'Teaching and Curriculum Committee' to challenge the headteacher to ensure children are making good progress and expected targets are met. This year they have also been closely monitoring the introduction of the new curriculum.

## **Getting ready for a new curriculum**

The government has revised and updated the National Curriculum, with significant changes in many subjects in both the emphasis and content of what has to be taught. Whilst schools didn't have to implement the curriculum until September 2014, our school had already done a lot of work, particularly in the core subjects of English, Maths and science to ensure we were fully ready to embrace these changes.

All subject leaders updated governors, at the relevant committee meetings, about priorities and developments outlined in their subject action plans. Miss Merchant provided detailed information on developments in PE in response to the new government focus on this area which is bringing extra PE funding into schools. Miss Merchant is working with the cluster of schools in our area to introduce a wider range of sporting activities and competitive games. Mrs. Kenyon explained that there was a new curriculum for Religious Education (RE) which would be incorporated into our school curriculum planning. Our school had joined an RE hub with other local schools so good practice could be shared and plans to set up an ethos group and re-focus on our school's Christian values were discussed. Literacy developments were also explained by Mrs. Kenyon with a greater focus on spelling and grammar being incorporated into guided reading sessions. Mrs Parr talked about the continued focus on maths as a priority for our school with regular monitoring of teaching.

Changes to the Early Years curriculum, assessment procedures and our schools role in the teaching schools alliance were highlighted at a training evening for all governors in March, whilst we discussed how well we know our school at our second full governors training evening in June, led by education consultant Maggie Swindells.

## **Staff: our most valuable resource**

We welcomed new staff to our team last September including Mrs Kimber who is a maths specialist teacher and Mrs Wilkes who works with children in early years foundation stage to improve communication and language skills for those children who need extra support in these areas.

Jackie, our family support worker increased her hours to become full time, meaning that she can support and help more families.

As we said goodbye and thank you to Mr Hatton our caretaker who left at the end of May, we then welcomed Mr Hollis as site manager who has quickly become a valued member of our school community.

As a member of the Cheshire Leadership and Teaching Alliance (CLTA), our school has been involved in training talented new teachers. Miss Burns and Miss Higgins were successful in

gaining full time teaching jobs in our school on completion of their training, which is carried out in partnership with the University of Chester. Mrs Whittaker is currently training in school to complete her teaching qualification, working with Mrs Parr and Mrs Kenyon.

Training and development of our teachers has a high priority as we strive to ensure that good teaching becomes outstanding. All staff are focused on where we want to be as a school, aiming to achieve the best outcomes for all the children in our care. Mrs Kenyon completed her Christian Leadership Qualification, and Mrs Parr is leading on a research project, as part of the CLTA, on 'Everyday excellence in the classroom'.

Miss Mogford has welcomed teachers from several other schools to see our good practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage, as well as visiting schools. Mrs Magiera has completed reviews of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision in other schools and advised them on how to improve practice in their own settings.

At our last Ofsted inspection in September 2012, inspectors said

*'The rigorous management of teachers' performance by the head teacher and senior leaders has been used effectively to identify training needs and improve the quality of teaching and raise attainment. This is an improving school.'*

The monitoring of teachers performance continues to be a strength, with performance management systems reinforcing high expectations, rewarding teachers who meet or exceed targets, whilst at the same time ensuring training and development needs are met so that teaching and learning continues to improve.

### **An exciting place to learn and work**

Our school environment continues to change and develop as we strive to provide a safe and stimulating setting for our children's education.

Improved gates outside nursery were installed to improve safety, staff having to open the gates remotely from inside the building to allow access. Internal doors were replaced to meet fire regulations and a new entry system on external doors makes our school more secure.

Outdoor learning opportunities were enhanced with the development of our forest schools area in the spring, and over the summer the installation of our Yurt which will be a great addition to our outdoor learning facilities. Inside school a new office was created for Mrs Parr opposite the staff room, this allowed Jackie, our full time family support worker to have desk space in the school office.

Children's learning is also enriched with a wide variety of visits and visitors. Over the year classes went to the seaside, Weaver Hall Museum, Stockley Farm, Quarry Bank Mill and the University of Chester. This is in addition to the residential trips for children in Years 2, 4 and 6.

Visitors included poet Dominic Berry, artist Jan gardener, African tribal drummers and Rhema Theatre Company. Sporting inspiration was provided by Beth Tweddle, Olympic Gymnast, and coach and former Captain of the England ladies football team, Sue Smith.

### **Part of the Community**

January saw the assessor from the eco-schools visiting school to find out about the activities of the eco-committee and how our school helps look after our environment. We were delighted when she told us that we had been awarded our 'Green Flag', passing with flying colours!

Miss Boston and Miss Boulton visited our Afri-twin link school, Belhar in Capetown, South Africa for a week in February half term and in March, Alastair, the headteacher at Belhar visited us at Witton Church Walk. It was fantastic for the children to have the opportunity to find out more about the life of children in Capetown asking Alastair lots of questions. Alastair had a very busy week and commented on the warm, caring and positive way in which the staff and children interacted. It is good to see these links flourish and we hope to work together on more projects in the future.

Gardening Gang and the Eco-committee joined forces to produce a garden for the Arley Garden festival in June, getting third place. The theme of the garden was Afri-twin, reflecting our links with Belhar.

Once again a large group of children took part in the Young Voices Choir performance at the MEN arena in February. It is a wonderful experience, thousands of children singing alongside professional musicians and singers. Children also visited Daneside Court to sing carols for residents.

Children were involved with a poetry project linked to the re-development of the Memorial Hall site, the poetry written by our children can be seen on the hoardings around the site, and was included in a book which was presented to the children at the launch event.

Charities who benefitted from school fundraisers last year included, Joshua Tree, Christian Aid, Children in Need, Water Aid, Breast Cancer Care, the Multiple Sclerosis Society and Sports Relief.

Year 6 children undertook first aid training with St John's Ambulance and following a suggestion from a parent, our school now has a defibrillator, which staff have been trained to use, should this emergency arise.

### **Building on our Church School Ethos**

Our year began with the news that our school had been awarded a silver award for the RE quality mark, this award acknowledges the high quality of RE teaching in school.

Finding out about religions also involved a number of visits. Year 5 attended Pilgrims' Day at Chester Cathedral, children also visited Liverpool Cathedral and a Jewish Synagogue. Father Pancraticus Sanders, who is a Greek Orthodox Priest, lead a whole school assembly in December.

Reverend Alison, Mrs Kenyon and Foundation Governors Angela Atkinson and Graham Sheen have worked with a group of children on developing our church school ethos, in particular they have been looking at our core Christian values and how we can embody them and promote them in everyday life in our school. The Ethos group from Tarporley School, visited us to see what was happening in at Witton Church Walk.

Children and staff walk up to St Helen's fortnightly for special collective worship in our Church on Wednesday mornings. Parents are invited to attend, with refreshments provided after the service. Many parents and carers join children, staff and members of St Helen's Church for important celebrations in the Christian calendar such as Christingle, Easter and Harvest.

Children and staff were also invited to help with a special service in St Helen's for 'Education Sunday' in February.

### **And finally...**

It is important that as a Governing Body we talk directly to all members of our school community to find out what they think about our school. At parents' evening in February governors handed out questionnaires asking parents about the information provided about their children's progress at parents' evenings, 78 were returned and the results and comments were discussed and actioned at the Full Governing Body meeting in March. Parents were generally very positive about the information provided, and governors were delighted with the high level of response. Look out for us at the forthcoming parents evening on 22<sup>nd</sup> October where we will be seeking feedback about the school website.

We will be adding termly updates on the work of the governing body to the Governors' section of the school website this year, so please look out for these.

Any feedback, comments or suggestions are welcome, please e-mail 'chair@wittonwalk.cheshire.sch.uk'.

Thank you for taking time to read this report.

Regards

Sarah Merison

Chair of Governors