

## **Governors look back at the school year 2011-12**

The role of the governing body is both to support and challenge the head teacher and staff, working together to ensure we provide the very best education for our pupils in a safe and nurturing environment.

The last school year flew by, as it always does, with a great deal to celebrate and a continuing focus on improving standards and making our school a place where our children have many exciting opportunities and experiences.

The year began with the drafting of a new school development plan. Parents, staff, children and governors were asked for their input and ideas and Mrs Magiera outlined the feedback received in the Spring 2012 Newsletter to parents. Governors agreed the new plan at the full governors meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> March. The plan outlines the areas which school will focus on and develop over the next 3 years, Governors review progress on these areas for development at their termly meetings with Mrs Magiera and Mrs Parr.

### **Progress and attainment**

National tests, Standard Assessment Tests, at Key Stage 1, show continuous improvement over the last 4 years for Reading, Writing and Maths. Whilst 70% of children are below National Age related expectations on entering school at the start of reception, by the end of Key stage 1 they are in line with National Average Scores in each subject area.

At Key Stage 2 our SATs results also show significant improvement, progress in English is particularly pleasing with 91% making the expected 2 levels progress whilst in Key Stage 2 and 83% achieving level 4+, compared to a national average figure of 84% making 2 levels progress and 80% achieving Level 4+. Like many other Cheshire West Schools maths continues to be a focus for improvement with 70% of Year 6 children achieving a level 4+.

Mrs Kenyon provided information to all Governors about the ways in which children were assessed and their progress tracked at our Full Governors meeting in March, we were impressed with the thorough way in which children were assessed and how this information was used to plan their future learning. Mrs Magiera and her senior leadership team check progress regularly to ensure all children are on track and any issues or problems are identified promptly and dealt with. Interventions such as 'Every Child a Reader' and 'Better reading partners' have been very successful and 'Reciprocal Reading' will be used across both Key Stages this year following a successful trial in Years 2 and 3/4.

Miss Preston, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, worked with teachers, teaching assistants and parents to ensure that children with special needs are provided with the help they need. Their individual learning plans and interventions have meant that the attainment gap between SEN children and none SEN children has narrowed significantly.

## **An exciting curriculum**

Governors visit school on a regular basis, seeing for themselves the hard work and dedication of our staff and how much the children enjoy their learning. Our creative curriculum has had a very positive impact, engaging the children as they cover all the national curriculum subjects whilst following their themed learning journey each half term. 'Wow days' ensure visitors to school and trips out are regular occurrences, for example the visit of a Viking warrior to Mr Rushton's class in the autumn and a trip to Knowsley safari park by Reception in the summer, there are too many more to list them all here! Our new curriculum is working so well that it is being recommended as good practice to other schools in Cheshire West and several schools have already visited to see what is happening at Witton Church Walk.

Many other opportunities have been grasped to ensure our children have chance to take part in a host of enriching activities. Year 6 enjoyed the outdoors with 'Forest schools'; learned to play violin or cello and learned first aid with St John's ambulance; Year 3/4 classes worked with an artist to produce banners and props which they then used as part of the street theatre event with several other primary schools to celebrate St Georges Day in Chester. Year 2 worked hard on their garden for the Arley Garden festival in June, producing a fantastic garden based on the book 'Oliver's Vegetables'. A visiting artist, Jan Gardner, helped reception children create a stunning Olympic Collage which was displayed at an exhibition in Chester, the design was so good it was chosen to be used as the poster to advertise the event. (It is now displayed in the corridor outside reception classrooms if you get chance, take a look).

## **The school environment**

The most obvious changes to see are in the school building and outside environment. The year began with the opening of the new play facilities (football area, climbing wall and extended trim trail) by the Town Mayor in October, soon followed by the involvement of year 5 and 6 pupils in creating the graffiti artwork and willow structures to further enhance our outdoor areas. Mr Lambert worked with a small number of pupils on our new recycled greenhouse which will be put to good use this year.

In January, an assessor visited our nursery to assess the learning environment, we achieved a rating of 5.4, compared to a national average of 3.2, one of the highest scores in Cheshire West.

As our school becomes more popular with parents and our pupil numbers increase it was necessary to move the library and EAL (English as an additional Language) Resource rooms in order to allow the old library to be used as Miss Merchant's classroom in this new academic year. The library is now in a bright, cosy and newly decorated room at the end of the Key Stage 2 corridor. The EAL room has a new home in a room next to the hall, converted successfully from what used to be the old PE store area.

A continuous programme of maintenance and redecoration means that our school continues to be a comfortable and attractive environment for our children's learning.

## **Making sure our children are safe and healthy**

The safety and well-being of our children is paramount. As a school we are constantly looking at procedures to ensure we are following best practice in keeping our children safe.

Two simple improvements implemented last year are that staff now wear badges with their name and photo and children no longer have to come out in to the entrance area to collect the registers. Our safe-guarding policy was revised and new improved systems put in place to ensure any issues or problems relating to safe-guarding are spotted and action taken promptly. Our family support worker is available to help families who need support.

Children are taught how to keep themselves safe, being involved in writing risk assessments for our new play areas and school trips for example.

Anti-bullying week took place in November, the children came up with the slogan 'Safe, Happy, Learn' and took part in various activities including drama and art to explore this theme.

We have a policy promoting healthy eating and this is highlighted to families at every opportunity. The school year started with a Healthy Eating Week and Walk to School week in May was also successful.

Every class joined in an Olympic themed curriculum in the summer term, with opening and closing ceremonies which many parents attended.

## **Working with parents and the community**

Parents are our partners in ensuring their children learn and achieve well. One special evening which illustrated this was the Pyjama Party event in March, author Antony Lishak spent the day working with the children, making their own books then parents and children were invited back to school in the evening, children listened to stories in magical settings created by the staff whilst parents listened to Antony in a very entertaining presentation about the importance of telling stories and encouraging a love of books and reading. The hall was packed with over 90 families taking part.

Family Learning Opportunities continued to develop, with more parents taking advantage of the variety of courses on offer in school; face-painting, IT, maths, jewelry making, knitting have all been included.

Children have been involved in helping our community and helping a range of charities. Year 6 raised money to improve the garden area at a local nursing home, all children helped raise money for Water Aid, Sports Relief, Christian Aid and St Luke's Hospice.

## **Church links flourish**

Our vicar, Reverend Alison is a regular visitor to school. Every Wednesday morning there is a collective worship assembly which is led by Reverend Alison or Graham Sheen, one of our foundation governors. Many special events in the Christian calendar are celebrated by our school in St Helen's Church, Easter,

Harvest and Christingle services were very successful and attended by many parents too. Members of the church community came in to school to help with the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations, a lovely day for everyone involved.

Reverend Alison is one of our Governors and she also volunteered to help with the Year 2 residential trip to Tattenhall.

Graham Sheen has worked with Miss Farran, to create reflective areas in all classrooms and in other areas throughout school. He has also helped review our RE curriculum and supported Miss Farran in organizing a day in which the whole school focused on Christian values.