



## **St Paul's CE Primary School**

### **Report on the Learning Review Day**

*"How close/far away is our curriculum from the broad and balanced curriculum being championed by Ofsted from September 2019"*

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

#### **Summary of findings**

The activities of the review and the discussion that followed support the school's belief that it is well placed to meet the change in tone of the Ofsted 2019 Inspection Framework.

The review has identified that the school's provision effectively meets the challenge of a broad and balanced curriculum in much of the evidence examined.

There are some discrepancies in the quality of non-core subject teaching and learning across the school but the school has put measures in place to address these through the SDP.

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## **Introduction**

St Paul's CE Primary School has always offered a broad and balanced curriculum in all year groups throughout the school year. The school has consciously avoided narrowing the curriculum at the end of key stages as we value the learning opportunities and the enjoyment provided by the full range of curriculum subjects. The school has developed a unique topic based curriculum which brings together many non-core subjects. The topics are taught across two year groups on a two-year cycle. With the change to the National Curriculum in 2014, the school has undertaken a review of the curriculum and mapped the new objectives against our existing schemes of work. This is ongoing, as there is some significant divergence in some of the non-core subjects.

In addition the demand on subject leaders has evolved over time, transitioning from coordination to leadership. Monitoring of provision and accurate assessment of standards are core priorities for subject leaders in the current academic year. Probing questions and actions (based on supporting evidence) from governors is an essential element to support this development.

## **Purpose of the review**

Ofsted's 2019 Inspection Framework places a strong emphasis on a broad and balanced curriculum. We believe that our school is well placed to meet this change in tone, however the purpose of the learning review morning was to test and probe this belief.

## **Aims of the review**

1. To identify how effectively the school's provision meets the challenge of a broad and balanced curriculum
2. To share a view of the quality of non-core subject teaching and learning across the school

## **Methods used in the review**

Senior leaders, governors and advisors worked together on the following tasks.

- Book scrutiny
- Pupil conferencing
- Website scrutiny
- Learning walk

In addition the governors and advisor took the opportunity to meet parents at the school gate for an informal "health check". (Appendix 1)

## **Results**

### Book Scrutiny

The book scrutiny showed that a variety of non-core teaching and learning tasks were evident. Evidence of progression was seen between reception through to years 1 and 2 and between 3 and 4 and then 5 and 6.

The quality of work did vary in some circumstances. Partly this was identified as lessons being covered by a ppa teacher not the usual class teacher. Mr Marriner asked the group to consider if some of the books were of a sufficient standard to be judged in the year above. The group agreed some could be.

Higher up the school constructive comments and questioning in the marking was more evident with responses from the children. Mr Pringle commented on the imagination of the tasks set for the children and the good opportunities for extended writing these offered.

Presentation in the books was an issue where the children were moving into joined writing or where the class was not taken by the regular teacher.

The group judged there to be a good quantity of work in the topic books and Mrs Ward commented that work and tasks were completed not left unfinished.

One area for concern was the change in recorded information between the learning journals of reception, where practical activities and first hand experiences are recorded, to the predominant colouring and lack of differentiation with little practical evidence such as drama or annotations in year 1. By year 2 the work was more detailed. The group discussed that the children may not be ready for the writing activities in year 1 and perhaps consideration could be given to a phased introduction of exercise books, starting year 1 with something more equivalent to the learning journal. The school will give further consideration to this.

Experience of teachers also shows in the books. Mr Marriner asked the SLT and governors to consider what the school is doing to support consistency and to support the weaker teachers. The variety of ways to teach also came across from the books.

The use of topic to support literacy (such as writing non chronological reports) was seen as a strength in the books.

### Website scrutiny

The group considered that the website reflected what had been seen elsewhere and that it was evident where a subject leader had been involved. The posts were varied and there was plenty of content of topic material on the website. There was less from KS1.

### Learning walk

It was noted that different classes working on the same topics had devised different displays. The group felt that some boards showcased children's work and others the teacher's contribution. The progress between year groups was more evident. There was a query as to whether national curriculum art targets were being met by the art work displayed on the topic display boards. The group considered the question is topic work an opportunity to develop a variety of skills.

Some colleagues clearly demonstrate a flair for display work, evidenced in some of the classrooms and corridor work examined. The group discussed the school expectations for display work such as the frequency of changing displays, the need to evidence all subjects, the contrast between informing boards and interactive boards. The group agreed that the subject leaders should monitor and intervene if necessary. Arrangements are in place for the subject leaders to do this.

## Pupil conferencing

The children that the group met were very eloquent, engaged and enthusiastic about topic work. They liked to inform their families of the information they had learned and described some tasks they had particularly enjoyed. (QE1 and QE2 comparisons, complex map drawing, acting out the mummification process.) One child commented its not just the quantity of the topic work it's the quality of the work they are doing. The children would like more practical science experiments and expressed their pleasure when the teacher makes a task tricky. A difference was picked up between years 1 and 2 where it was evident that the children were having a different experience with topic work more embedded in the older children.

## **Conclusion**

The activities of the review and the discussion that followed have confirmed the school's belief that it is well placed to meet the change in tone of the Ofsted 2019 Inspection Framework.

The review has identified that the school's provision effectively meets the challenge of a broad and balanced curriculum in much of the evidence examined.

There are some discrepancies in the quality of non-core subject teaching and learning across the school but the school has put measures in place to address these through the SDP.

In particular the school has experienced teachers and subject leaders who have examined and developed the topic work to try and meet the new objectives. There is further work to be done on this.

While some topics and tasks are well embedded in the school curriculum the group considered if new topics would bring a fresh energy and enthusiasm to the planning and work?

The school and the group believe that, although new schemes of work have been considered, developing a scheme of work works best when experienced teachers are involved.

The teacher needs in depth knowledge, interest in the subject and the time to research and prepare such new schemes. There is also a risk of something very dry and un-stimulating being prepared.

At present there are no firm plans to develop new topics from scratch.

The learning review day has also shown the need to consider the following -

- the transition between reception and year1
- ppa staff should be encouraged to follow the schools marking and presentation policy more closely
- subject leaders may need to monitor discrepancies in provision between classes in the quality of non core curriculum delivery they are being offered

### **Participants**

Mr Wright (Headteacher), Mrs Cossar (Deputy Headteacher), Mr Marriner (LDDBS advisor), Mr Lacy (SLT), Mrs Riley (SLT), Mrs Lepsky, Ms Parfenie, Mr Pringle, Mrs Ward Mr Roy and Revd Guinness (Governors), Mrs Churcher (Clerk)