

Minutes of the Curriculum Sub-Committee

Held on: 9 October, 2013

Present: Sue Farrington (chair; GB vice-chair; community governor)
Amanda Freshwater (staff governor)
Wayne Cooper (DH and associate governor)
Jenny Turner (minutes; parent governor)

Apologies: none

Absent: Therese Reinheimer-Jones (LA governor)
Isabelle Sporidis (parent governor)

1. Matters Arising

SF notified meeting she would be late; meeting opened with JT in chair.

- 1.1 Website: School Info Regs 2012 – a statutory document – requires up-to-date Curriculum info on website (not just Fronter – needs to be public access). At the moment much of it is out of date (though more detailed EYFS and Phonics info is fine). JT keeps an eye on this and is happy to continue doing so.

Action: WC will chase teachers. Deadline: By autumn half-term.

- 1.2 Fronter: teachers using it as portal with class blogs on free blogging software Weebly, which is much nicer to look at and easy to use. Possible problem: it's not on LAN but open-access web. Solution: staff MUST be made aware of this and of the need to respect e-safety issues and pupil confidentiality (photos, names).

Action: WC will bring up at staff meeting. Deadline: ASAP.

- 1.3 Homework Policy has been revised by staff and redistributed – now more specific and precise. Home reading journals – JT queries how consistently these are used. E-homework – Maths homework now on Education City, spellings on Fronter, both accessible online. Mr Orton is running a Thursday lunchtime homework club for children without home computer access. The school and Mr Orton to be congratulated on this.

Action: WC to check that home-reading journals are being used consistently throughout the school. Deadline: next Curriculum meeting.

- 1.4 Are LSAs logged on to Outlook? Yes, they are now.

- 1.5 Clarification of SLT roles: WC reports that this has been done in recent SLT meeting.

- 1.6 Marking policy: currently parked owing to crossover with AfL and AM work.
Action: WC will report on progress of all three. Deadline: next meeting.

- 1.7 Spelling audit: WC has done, and will report further. Frameworks on spelling about to change completely with new National Curriculum.
Action: WC will report on changes in the summer term.
- 1.8 Homophobic bullying. Has been made a part of the new SDP.
- 1.9 Summer 2013 observations and book scrutinies: data not available. Governors asked for it again, and for the next round of teacher monitoring, which WC said will take place in November 2013.

Action: WC to produce data on summer 2013 observations and book scrutinies, noting the proportion of good to outstanding, and any falling below. In addition to present a calendar outlining the annual programme of SLT assessments of teachers. Deadline: next meeting.

SF arrives and takes chair. Minutes by JT.

2. Statutory policies.

May 2013 meeting proposed making these first point of this meeting as many are out of date, but no time this evening because of SDP and attainment data, below.

Action: JT to compile up-to-date list with recommendations and action plan for getting through it as efficiently as possible. Deadline: by next meeting.

3. School Development Plan

WC presented this year's School Development Plan, written in a new format by Mrs Ewers and her consultant, Julian Soresby, and as yet incomplete.

- 3.1 Governors noted that this crucial document had not been distributed to governors, in spite of requests, until 8 October. It was also noted that governors have previously asked for all papers to be sent at least five working days before meetings in order to allow time for preparation, and that this committee has previously noted that the SDP should be ratified and ready for use by the beginning of the autumn term. An assumption that this point was accepted and agreed can be found in the minutes to the previous meeting (1/5/13, 3.7).

Action: SF to discuss with WC and Mrs Ewers and report back. Deadline: Full GB meeting, 25/11/13.

- 3.2 Governors noted that the plan does not use SMART categories and that much of its language is vague and insufficiently quantifiable. Examples from the first page: "average to above average standards"; "consistently significantly above average"; "a majority of outstanding teaching"; "consistently high achievement".

Action: WC to feed back to Mrs Ewers and send rethought SDP to Curriculum Cttee. Deadline: Friday 8/11/13.

3.3 Governors noted that many of the items noted in the Success Criteria column in fact referred to actions, and suggested that they should be rewritten accordingly. Eg, from page 2: “Fully implement AM in maths across the school”; “Further develop contacts with business and professional people” – and there are others.

If this is done, the current Success Criteria column becomes two different columns: one of Actions and one of Success Criteria. This latter should include specific, measurable targets and suggestions as to how the success can be evidenced.

Action: as above, 3.2. WC to feed back to Mrs Ewers and send rethought SDP to Curriculum Cttee. Deadline: Friday 8/11/13.

4. Attainment data

WC presented the 2013 KS2 Sats data, which was down on recent years. Maths was 90% level 4, but Reading and Writing was down to 70%. Various reasons given – this was first year of separate Reading, Writing and Spag test; the volume of the Reading task was greater than expected, causing some children to freeze; some issues with this cohort. Dip in results to be seen as a dip, not the beginning of a downward trend.

WC added that results were down, too, on KS1 and EYFS data, but as governors had not been able to see this information, it was not possible to discuss any emergent issues.

4.1 Governors noted that attainment data had not been distributed to governors, in spite of requests, and in spite of this committee’s having previously asked for all relevant papers at least five working days ahead of meetings in order to give governors time to prepare.

KS2 Sats data has been with school for at least two weeks now, and has already been briefly discussed in Children, Families and Communities and Plan for Excellence meetings. Data for other classes is compiled by school from previous year’s activity (2012-3) and so has been available since last term. None of this information been distributed to Curriculum Cttee at any point.

Action: WC to feed back to Mrs Ewers and SLT, and all data to be distributed to governors immediately. Deadline: ASAP.

5. Assertive Mentoring (AM).

Governors noted that the acquisition of the Assertive Mentoring system of personalised learning is central to the current SDP, and requested a presentation introducing the system at a future meeting.

Action: WC to arrange AM presentation by SLT member. Deadline: next meeting.

6. Closing the Gap

WC presented an analysis of the ongoing attainment gap between our BME and white children, and a plan of actions for closing it. He notes that although the gap is beginning to close in lower KS2 (yrs 3-4), at its most extreme it can be as big as a three-point difference – ie, the children making the least progress can be as much as a year behind in their learning from the children making the most.

6.1 There is overlap between the BME/white gap and the FSM/non one, but they are not identical. Need for precision in this analysis.

Action: WC will further drill down. Deadline: next meeting.

6.2 WC's action plan includes the following elements:

- 6.2.1 Raising expectations
- 6.2.2 A more challenging and relevant curriculum
- 6.2.3 Pastoral guidance from class teachers
- 6.2.4 Genuine partnerships with parents: seek them out, talk, be honest, ring them up
- 6.2.5 Academic mentoring – eg from high-achieving BME sixth-formers at local secondary school.
- 6.2.6 Deone – role of the DKH Learning Mentor
- 6.2.7 Behaviour management clearer, preventative not punitive focus
- 6.2.8 Race issues, though uncomfortable, need open and frank discussion
- 6.2.9 SLT to mentor individual children
- 6.2.10 Literacy coordinator to conference BME literacy issues as soon as they arise

Governors thanked WC for this extremely timely and useful intervention, and applauded him for his initiative in producing it.

Action: WC to develop ideas further and take to SLT. WC makes contact with local secondaries and mentoring charities. Deadline: next meeting

7. AOB

7.1 Safeguarding concerns at Dulwich Hamlet Football Club: WC has investigated and it's fine.

7.2 Future meetings of the Curriculum Committee: Wednesday 12 February; Wednesday 7 May 2014.