

Thongsley Fields & St. Peter's Governing Body

## Curriculum & Standards Committee

Minutes for the Curriculum and Standards Committee Meeting  
held on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 9:45am

### Present:

Phil Cox	Trust Governor
Mark Goodridge (Chair)	Trust Governor
Emily Davis	Trust Governor
Chris Jukes	Primary Executive Lead
James Singletery	Trust Governor
Rachel Hurst	Trust Governor
Aleisha Matthews	Associate member
David Jones	Head Teacher
Lauren West	Deputy Head Teacher

Also in attendance: Kayleigh Cooke as Clerk

### 1. Apologies for absence received and accepted from

June Housego – Associate Member

### 2. Declaration of (changes in) interests

No interests declared.

### 3. Review committee membership structure and terms of reference

Current structure and ToR briefly discussed – no amendments recommended.

MG advised he is continuing as Chair for the Thongsley Fields Curriculum and Standards committee.

RH confirmed the St. Peter's terms of reference will be reviewed and submitted to the LGB.

### 4. Minutes of the last meeting 4/12/2020 and matters arising.

Agreed at the LGB meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## 5. Actions carried forward from previous meetings

Action Reference	Action Summary	Person(s) Responsible	Due Date
2020/2021 - 001	Nominate and agree C&S committee Chair for recommendation to LGB	All members	23/10/2021
2020/2021 - 002	MG to arrange governor visit focused on Read Write Inc	MG/LW/KC	23/10/2021
2020/2021 - 008	Governors to volunteer to complete SEND/Inclusion focus visit in Spring.	All members	11/1/2021
2020/2021 - 009	KC to arrange SEND/Inclusion visit with BH as part of action #008 above.	KC > BH/SF/DJ	Spring 2021
2020/2021 - 010	Invite DH (History Lead) to present latest curriculum developments in History at the end of the Spring term.	DJ > DH	Spring 2021

## 6. Review and consider attainment and progress data for Autumn 2020

Comparison with baseline assessments and targets for 2020-2021.

DJ confirmed that end of Autumn term 2020 assessments for Year 6 showed good progress towards previously set targets. ~~were progressing to the target set.~~ Governors were reminded that the targets set were based on baseline information from the beginning of the Autumn term and assessment data from the previous year. The Autumn term data and agreed targets have been discussed in detail with Chris Jukes, Primary Lead for the Trust.

**QU - MG – Chris Jukes was asked for his reflections on the Autumn term data.** CJ noted improvements and progress in the results the children make when they are attending school - progress is negatively affected where remote learning has been necessary. Autumn term results show a significant acceleration in progress. Writing is often the weaker subject compared to other subjects as is the case at TF. All schools including Thongsley Fields, will not have to prepare for SATs in May this academic year, giving more time to focus on teaching and learning through to the end of the school year.. CJ confirmed the school's targets sensible bearing in mind the known unreliability of previous Key Stage 1 published data.

### **QU – MG – How comparable are our results compared with the other primary schools in the Trust?**

CJ noted that the schools are all in different contexts - the data from Thongsley Fields is comparable in that Maths data is stronger across the Trust schools and Writing is the weakest. The Trust introduced "No More Marking" as a moderation tool to share and compare results along with 30,000 other children across the country. Schools have been given government "catch-up funding," to

support ongoing work connected with COVID-19. TF will be using the Pixl assessment system which will help the school to review and target gaps in learning.

DJ added that it is a cyclical process of diagnosing, teaching, and reassessing individuals as well as providing whole cohort analysis and intervention.

Following a previous request from governors, DJ referred to a previously shared chart providing an overview of the attainment comparisons between different groups, for example, comparing pupil premium pupils to non-pupil premium pupils. Governors noted the relatively small difference between these two groups.

#### **QU –RH – How does that relate to progress?**

DJ explained that generally disadvantaged children begin school with lower baseline assessments and therefore, attainment gaps are wider in EYFS and KS1. The aim is to reduce the gap throughout their time at school., Our data, discussed in a previous governing body meeting and demonstrated by the chart shared, has shown that that attainment gap does narrow. Our challenge now is to monitor this closely to minimise the potential negative effects of the past year.

#### **QU –RH – Would the chart be flat for progress as all students make the same amount of progress during their time even though they are at starting points?**

DJ referred governors back to previously discussed data showing the last published progress scores. This data represents the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in comparison to all pupils. DJ noted that the children who historically have made less progress are those not eligible for pupil premium but who might be deemed to be disadvantaged through other criteria. This might be those from families where income is marginally above the PP threshold or those experiencing or have experienced significant turmoil or other disruptive influences in their lives.

#### **QU – ED – Looking at the attainment chart, the pupil premium and non-pupil premium pupils in Year 2 have a larger gap compared to Year 6, is this expected?**

DJ referred governors back to previous comments explaining the different 'on entry' baseline starting points. DJ advised that this was why the school is focusing more resources in the Early Years, developing the Nursery and Reception provision going into Year 1, and have restructured the Year 1/2 classes to help reduce that disparity as early as possible rather than waiting until KS2 to try to reduce the gap. Read Write Inc. is a large part of this as is the plan to develop oracy skills more widely. A high number of children enter our school with very low language skills and confidence., There is an identified member of staff who will lead on this work and collaborate with other Trust personnel who have been already been working on this.

#### **QU – ED - Is it too early to say whether the national lockdowns will have had an impact on that gap?**

DJ explained that when children returned in September 2020 staff noted that there had been a significant impact on children's use of language. Some of this could be attributed to EAL related

issues i.e. where children have not spoken English for an extended period. However, it could also be as a result of a lack of positive, interactive communication within English speaking households.

LW explained that the school had been ready to introduce the Nuffield Early Language Intervention scheme (NELI) (a Government funded programme aimed at supporting schools in our local context) before the national lockdown.

Children had been assessed towards the end of the Autumn term and staff has received training to implement the intervention programme. Many of our children live in high occupancy households where there are multiple siblings and other members. Many of our parents experience communication difficulties. Some families are known to prioritise the education and support of older siblings. Combined, these factors negatively impact children's ability to engage in learning and learning behaviours such as focus, listening and speaking skills, social skills, etc. and mean that many children are not ready to move from learning through play and continuous provision style environments to beginning to learning, read, write, etc. more formally.

#### **7. Update on pupils' attendance and monitoring processes (Spring Lockdown)**

Pupil attendance data to include summary of vulnerable groups and termly comparisons.

As shared, DJ confirmed attendance for the Autumn term was good (96.7%) and currently exceeding targets. Attendance in school during the Spring term lockdown began at 13% and has now risen to 15%. This compares to 14.9% for all pupils across secondary and primary schools nationally

#### **8. Update on Distance Learning and pupils' engagement (Spring Lockdown)**

Trends and current level of engagement including actions.

All governors were provided with the distance learning report that LW produced summarising what support the school is providing for pupils both in and out of school. This included what platforms they use for school lessons and a breakdown showing the levels of engagement from each year group.

DJ advised governors that each child is monitored on an individual, daily basis with all teachers recording levels of engagements, communication and other factors. Each child has their own login for the numerous learning platforms which report when accounts have been logged in to, how much work is being completing and success rates

31% of children have so far engaged in some work; 11% have engaged in a 'good' level of work and 13% of pupils are in school. Unfortunately, approximately 45% of all pupils are not engaging in any work.

**QU - MG – James Singleterry, Headteacher at Stukeley Meadows Primary School, was asked how that compares to the levels of engagement with his school pupils.**

JaS confirmed that they have had very small numbers of children consistently accessing home learning daily, completing the tasks set. The number of children with no engagement is approximately 25% although there are contextual differences between the schools to consider.

DJ explained that in order to support a wide range of family circumstances and remove as many barriers as possible, staff have again been hand delivering paper packs to those who do not have access to devices or prefer off screen work. This has been a huge undertaking.

#### **QU – MG – Is the access to devices still a barrier to learning?**

DJ confirmed that the school has distributed a further 50 iPads to pupils which has helped in some cases. However, there have been a not insignificant number of parents who did not collect iPads that were offered to them. Many who have collected devices have still shown limited engagement. Many households struggle with the technical knowledge required to support children (staff have and continue to provide significant technical support) or the discipline, inclination, capacity or suitable environment conducive to effective distance learning.

The school is currently in the process of setting up another batch of 32 iPads to distribute.

#### **QU - RH – Could you put it in perspective - how many pupils are missing devices?**

DJ advised that a survey sent to all parents helped to identify over 90 children without access to a device in the home. This was based on 170 responses out of 285 pupils on roll.

Several families only have access to the internet via a parent's mobile phone and most of these use a PAYG service. We have supported these families with data online SIM cards which can be used in older phones to create an internet hotspot.

As already mentioned, a significant barrier affecting many of our families is technical understanding, knowledge and confidence.

#### **QU – MG – Are you getting the support from the Trust that you need?**

David confirmed the Trust has supported with the supply of iPads from the DfE – Thongsley has benefitted more than most other Primaries. The Trust Primary Headteachers have continued to provide strong support for each other and more staff are taking part in collaborative initiatives or making informal connections e.g. to share ideas and resources.

There are ongoing concerns about the capacity to support with IT related issues. However, as the school is not yet part of the Trust's wider IT network, issues reported by other Trust Primaries have not affected Thongsley Fields. Paul Middleton has been very supportive in providing access to the Trust's preferred management system for the iPads and therefore the school has been able to get these devices setup and distributed more quickly and apps and configuration better tailored to our children and context.

CJ confirmed that the Trust's IT infrastructure and mechanisms for supporting schools has been challenging and increased investment is being made to improve the situation. Most schools have experienced issues with the recent increase in reliance on technology. The Trust's IT department are working at full capacity but investment is needed to improve things like WiFi connections which have struggled in some schools.

LW reported that all Nursery and Reception staff at Thongsley recently attended an Early Years Foundation Stage meeting with all other Trust Primary schools. It was positive and led to good practise and resources used by others being shared..

#### **QU – MG – Aleisha, as a parent Governor, how has it been for you? What have you seen from Thongsley?**

AM described how 'lockdown' and home schooling had been a challenging time.. As a parent, she contacted the Headteacher for support and guidance which was incredibly positive and helpful. Some parents and families have been keen to engaged and able to keep the momentum going with home schooling but there are also families with a high number of siblings who are struggling as many do not have support networks around them.

DJ advised that similar feelings were common across the parent body with many similar conversations taking place daily., The school has recently completed its usual Spring term Parents Consultations albeit virtually via video or phone call. . Following consultations with staff and a small selection of parents, it was decided that an opportunity to talk to parents more formally would help to continue the momentum of engagement but also gain some useful feedback about distance learning and more widely about the state of feeling across the school., Feedback was overwhelmingly positive for staff and what they were trying to achieve. Most parents reported finding it increasingly hard to motivate their children and a small number asked about the possibility of providing 'live' lessons like secondary siblings were increasingly having.

#### **QU – MG - What was the level of parental engagement for parents evening?**

85% of parents booked appointments with a few not 'attending' and requiring follow up telephone calls from staff. A relatively high percentage of engagement only slightly below that of the school's Autumn term consultations.

### **9. Review progress of curriculum development.**

Report of progress since September 2020 inc. Subject Leadership

#### **QU - MG – Have you been successful in completing work on curriculum development?**

Staff are continuing to develop the curriculum plans and materials specific to their subjects and year groups. However, as staff have been working in isolation during the latest 'lockdown,' less progress has been made than would be possible if staff were able to collaborate face to face.

### **QU – MG – Do the delays cause you to question the course you have set for the curriculum development?**

DJ commented that although the development is not as far forward as anticipated, the majority of the planned work is proceeding positively. Some areas of the curriculum have proved more challenging than others and therefore other options and support have and are being sought.

LW advised that some of the school's subject leads have participated in the newly formed Trust subject lead groups. These have been very productive and the feedback from staff has been positive.

CJ added that the Trust have been working for 18 months on a project which brings together all the subject leads from each of the Trust schools to support the development of each subject area.

### **QU - RH – In terms of the framework, is Thongsley Fields expected to have an inspection soon?**

DJ confirmed that all schools that convert to an academy should be inspected by Ofsted within 30 months. For Thongsley, this would be anytime between now through to the summer term. However, due to COVID-19, Ofsted has confirmed that this is unlikely to be the case and we are therefore expecting to be inspected sometime during the next year.

CJ added that Ofsted are carrying out non-judgemental inspections of schools previously deemed to require improvement or schools with elevated levels of complaints.

## **10. Policy review**

No policies requiring review.

## **11. Governor Visits**

Proposals for the Spring term:  
(Previously agreed on 18/9/2020)

- a. SEND/Inclusion (planned for Spring 2021)  
(To be rescheduled after 'lockdown')

### **QU - MG – What was the SEND inclusion visit in the Spring term for?**

DJ reminded governors that, as previously agreed last year by the C&S committee, the school would like a range of staff to present to the committee on areas of particular focus. In order to help triangulate information received, a follow up governor visit would then be helpful to see that work in person, obtain a range of views e.g. from teachers, TAs, children, parents where applicable and then be in a position to report back to the committee. This would then help to increase the knowledge and understanding of the full committee and governing body at the same time as providing a broader range of evidence.

Mark Goodridge and Emily Davis expressed their interest in attending a SEND/Inclusion focused visit. It was suggested that Bill Hennesey (governor responsible for SEND) should also be encouraged to



participate and that the Summer term, when the nation is not in a national lockdown, would be the most appropriate time to do this.

MG noted that another option for governors is conducting virtual visits and has found them extremely useful previously. DJ agreed that this is a possibility although advised that as most governors have not visited Thongsley Fields before, physical visits would be most beneficial, particularly in this case.

Governors agreed with the suggested inclusion of History as the curriculum focus for the next C&S meeting.

Rachel Hurst expressed an interest in finding out more about the Pixl resources being introduced and also taking part in a future History focused visit.

#### 12. Any other business

No items were presented prior to the meeting.

**13. Next meeting date:** Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 9.45am.

Meeting closed at 10.50am

#### New actions from this meeting

Action Reference	Action Summary	Person(s) Responsible	Due Date
2020/2021 - 002	MG to arrange governor visit focused on Read Write Inc.	MG > LW/KC	23/10/2021
2020/2021 - 009	KC to arrange SEND/Inclusion visit with BH, MG, ED as part of action #008..	KC > SF/DJ	Summer 2021
2020/2021 - 010	Invite DH (History Lead) to present latest curriculum developments in History at the end of the Spring term.	DJ > DH	Spring 2021