

Questions

SID – School Improvement and Development

1. When will the next Ofsted inspection be?

- We don't know...hopefully within the next 6 months but there is currently a delay at Ofsted due to a reduction in the number of Inspectors
(and what are the consequences if expectations haven't been met?)
- School would remain as RI and a further Sec 8 visit would follow within 18 months

2. What is the governing body's view of the quality of leadership in the school? How are the governing body challenging the school?

- Leadership has been identified as requires improvement so we completely understand that it remains a concern for our families
- Leadership is not only the HT and SLT's responsibility but also the Governors
- The leadership style of any organisation will never suit everyone within it particularly in times of challenge such as RI
- We are addressing our leadership skills collectively - management styles have changed to become more focussed on specific targets so we are all working smarter
- Leadership style is collaborative...everyone is part of the solution, everyone understands their role in 'Getting to Good'
- Governors are now more involved in school than ever before and have a greater understanding of how school operates day-to-day - therefore able to challenge more frequently and effectively
- Changes in the Governing Body – organisational & personnel allow us to work more effectively – specific Gobs are becoming experts in specific areas
- School practices and procedures are examined in detail by the relevant Governor committee/individual – we no longer accept what we are told and we are making sure that targets are ambitious and we are aiming high

3. How do you know that policies are put into practice and are effective?

- Policies are controlled by Governors – specific policies controlled by the relevant committee
- There are 40 policies in place within school
- Some relate to curriculum other to how we manage and run the school

- Our policies are reviewed and updated regularly to reflect both legal guidance and practical experience to ensure accuracy and effectiveness
- All members of staff and the wider school workforce are aware of the policies and how they impact on them individually
- Policies are available on the website so parents and carers should also be aware of how they impact on their children

Management

4. **Please could we understand the retention policy in place in order to keep the high performing teachers currently employed?**
 - There is no retention policy in place...legally not allowed
 - Advice given to many training teachers is that they should stay in the first job for no longer than three years and in their second, (which should be in a school in a different type of catchment), for five. They can then be regarded as having the range of experience needed for a leadership post.
 - Information in the School Workforce Census states 'that in a typical school a fifth of staff had been in post for less than two years and half for less than five'
 - Based on those figures our retention rates do not show a high turnover.
 - Interestingly, we have heard from a number of previous staff members who have expressed the desire to come back to Marton should the right opportunity present itself so that is very encouraging for us as Governors in our role as employers.
5. **Are the teachers individually assessed by Ofsted and is that something which can be made visible to parents?**
 - Historically assessment feedback did mention individuals but this is no longer the case
 - Current feedback focuses on general statements such as 'teaching requires improvement'
6. **A number of children have left Marton at what point (min number per class) would classes be merged or worse still does a school not become viable enough to remain open?**
 - No one should be concerned about the future of our school
 - We lose children each academic year (6 since end of July 2015) – some because parents are dissatisfied with the school, others due to relocation, others due to personal reasons – and this is true of other schools too

- However, we also gain new starters across each academic year – again due to the reasons mentioned and this has been the case this year (12 starters)
- With the proposed new housing developments taking place locally we are anticipating that our numbers will hold up and most probably increase.
- We have historically been a one-form entry school and this will continue to be the case moving forwards.

7. Next year we will have a child in KS2 and KS1 and we are concerned about the security of the KS2 playground. It does not appear to be supervised in the morning so we will have to leave our daughter with direct access to the playground from the road, whilst taking our son to KS1. Can we have some clarification around the normal procedures for KS2 and any plans regarding security?

- Always a member of staff on duty from 8.45am in KS2 playground.
- Rota to be put up so parents can see who will the staff member is.
- Looking into ways of making the staff more visible.
- Gates are all locked at 9.10am and not opened again until end of school day.
- KS2 whistle goes slightly earlier than KS1 so parents can stay with juniors until then and then walk through to KS1 in time.
- Site generally much more secure with new fencing etc. Site manager does regular checks of the perimeter to ensure that all is secure.
- Safeguarding was no longer an issue requiring improvement following the HMI's visit in December

Standards

8. At the recent parents evening we got the distinct impression there is a massive focus on data. How is this data being used to then implement change in the classroom, i.e. underperformers up to standard, standard to progress onto higher achievers and so on?

- Our school data (children's progress and achievement) is absolutely under the spotlight and rightly so.
- Each academic year we are seeing the bar being raised in terms of the standards our children need to reach so as Governors we need to make sure that the quality of teaching and assessment is as it should be
- National standardised tests allow staff to benchmark our children and identify their individual progress to date and current level of ability (attainment)

- Moved from RAG rating (Emerging, Expected, Exceeding) to our bespoke Rainbow Rating to show in more detail progress within each of these broad bands based on multiple colours
- Impact Groups for Maths largely targeting middle ability - intensive small group learning opportunities run by our TAs, designed to complement the day-to-day quality first teaching delivered by class teachers.
- Essentially focussed on underpinning learning objectives that certain groups of children may be struggling with and which are holding them back from making significant progress in Maths
- In place since January and we are already seeing extremely positive results across the majority of children who have benefitted from these sessions
- Extension elements in all tasks for higher ability children designed to push these children to greater heights
- Our least able children continue to benefit from a range of interventions and already this academic year we are seeing some really encouraging results. Many of these children work closely with the TAs and as Governors we ensure that any funding any of these children receive is utilised appropriately for their benefit.

9. Please could we have an update on the benchmarking exercise?

- We are extremely pleased with the results of the standardised tests (benchmarking) in terms of children's attainment
- That said, as you'd expect there were a handful of surprising results – some children overachieving, others underperforming and staff are investigating these anomalies and taking action as necessary
- Just as importantly, these tests have also enabled us to benchmark staff performance in terms of proving that our newly introduced internal assessments following the abolition of Levels and APS, are also accurate
- Results show a strong correlation - indicating that our new assessment method is appropriate and accurate and we can have confidence in the ability of our staff
- As a result of the standardised tests, end of year reports will contain reading and maths ages so you will have a clear indication of exactly where your child(ren) sits.
- **How do governors find out about the quality of teaching?** By greater hands-on involvement – previously we were too passive and accepting...but no more!
- We are responsible for the Performance Management Review of HT

- We are responsible for the Pay and Review for all staff
- Governors work closely with subject leaders to ensure that teaching plans are appropriate in relation to curriculum
- We are involved in lesson observations, work as mentors to our NQTs, carry out spot checks on children's books to monitor marking policy, extension exercises for more able children etc.
- We see the data for each cohort so can track progress and attainment and are aware of any issues affecting both individual children and cohorts/groups of children
- We also receive feedback from the NLE in respect of her external evaluation of teaching practice and standards and leadership/effectiveness of the SLT and subject leaders

10. What is being done to help the most vulnerable pupils in the school?

- Many types of vulnerable children and the school cares for each in an individual way.
- SEN - recent change in code of practice and senco and Sen governor working closely to ensuring that changes affect our children in a positive manner. This means more meetings with parents of children with more complex SEN, along with better involvement all round. Parent and pupil voice are important and the new code of practice encourages this.
- Vulnerable due to social circumstances (relationship breakdown, looked after children, financially disadvantaged. These are bespoke and delicately handled. The school offers help, where needed (financial in terms of uniform, assistance with trips and residential etc.).
- If parents are not aware of these things, we're doing our job as we're succeeding in being discreet.
- Dedicated Governors; one who specialises in SEN and Safeguarding and another who is focussed on Pupil Premium
- In addition our Data Gov sees the results of all children within the school so is aware of exactly how our 'vulnerable' children are progressing
- Where possible school works closely with families to implement interventions that are in place in both settings
- Children have significant support (often 1-2-1) from TAs and external practitioners all designed to accelerate progress

Foundation

This isn't a question but more of a suggestion...I know there is feedback, questions or suggestions which parents aren't raising for whatever reason... Whilst I accept being anonymous isn't encouraging relationships and communication, at least it is giving those parents who aren't confident enough to raise issues a way of doing so. As I've said before I am a great advocate of Marton but there are clear improvements required and some things would be very small changes which would make a big impact. A lot of the parents have friends at local schools and hear the great and not so great things about their schools, I'm just thinking this might be a way to tell Marton what impresses us about other schools and could be implemented at Marton (e.g. head teacher on the playground a couple of times a week, I know Buglawton do this every day and the parents have built a better relationship with the head as a result as it has made him more visible and approachable)

- We do actually have a suggestions box in reception but we would prefer that comments/suggestions are not anonymous
- Anonymity is not something that encourages strong relationships and communication between school and our families – contradicts our Christian ethos
- The introduction of Class Reps 4 years ago was intended to foster stronger links with the wider parent audience and in most cases this has been the case
- Maybe we could look to our Class Reps to raise any suggestions or concerns from parents who do not feel confident to talk to school themselves – potentially through a termly rep/staff/gov meeting – coffee and cakes?
- We could also look at how we could introduce a feedback/suggestions mechanism on the website

Ad-Hoc Questions

We feel communication between the school and parents could be improved. What plans are in place for this?

- The school communication plan is another thing that is under the Governor spotlight
- As Governors we have been guilty in the past of being somewhat distant from our parents, however with so many personnel changes to the

Governing Body and so many of us now being parents ourselves we are beginning to change that.

- Recent introduction of the termly Governor Update and the launch of the 'Getting to know the Governors' presentation session will we hope help us achieve a much closer and stronger relationship with parents
- Day-to-day school-parent communications are in a much better place than previously
- Revamped newsletter is nearing its 100th edition and we hope that everyone finds this to be a useful method of communication for what's going on, what's coming up, sporting info, diary dates and general school news
- For information specific to classes, after school clubs or transport issues etc. we utilise emails and the school text service and of course send letters home
- For wider audiences the school website is the primary method of communication. We are in the process of overhauling our website to make it more user-friendly and edit the information available. (It may be that in respect of the earlier suggestion about improving communications with parents, we introduce some kind of virtual suggestions/comments facility for our families into this new look site)

Communication between school and home is perhaps most under pressure in times of adversity which is usually when a member of staff leaves unexpectedly or when we have information such as a disappointing Ofsted visit to report. No one likes to think they are being kept in the dark nor misinformed, however it is important to understand that on most occasions such as these, not only do certain things come as a total surprise to school and Governors, but our hands are often tied in respect of what we can share and when. In many ways it would be beneficial to all of us to be able to share the exact details of what is going on but unfortunately this will never be the case as we must always adhere to practice and policies.

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Issues Arising on the Night

Flooding on the field – Children are not allowed on the field unsupervised and where there is lying water are instructed to stay away. There is an ongoing problem that the management committee and school site officer are tackling. Stuart Andow, Vice Chair of Gobs has contacted the concerned parent and an area of the field has been fenced off to provide additional protection for our children.

Impact Groups – concern was raised by a parent as to the use of the word ‘Impact ‘ and how participating in these groups was negatively interpreted by their child. Moving forwards we will continue to use the phrase Impact Groups as this is an internal intervention initiative. Children of all abilities are taking part in Impact Groups and as was stated by one of the TAs who is delivering these groups, on the whole everyone of them is benefitting from them and enjoying them and test results show their effectiveness is allowing children to progress. The role of Impact Groups was introduced in the last Governor Update to parents but it will be further explained in the upcoming parent Maths workshop that Miss Young will be organising soon.

Child Targets – in response to a question from a parent, within the classroom all children are aware of their targets and are regularly asked about them within the course of the normal working week.

Parent Surgeries – to further improve the communication between Governors, school and parents, we are going to introduce monthly drop in sessions for parents to meet with staff and Gobs. Initially these will be aimed at Class Reps who can turn up and raise any issues or concerns, or say thanks/well done on behalf of other parents, but if Class Reps can’t attend or an individual parent would like to come along and see us in person that would be great. These will be informal sessions and are designed to build stronger links between us all.