

**Gillespie School Learning Committee**  
**End year review of 2022/23 School Improvement Plan Priorities**  
**Minutes, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

Attendees: Jodie Reed (Chair), Dan Hamilton, Mandy Leatham, Mark Owen, Shelley Wragg, Katrina Moses

Apologies: Hafsa Abokar, Fin Craig

## **Introduction**

The 2022/23 priorities were re-shared amongst governors. Mark said that overall he felt it had been a strong year of recovery for the school, with a lot of much focused work taking learning and curriculum back to where it had been prior to the pandemic. The rest of the meeting was dedicated to review of each school priority and point and sub-point from the 2022/23 school improvement plan (see **Annex 1**). It was noted that these priorities had been effectively distilled down to be as simple and focused as possible in September – but the action plans beneath contained a huge amount of detail.

## **Priority 1 – English, writing and maths across the curriculum**

### **1.1 Phonics across EYFS and KS1**

The shift to “authorised” schemes required a big process of evaluating different schemes last school year. Steph Welburn was allocated as Early Reading lead and has done an outstanding job over the last two years providing lead and helping the scheme to fit the school.

Steph has re-trained TAs across the school and worked with our phonic expert teachers in reception, y1 and y2 in this specific scheme (development of y2 expertise also critical because of need to provide appropriate catch-up support). Steph continues to mentor support staff who do the additional phonics teaching. Steph regularly observes TAs. She is now doing analysis of different group’s performance and is producing a plan for the autumn term based on what has gone well. Mark believes TAs are now all confident with the new scheme/approach, and a small team can in addition provide catch-up and keep up to small groups and some KS2 based TAs who can do catch-up with older children.

Dan asked if there is evidence of progress in children’s outcomes as a result. Katrina highlighted that 87% passed phonics check this year (contrasting in the 60s last year). Of those who did in the re-check in year 2, 3 out of 6 passed (the 3 remaining all had very complex needs).

## **1.2 Reading skills and comprehension**

Mark said this was an area of great progress and the chair commented that this was reflected in Gillespie's results. In Shelley's y2 class 83% achieved good progress even with reading skills, and 37% greater depth (KS1 results). At KS2, 90% achieved the expected standard for reading.

A very clear focus on reading across the school and across the curriculum were attributed for this success – it feels like children are more effectively reading across the curriculum than a year ago. Shelley emphasised the importance of whole- class reading and all children having the opportunity now to benefit from this. For example in y2 boys who are studying phonics are also integrated into whole class reading – giving them chance to develop love and passion and access language even where not yet fluent de-coders.

All agreed this would be an area to keep going in next year, but which will not necessarily require a front page priority

## **1.2 Improving accuracy/fluency of writing in KS2**

Mark views writing as a continuing area of development where in respect of the target we set outcomes are 'emerging'/partially met. KS1 and 2 writing scores have improved but remain lower than reading. In y2 77% achieved expected and 13% achieved greater depth. In y6 83% achieved expected. Mark emphasised that all result had been moderated formally.

Advanced spelling skills a key area for development. The introduction of the "tricky word list" – raised the profile of these with children, and children are now assessed on which know these words and which children/words to focus on. Shelley spoke about her training and work in the school to develop the Structured Word Inquiry approach (SWI – Pete Bowers approach from international schools). This involves focus on etymology in spelling to support, teaching children to break up words and enquire on to the meaning of components. This has proved popular and engaging with the children previously and she is now running structured word enquiry tasters. Mark said that spelling will be a real focus from September – staff in all classes Y1-Y6 will use the Purple Mash national curriculum word level spelling scheme and there will be one word investigation every two weeks minimum.

## **1.4 Connections between maths and other subjects**

The maths focus across the school has gone far beyond White Rose, with a lot of attention put into ensuring that maths is continuously embedded in other subjects, enriching those subjects and showing children that maths is used for real purpose.

Katrina has provided training to all teachers. She has, with input from other staff, created a “Maths access across the curriculum” portfolio of materials (physical and on the server) arranged by year group and different topics. Material is based on examples teachers have developed and materials are annotated, including notes on varying context. Teachers are now using this very actively. Shelley endorsed this, commenting that she has seen children now speeding through the statistics module from White Rose because they had had experience from other subjects. Mark has observed real benefits to learning in other subjects – for example the effective use of graphs and tables to support more vibrant work in history and geography.

In terms of maths Key Stage outcomes, Gillespie results are back to where they were pre pandemic. At the end of KS1 87% achieved expected levels in maths, and 30% greater depth. In KS2 93% achieved expected levels and 37% greater depth.

This target has been priority for a few years and is now considered to have been met. Maths across the curriculum will continue to be embedded but will not therefore need not be a priority for next year.

### **1.5 Literacy catch-up**

The number of children requiring catch-up continues to be more significant than it was prior to the pandemic. Support has continued through a model which enables class teachers who know the children well are released to do additional catch-up (rather than outside catch-up tutors). This also supports a parallel learning model meaning support / catch-up content is in line with and complementary to with the wider class where possible. Katrina believes that this system is running more smoothly for children than it was a year ago with the flow in and out of the classroom to manage focused teaching and catch-up (in maths as well as literacy) is now better managed and understood – it feels less disruptive.

The school has been provided with funding for one more year of catch-up, although we have to contribute a set percentage of costs. The provision of support will continue on a similar structure – a day a week for 21 days, where class teachers released to do additional catch up.

### **Priority 2 – EYFS and reception year outcomes**

Second year of this target which is why “embed”

Upped stakes on aspects of literacy/numeracy.

GLD this year – 77% (53% last year) - literacy and numeracy, a lot more focus on PSE.

Go back to Katie to discuss the priority – might be more specifically on emotional and social developments.

### **Priority 3. Science enrichment and outreach**

The school has achieved the Science Mark in sought, and was awarded the top mark – this was a very significant process and involved bringing a range of evidence to bear and consulting with pupils, governors, parents across the school. In addition, according teacher assessments, science learning remains strong – with outcomes in the top 10 percent of schools.

Mark commented that Hassan's excellent curriculum leadership plus Megan's broad and rich science enrichment work have effectively supported all teachers to strengthen the offer in this area and have both a lot of credit is due to them for their work. Shelley said her class are beneficiaries of this - she is now helping them to access/model new areas of in-depth science and access external areas (such as Institute of Physics resources). Mandy commented that the strong development of Gillespie's science offer has been documented in the school newsletters, although she would like to understand more about the Science Mark and developments in approaches to how science is taught within Gillespie. It was agreed that this would be a good topic for future Learning Committee meeting and future parent communication.

This target is considered to have been met, and will not be a priority for next year, although Hassan's subject leader action plan will continue to drive forward activity. Mark thinks that the focus instead should be on design/technology for next year.

### **Priority 4. Broad, balanced and diverse curriculum**

In the immediate post pandemic period, the focus on wellbeing subject leaders were not as active as they normally would have been, but Gillespie now has a strong team of 5 subject leaders across the curriculum – with Shelley having overall leadership, utilising her last two years of training for senior leadership (NPQSL) which have seen her focus a lot on implementation and specific subject expertise. Shelly has done a lot of development work with subject leaders, reflecting on the current strengths and development areas within subjects, setting future aspirations and goals and working with to identify the non-negotiables for the future. Subject leaders were also given release time to take groups of children and survey and test ideas. This outcome of this process is revised subject plans for each subject which were presented to all the teachers and now being tracked via regular reviews with teachers. Subject monitoring has been tightened to ensure staff are properly communicating about the whole school situation and within each class.

Katrina reflected that this has improved consistency across the school. She describes the year as starting off looking at intent, implementation and impact – with the focus now having moved on to ensuring the practices match planning documents, for example giving teachers more tools like they material to support cross-curricular use of maths. The intention is to develop a maths portfolio style folder in every subject.

This focus for next year will be on sustaining new approaches, ensuring this through subject monitoring and pupil voice. Subject leaders will also undertake focused work looking at strands of subjects and mapping how the curriculum and materials are developed across years (e.g. multiplication, wellbeing).

Mandy complemented that she observes the team work. Governors encouraged teachers to use the planned mapping work to identify and eliminate any accidental overlaps as perceived by the children.

### **Priority 5. Creative outdoor play**

Building on governor conversations throughout the year, there was a discussion of the significant success of the playground Creation Station. This new area was designed and developed by staff in response to perceived growing needs of children and feedback from parents for a space to enable small world work, construction, imagination for children beyond the reception age. Initially there was concern from support staff about management of the area which includes a lot of play resources. Lyn created a system where children look after all the equipment – providing them with different coloured lanyards, requiring them to take responsibility and ownership and take turns. Initially in the autumn they were assigned helper roles, but since the start of the summer term some have taken on area leadership responsibilities. Children are now coming forward with suggestions for workshops and themed weeks.

Governors were very supportive of this innovative initiative and recognised the value – with parent governors reporting the positive feedback from their children. The desire to capture the benefits more clearly for wider audiences was discussed. Steph and Shelley are currently making plans for the My Happy Mind and wellbeing survey in early September – creation station will be part of that. Governors agreed that there would be merit in writing up a case study of this project for external audiences and that it would be of great interest to outside educational practitioners. The RSA were named as another organisation who would have an interest.

For next year, Mark said the ambition was to build the creation station focus and principles into the garden area, and develop thinking about how these resources could support children with SEN.

# Gillespie School Priorities 2022-23

## **1.To continue to raise achievement in reading, writing & maths through:**

1.1 strengthening the teaching of systematic phonics across EYFS and KS1 to improve reading fluency

1.2 further improving the teaching of reading skills and comprehension strategies in whole class reading lessons to support effective reading across the curriculum

1.3 improving the accuracy and fluency of writing within KS2 through the effective application of phonics and spelling knowledge

1.4 enabling children to make strong connections between maths and other subjects by using and applying maths learning in different contexts, developing skills of reasoning and problem solving

1.5 implementing a targeted literacy catch-up programme to support children who have fallen back or made slow progress to make accelerated progress towards expected standards

## **2. To continue to embed the revised EYFS curriculum to improve pupil outcomes by the end of Reception**

**3. To continue to improve teaching and learning in science across the school by providing high quality science enrichment for pupils and through leading outreach engagement for stakeholders in our school community and the wider local school community.**

## **4. To ensure all children have a wide range of opportunities to learn from a broad, balanced and diverse curriculum by:**

4.1 continuing to review and evaluate our school curriculum to ensure effective implementation, continuity and progression

4.2 strengthening leadership of curriculum areas and subject expertise of class teachers to ensure pupils acquire effective knowledge, understanding and skills in all subject areas

**5. To maximise the impact of outdoor play on learners' achievement, personal development and well-being through engaging children in leading creative play experiences including during playtimes and lunchtimes.**