



What we've been up to this term...

This year has seen a number of profound changes to the way aspects of all schools are organised. As a Governing Body, part of our role is to ensure that our school is keeping ahead of the curve as these changes come in, whilst ensuring that our children continue to flourish and that these legal requirements do not distract from our number one priority: the pupils' learning and wellbeing. Here is a quick overview of some of the changes to the school systems:

Changes to National Curriculum

The school has been following the new National Curriculum since September 2014, and getting to grips with the implications for our creative, topic-based approach to learning. Staff are committed to planning lessons around a themed approach, involving the children in the choice of theme. Each curriculum area has a *subject leader* in school to oversee that part of the curriculum and to make sure that children of all ages progress through their subject, and receive their entitlements in terms of school trips, visitors etc.

Mostly, changes from the old National Curriculum involve giving more flexibility to teachers about what is taught and how. Specific changes to the Maths and Literacy parts of the curriculum are being phased in; we try to communicate these changes to parents and carers through the **Celebration Evenings** focused on these subjects.



Changes to Assessment in school

There have been fundamental changes to the way in which children nationally will be assessed during SATs. While these will not affect our pupils until SATs in 2016, schools are required to gear up now to accommodate changes and to make sure that our own internal testing is consistent with the way SATs results will have to appear.

These changes are being made with the intention that the new system is easier to use in the classroom with outcomes that are simpler to share with children and parents/carers. There will also be changes to age-related expectations for test results. In the meantime we carry on making sure our internal assessment is carefully

moderated by using complementary schemes to ensure that we have an accurate picture of how our children are progressing throughout their time at SJB.

Changes to SEN provision



The framework for funding of support for children with Special Educational Needs is being changed. Previously, provision was organised by using *Statements*, and these are being phased out, to be replaced by *Education and Healthcare Plans*. The transition to this new format and the new systems is a substantial amount of work and we are lucky to have a full time SENCo who is able to ensure that this is carried out whilst maintaining continuity of quality teaching and support for all of our children.



Coffee and chat feedback

Thank you to all the parents and carers who have been able to attend the Governors' Coffee and Chat sessions. We hope you find these useful – we certainly do, and we regularly use the feedback we get to inform our conversations in school.

In February, we asked for your input to the school's **Homework Policy**, and your feedback included comments about timing of homework and clarity of instructions to parents. Parents present appreciated the sessions in school where they can learn about how Maths and Literacy are taught in schools, to support learning at home.

March's topic was **Literacy Teaching and Learning in School**. The tone of the discussion was overwhelmingly positive with parents present praising the school's impact on their children. There were useful suggestions around communication between school and families, which we have fed back to the staff.

Since not everyone can make morning sessions, next term we will be trying out hosting Coffee and Chat at the **end of the school day**. Let's hope the sun shines and we can take our discussion into the fresh air! Watch *Parentmail* as well as the flyers in book bags for the next date.



Governor Spotlight: Teaching and Learning

We continue with our termly Governor “Learning Walks” where we come in to school to gather information on different aspects of school life. Our **2012 Ofsted** report said one reason we were not yet an Outstanding school because

“Some middle leaders do not ensure teachers act on advice from lesson observations to further improve teaching and learning, such as for the more able pupils.”

We wanted to check up on how the school has moved on since 2012 and what has been done to address this point. Here are our findings:

First we asked the Senior Team about how they monitor the quality of teaching in the school:

The senior team (our middle leaders) have a major role in monitoring Maths and English throughout the school and report regularly both informally and in writing to the Headteacher. There is an annual schedule for observations, three per year for each teacher, and, in between, there are drop-in lesson observations to ensure follow up advice is acted upon. The schedule identifies teachers’ strengths and weaknesses, and what the teacher needs to do to move from being a “Good” teacher to an “Outstanding” one. Informal feedback is given to teachers very soon after their lesson observation and followed up with written feedback with advice and points to consider and work on. The Headteacher is aware of objectives set, and timetables weekly ‘drop ins’ to check up, and further support the teacher.

We asked for evidence of the impact of this process on raising the quality of teaching and learning:

This is seen in the various data sources which show pupil progress (like the SJB Data Dashboard <http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/>) and the more detailed version of this, called RAISEonline which we scrutinise as Governors annually. These independent data sources show an upwards trend in performance across the school in almost all areas. Impact is evident in the school’s own internal assessment data, in the children’s books themselves, and in teachers’ enhanced subject knowledge and planning.

We also asked the class teachers for their view of the monitoring and feedback cycle:

There was a unified message from all the teachers we spoke to. Teachers are confident that they have changed their practice as a result of advice. They feel they have ownership, and see the process as both challenging and supportive of teaching and learning in their classrooms.



Report from a new governor

*Cllr Mark Wilson is one of Ulverston’s two County Councillors, and he has held the position of **Local Education Authority Governor** since March 2014. Here are his observations from his visits to the school during his first year as a governor at SJB:*

As a Governor I am extremely lucky to be able to visit SJB.

The school dinners are a good place to start. Extra staff have joined Cook to prepare, assist and serve delicious meals. The children tuck in and make nutritious choices across a wide range of meals – lots of smiles from pupils and staff.

Coffee and Chat meetings are a good point of contact with other parents, staff and governors. Real discussions, real issues and real outcomes – I would invite you to pop in and test it out.

My adopted class is Year 3, and these children work hard and are well led in their learning. You would be proud of the way your children work so hard to achieve the learning outcomes set by their Teacher. I had never heard of Big Maths or Big Write before getting involved.

SJB is great school and is always pushing itself forward, and striving to improve in all areas.

Mark Wilson