

## GOVERNOR NEWS – April 2018

Welcome to our annual edition of “Governor News”, bringing you information about what we, as governors, have been up to so far this academic year.

### GOVERNORS – WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE DO?

The **governor page of Curzon’s new website** includes a full list of our current governors, with photos to help you identify us, and certain other governor information we are required by law to publish: [www.curzonschool.co.uk/wp/governors/](http://www.curzonschool.co.uk/wp/governors/) A **summary of the role of the Governing Body and how it operates** can also be found on this webpage.



This year, we have been delighted to welcome **Mr Michael Thomas** as a full member of the Governing Body and **Mr Michael Bowditch** and **Mr David Pollitt** as new Associate Members. **Mrs Rhiannon Lawrence** continues this year as **Chair** of the Governing Body and **Mr Ian Miller** as **Vice-Chair**.

### ENSURING CLARITY OF CURZON’S VISION, ETHOS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION

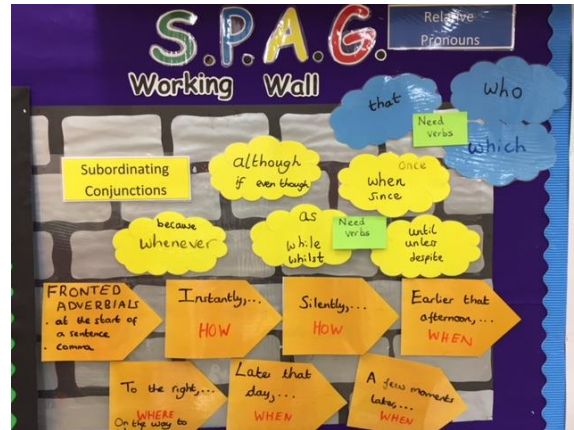
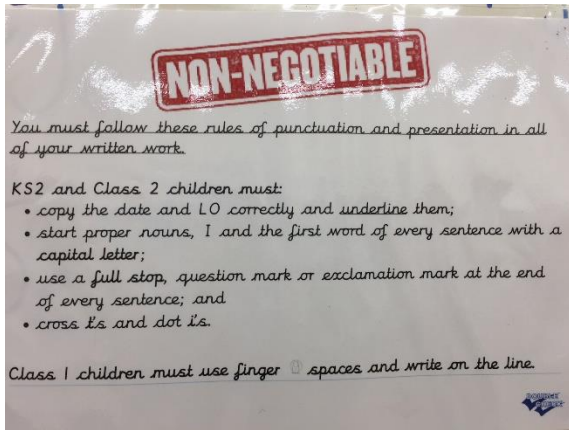
The full Governing Body – 12 governors plus our clerk – meets twice a term. Mrs Coles presents her termly ‘Head’s Report’. We **monitor progress** made in meeting the targets set out in the **School Development Plan** which sets out priorities for the current academic year, as well as those in our **longer-term strategic plan** for Curzon, and we also undertake regular SWOT analyses (identifying the school’s **S**trengths and **W**eaknesses, together with the **O**pportunities and **T**hreats that face the school). Individual committees feed back at these meetings, as do governors with specific responsibilities, such as safeguarding, special education needs, or Early Years. We monitor how the school is spending the Sports Premium funding and its impact on pupils across the school, as well as the impact of any Pupil Premium funding received, and we review policies.

As part of Curzon’s longer-term strategic plan, a **working party** of the Governing Body has continued to monitor developments nationally and county-wide with regard to the **future educational landscape**. Although the government has withdrawn its requirement for all schools to plan to convert to Academy status by 2022, ongoing cuts to the funding of services currently provided to schools by the Local Authority are likely to mean that over time, schools will no longer be able to source all the support they need to purchase from external sources, and will instead seek that support by grouping together in Multi-Academy Trusts. At Curzon, we have enjoyed the benefits of effective school partnerships for a number of years already. Examples are shared staff training; liaison groups for heads, deputies, admin staff, governors; subject/key stage moderation; or buying in to the sports events package that allows our pupils to participate in inter-school sports days. We have also been exploring the various collaborations of schools that have recently formed or are forming locally, remaining mindful of the distinctive character and ethos of Curzon and of what would benefit our pupils, staff and school in the long term. For the time being, our priority is to strengthen our financial position, so that we have a secure foundation from which to consider any attractive options open to us in due course. One of the strategies we are considering to boost our financial resources is to increase our Published Admissions Number at year 3 from 24 to 26 pupils which will take effect from September 2018. This small increase will not change the ethos of Curzon as a small, family, village school, as a class size of 26 is still under the average KS2 class size, and will enable us to keep providing your children with some of the extras that make Curzon special. Each year we have to disappoint some parents of Coleshill KS1 children who are not able to secure a place for KS2 at their catchment school, so this small increase in pupil numbers should benefit local families too.

Since our successful Ofsted inspection in October 2017, governors have been supporting and challenging staff as they work ambitiously on the two **next steps for Curzon, as identified in the Ofsted inspector’s report**, and have been **monitoring progress** made over the last few months.

<b>Next step:</b>	<b>Actions to address next step include:</b>
<i>Pupils, particularly those at KS2, consistently use their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills when completing written work</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creating a set of “non-negotiables”, the basic rules that pupils MUST follow in all their written work (see photo);</li> <li>- Increasing pupil ownership of their spelling, punctuation and grammar (“SPAG”) through target setting, peer-to-peer review of work and training pupils to spot their own mistakes;</li> <li>- KS2 pupils to create individual mini-dictionary of common words they have misspelt, to be learnt and tested periodically</li> <li>- Using word cards for common words, especially at KS1, to encourage pupils to spell them correctly.</li> </ul>
<i>There is a consistently high enough level of challenge for all pupils in mathematics lessons</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- implementing a new maths calculations policy in line with the new national maths mastery requirements across the school; and</li> <li>- compiling and sharing maths mastery activities among staff.</li> </ul>

Governors will be visiting some classes in the summer term to see how these initiatives are being implemented. In the meantime, do please encourage your children to observe the “non-negotiable” rules in the writing they do at home.



We would like to use this newsletter to explain what “maths mastery” actually is and how it will ensure that all pupils achieve to the best of their ability in maths. Please do look at the two-page maths mastery appendix at the end of this newsletter.

**ENSURING CURZON PUPILS RECEIVE THE BEST LEARNING EXPERIENCE AND PROGRESS WELL**

One role of a school governor is to “think strategically to help raise standards”. This year the Curriculum Committee has launched a joint governor and subject leader programme. Subject leaders for ICT, History, Geography, Eco, Science, RE and EYFS on the staff team have been paired with a governor who shares some expertise in that area. Joint meetings are being held throughout the year, looking at how best to move each subject forward and enhance your children’s learning and experiences. A good example of this is the recent successful KS2 fair trade project culminating in your children making and selling fair trade goodies.

Each Curriculum Committee meeting has a focus on a different subject area. The leader for that area meets with the curriculum governors to feedback on their work. This year we have looked at the exciting new Year 4 twinning project with Highworth (a larger, non-Church, multicultural school with a hearing-impaired unit). There are three visits planned this year with a focus on exploring personal, cultural and community identity and hidden similarities and differences. The children have also been writing letters to each other.



We have also reviewed developments in Science and evaluated the impact of our Healthy Living Day, held in the spring term.

← Measuring out sugar to see how much some products contain

Circuit training →



Our Admissions Committee is responsible for approving and overseeing the implementation of Curzon’s Admissions Policy each year. We look over applications, pupil numbers and pupil projections liaising with both Bucks LA and the Diocese.

### **ENSURING CURZON'S MONEY IS WELL SPENT**

The Finance, Personnel and General Committee is responsible for monitoring the school's budget, and approving expenditure, whilst ensuring we follow government-set standards and make the most out of the income we receive. Over 80% of our funds are spent on the employment of our wonderful staff, whilst the remainder is split on day-to-day maintenance and premises running costs, equipment, resources and administration.

Recent government figures showed there were more than 9,400 schools which had been in deficit in 2015-16, equating to more than a third of the total number of schools in the country, highlighting just how difficult it is to run a school within budget. Curzon's Finance Committee has invested much of its time in this past year reviewing the spend against budget, the impact of the new national funding formula and ensuring that we continue to make ends meet which is a constant challenge.

We are always so grateful to the PTA and the funding you raise which provides additional resources and experiences for our children which would otherwise be challenging, or even impossible, to afford.

### **KEEPING CURZON PUPILS SAFE AND CURZON'S PREMISES IN GOOD CONDITION**

The Premises and Health & Safety Committee, ably assisted by Mrs Bradshaw, continues to **ensure the fabric of the buildings and the school grounds are maintained to a high standard**. Maintenance tasks completed in the last year range from the redecoration of Class 1 and 2, to boiler repairs. Items currently planned, which should benefit parents as well as pupils, include repair to the school path through the field, and investigating the possibility of the council painting markings on the road to keep the crossing point clear and aid visibility for users.

The current school funding climate, referred to above, means that our original Phase III building development plans were not a priority for the Diocese's pot of capital monies, and we have therefore revised the **scope of our next capital development**. A working party comprising members of the Governing Body, the PTA members and staff have agreed that projects will be carried out, over a period of time, and using a combination of the school's capital funds and PTA funds, to refurbish the library; replace the current ICT workstations in the ICT suite with more portable devices, freeing up the space for 1:1 and small group support; renovate a former toilet area to provide storage and a quiet workspace for staff; and improve the kitchen area and its facilities.

### **ENSURING CURZON'S CHRISTIAN DISTINCTIVENESS**

The past year has had a number of great highlights for the foundation governors. Curzon was **awarded a silver RE Quality Mark** following a visit by an assessor who was clearly impressed by the way RE was taught in, and had an impact on, the school community. Curzon now features on the Quality Mark website map (!) and stands out as one of the few schools in the county to have this award.

The foundation governors have continued to be involved in observing RE lessons and meeting with staff since the Quality Mark was awarded. The high standards continue in spite of Mrs Watts and Miss Greathead moving/retiring - Mrs Cox has returned and Mr Owen has joined the staff as the new RE co-ordinator. The staff have been doing an excellent job of introducing the new curriculum

developed by the Church of England for teaching the Christianity component of RE. It is well thought through and resourced and staff have received training ([www.understandingchristianity.org.uk/](http://www.understandingchristianity.org.uk/)).

On 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017 Curzon held a 'Christianity across the world' day. This was imaginatively run by an external organisation, with all staff creating super learning opportunities to give the children a taste for the diversity of the way the Christian faith is expressed across the world. The day included art (different representations of the cross), writing prayers, reflection, drama (acting out the storyline of the bible), singing songs from different traditions and considering persecution. The day was clearly enriching for and much enjoyed by the children.

A few weeks later it was followed up by an assembly led by a previous pupil of Curzon, which linked well to the theme.



Last term we were able to fund educational visits to a gurdwara and mosque in Slough and invite speakers of other faiths to come and talk to the children.



The foundation governors have worked on the school's RE policy and the drafting of a new spirituality policy. We have been monitoring collective worship (do listen to the children's Podcast on Collective Worship on the Curzon website [www.curzonschool.co.uk/wp/media/Collective-Worship-Podcast.wav](http://www.curzonschool.co.uk/wp/media/Collective-Worship-Podcast.wav) ).

We have also been busy preparing for our five yearly SIAMS inspection in the summer term. SIAMS stands for "Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools" and Curzon's last inspection was in June 2013. There has been a lot to prepare but with a great staff team, wonderful children,

supportive parents and local churches which contribute a great deal into our school life, we are positive about the process and proud of what we do as a church school.

### **GETTING TO KNOW CURZON PUPILS**

**Class governors** visit their class at least termly to speak with children about an aspect of teaching or learning identified on the School Development Plan. Some governors are able to help out more regularly or accompany their class on an educational visit. Class governors are currently: Class 1: Mrs Lawrence; Class 2: Captain Peter; Class 3: Mr Hornsby; Class 4: Mrs Clark; Class 5: Mr Thomas; Class 6: Mr Powell.

This spring our class governors have been meeting with their respective classes to talk about the role of a governor and allow children to ask questions. Lots of the pupils were surprised to find out that governors are voluntary and do not get paid! The class governors have also been looking at your children's spiritual understanding, with discussions and each attending an assembly.

### **PLANS FOR THE SUMMER TERM 2018...**

Towards the end of the summer term, we will be carrying out our annual **parent survey**, to seek your views on what the school is doing well and any areas you may consider need further improvement.

We hope this newsletter has been of interest to you. If you have any feedback or any questions, please do not hesitate to contact any of the governors.

We wish you all a good summer term!

*Curzon Governors*

18<sup>th</sup> April 2018

***Please scroll down to our MATHS MASTERY APPENDIX on the next page...***

**So why Maths Mastery at Curzon?**

Mastery is an approach to teaching and learning maths that gives all children the skills and confidence to meet the demands of the new National Curriculum. It came over from East and S-E Asia where children achieve significantly above other countries, and many schools are now using aspects of this approach. Children within a year group typically move through Curriculum areas together – on a shared journey - spending blocks of time “mastering”, or becoming



**The beginning**

Knowing everything there is to know about a number.  
What do you know about 7?



- It is an odd number.*
- It is made up of a 3 and a 4.*
- It is made up of a 3 twos and a one.*
- It is three fewer than 10.*
- It is double three and a half.*
- It comes after 6 and before 8.*
- It is a quarter of 28.*
- It is two more than 5.*
- It is half of 14.*
- It is a single digit number.*
- It is a prime number.*
- It is fewer than 10.*

© Oxford University Press 2016



fluent in key concepts. The idea is that rather than learning lots of facts superficially without fully understanding them, children master these concepts and learn them so well, they could teach someone else! Children first use practical resources such as Dienes (numerical rods and cubes), before becoming familiar with drawing e.g. bar models, and finally linking this securely with abstract calculations. (You might see the acronym CPA for concrete – pictorial - abstract.) Children use concrete and pictorial resources throughout their time at school; you may have noticed more diagrams in their books when you looked at them at parents’ evening. From Reception, children will be encouraged to use mathematical language to express their understanding. This firm foundation encourages a “growth mindset” as every child builds into their working memory a toolkit of practical and visual representations of problems, which they can draw on in class or in a test.

**Concrete - modelling with other objects and pictures**

Sam bakes 20 cookies.  
What if he gives some away?

Let's use to help us.

What if Sam gives away 8 cookies?  
 $20 - 8 =$    
Then, Sam would have  cookies left.

© Maths – No Problem!

This in turn gives them the confidence to challenge themselves in areas of more complex reasoning and problem-solving.

**How does mastery work in a classroom of children with different abilities?**

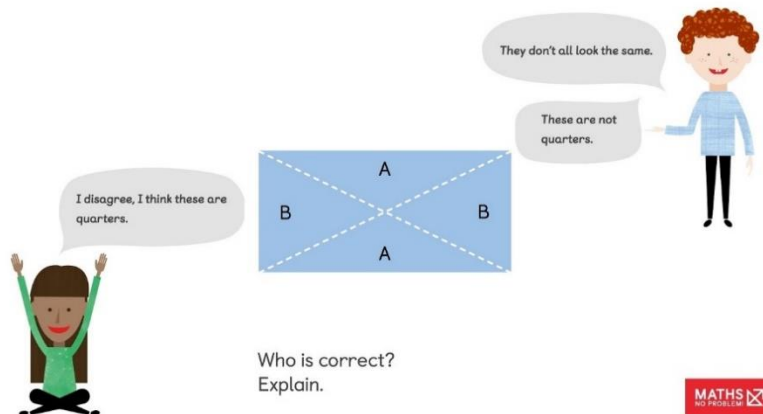
In a mastery classroom, when a new concept is introduced, all children will start by working in regular sequenced precise steps, often using resources as above. The majority of the class will progress through these stages at a similar pace. Groupings are flexible and fluid. Some pupils will need additional practice to really “get it”; pupils who grasp concepts rapidly, will be challenged through rich and sophisticated higher-level reasoning problems, before any acceleration through

new content. Rather than just involving bigger numbers, this might be about making connections with another area of maths, or thinking more deeply “why?” For even the most able mathematician the power of the simple question should not be underestimated, such as “how do you know?” or “is that always the case?”

### Have a go at this Year 4 fractions assessment problem....

8 girls share 6 bars of chocolate equally. 12 boys share 9 bars of chocolate equally. Clare says each girl got more to eat as there were fewer of them. Rob says each boy got more to eat as they had more chocolate to share. Explain why Clare and Rob are both wrong.

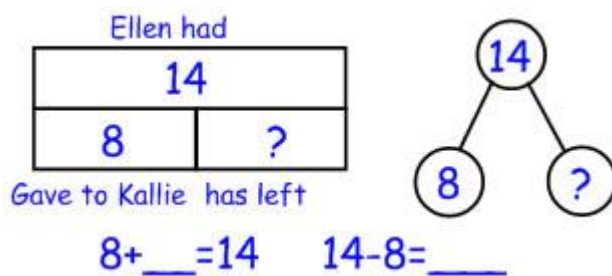
### Or this from Year 1.....



### This new approach is different from maths when I was at school. How can I support my child?

Actually, it’s not that different! Quick recall of number bonds and times tables are absolutely invaluable, as these will “unlock the door” to exploration of new concepts.

- Encourage a *secure knowledge of number*, by asking questions which help them explain what comes before or after a given number, or how the number is made, for example tens and ones (place value).
- Encourage them to *draw pictures and models* such as part-whole and bar models to answer questions.
- Support them with home activities and encourage them to answer questions in full sentences.
- Use every opportunity to quiz them on their times tables.



### And Finally....

**How many of us left school feeling we aren’t really very good at maths? How many of us did pages of calculations without really understanding what relevance they had to life?**

From The National Centre of Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics: *The intention of Mastery is to develop confidence and competence – children’s chances of succeeding in education and life will be maximised if they develop deep and lasting procedural and conceptual mathematical understanding. (i.e. knowing how to do it AND why)* [www.ncetm.org.uk/](http://www.ncetm.org.uk/)