

## **Coffee Morning 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

27 parents attended.

### **Key stage two results**

Mr Barber referred to previous communications with parents about the extensive changes to assessment at the end of Year 6 this summer, which mean that this year's data cannot meaningfully be compared with previous years. Performance is no longer measured in "levels". The old Level 3, Level 4, Level 5 which teachers have used for over 20 years to describe performance have been abolished, and the government is currently using an Interim Assessment Framework for Reading, Writing, Maths and Science which defines a list of criteria which children must meet. If they meet them all, they are said to be Working At The Expected Standard (EXS).

The government's headline statistic is the percentage of children who are EXS in all three subjects – Reading Test, Writing Teacher Assessment and Maths Test. Note there is no mention of their ability in Science, or acknowledgement of teacher assessment for Reading or Maths, and no reference to the Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar test result.

Subject to final validation, the percentage of children at the expected standard for reading, writing and maths at HJS this summer was 73%. Nationally, the figure was 53%. The minimum standard they set (the "floor standard") was 63%.

The government will be publishing progress data as well as attainment data, in spite of objections from the teaching profession, and representations by the unions. These objections have been raised because the calculations required to compare this year's data with a completely different set of performance criteria from 4 years ago, with a new curriculum introduced half way through key stage two, render any numbers meaningless.

The government defines progress in terms of comparison with schools with similar prior attainment at Key Stage 1. A progress score of 0 means children have done as well as those in similar schools nationally. Greater than 0 means they've done better than those in similar schools, and a negative score means they've made less progress.

The floor standards for progress set by the government this year are:

Reading -5 (minus 5)

Maths -5 (minus 5)

Writing -7 (minus 7)

The results for HJS appear to be:

Reading 1.5

Writing -1.4

Maths -0.5

Having consulted our Local Authority School Improvement Officer and

compared notes with colleagues from other schools, we are confident that these results are good, and certainly much better than the national averages.

As we obtain more detailed information, we will publish the required performance data on our website, but we urge parents to exercise extreme caution when using the data – its validity is seriously questioned by many authorities.

On the other hand, the assessment framework which we have developed at HJS during the last year for Reading, Writing and Maths, and which we used in our Annual Reports To Parents this summer, provides us with really detailed information about every child's progress and their learning needs. Every teacher, in Years 4 to 6, starts the year with an accurate assessment of which children have met the expectations for the previous year, and where they haven't we know what they need to do. Parents have responded positively about the end of year reports – and asked if that level of detail could be provided more frequently. It would not be possible to ask teachers to write reports of that detail more often: it is an enormous piece of work during the summer term. But the assessment framework provides a helpful agenda for discussions at parents' evenings, and we can look into manageable ways of communicating at key points in the year which targets children need to work on.

The school website contains a new page with full details of the assessment framework and a timeline showing how teaching and learning links with reporting to parents. Search for [Assessment and Reporting](#) on the website.

### **School Development Plan**

The document which describes our goals for the coming year will be uploaded shortly to the website. We are not introducing any major new initiatives: our aim this year is to embed the new curriculum and assessment framework, to ensure we continue to deliver the broad, enriched curriculum that HJS is known for, and to develop our workforce so that we continue to deliver consistently high standards of teaching. We are also keeping an eye on political developments to make sure that the school remains in a strong position to deal with external circumstances that may arise: we don't know what those may be, but tight budgets and pronouncements about academisation and selective schools give us plenty to think about!

### **Building works**

There will be some work going on in the next few weeks to repair a leaky pipe beneath the top playground which carries our hot water from the boiler house, which is rather inconveniently attached to the Infant School. We are assured by the contractors that they can replace the pipe without digging up the playground, so we hope disruption will be minimal. Without this repair, we would not be able to turn the heating on this winter.

### Parents survey

Two parent governors were present at the meeting – Sarah-Jane Ribeiro and Tamsin Alexander. They led a discussion on the findings of this year's survey. We had the best response rate since 2010, with 152 submitted surveys.

Overall satisfaction with the school remains high. Our discussion focussed on the questions that had higher "disagree" responses.

The question with lowest "agree" response was "I know who the governors are."

- Suggestions to raise governor profile included:
- Publish a governors newsletter.
- Add their photos to website.
- If parents were more aware of who governors are, it might encourage a dialogue, and might result in parents with helpful experience or skills connecting with the school.

The questions with the highest number of disagrees were:

The school provides appropriate homework

I know what my child has to do to make progress

I feel well informed about what my child is learning

I know how my child is getting on at school.

43 people had responded positively that they would like to take part in further discussion about issues arising from the survey - how should we facilitate this?

- Informal drop in for parents and governors, possibly once a term?
- Could we combine it with parents evening? (There could be complications with timing of appointments)
- Have a set time to discuss a particular question – probably evening due to governor availability. People are more likely to air their views if the meeting has a specific focus. It would help to publish the question online in advance to elicit suggestions and responses from those that can't attend the meeting.
- People will come to discuss the issue if they are interested in it.
- For future surveys, introduce free text fields for comment so that we can more fully understand the reasons why they disagree

We had a brief discussion about homework policy. Whilst there are always parents who would like to see more formal homework set, the school's policy has been regularly reviewed and in the absence of evidence that more homework improves standards (and significant evidence that in fact it makes no difference) the school continues to take the view that children should work hard during the day and engage in social interaction with family and friends, relax, indulge in their hobbies and interests, and get a good night's sleep.

There is a clear expectation that all children read at home both by themselves

and with family members, and that they take responsibility for learning spellings and times tables. From time to time they may be asked to do some research or preparation, or to finish off work at home. In Year 6 we introduce more regular formal homework tasks – and Year 6 parents present felt that this was an appropriate amount and helpful preparation for secondary school.

It was also acknowledged that due consideration must be given to the views of those who would endorse a “more homework” policy, and that it should be made clear that these views are valued.

### **Feedback on online Comms**

We had a very brief discussion about the move this term to online payments and online forms for clubs, trips and residentials. There have been many positive comments to the office, and in spite of the initial teething troubles, the school has already seen the benefit in terms of reduced paper consumption, reduced workload in the office and increased reliability of data.