

Basic Skills Quality Mark Programme – Visit Feedback Report

School name	St Thomas CE VA Primary School		
Headteacher	Lynne Williamson		
School and/or HT email	headteacher@st-thomas-kidsgrove.staffs.sch.uk	Tel no	01782 787 099
Alliance QM Assessor	Janice Raczowska	Visit date	7.3.14

Purpose of Visit	Renewal
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The Assessor spoke with the following people

Headteacher/Senior leader YES	Literacy Subject Leader NO	Numeracy Subject Leader YES	Assessment Manager NO
SENCo YES	Pupil representatives YES	Governor representative(s) YES	Parent representative(s) YES

'Learning Walk' completed? YES	Relevant evidence-base reviewed? YES
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<p>Suggested areas for development in preparation for the next Quality Mark visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider giving the SENCO opportunities to observe intervention groups to enhance her monitoring role and validate current robust data tracking of pupils with additional needs. • The school recognises that more pupils need to show a consistent style of cursive handwriting. In the review of presentation, consider reviewing the policy for how pupils correct mistakes to reduce heavy crossing out by some pupils.
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<p>'Good practice' identified in relation to the 10 Elements of the Quality Mark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a good range of comprehensive evidence of how the school plans for, provides and evaluates basic skills. Data is presented in different formats for different purposes and audiences to ensure everyone is aware of what needs to be done regarding school improvement. Governors confirm they are well informed about
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literacy and numeracy standards and areas for improvement. The school had a dip in KS2 test results last year for a variety of reasons but strong leadership and support at all levels has acted quickly to ensure a positive trend in standards is being regained as soon as possible. Current data shows that the majority of pupils are assessed to be on track to meet or exceed age related expectations. The school recognises that the progress of pupils eligible for free school meals could be more secure but such pupils are discussed with others at regular pupil progress meetings between the Headteacher and each teacher.

- Self- evaluation of all aspects of the school is very detailed and honest because data scrutiny is robust and thorough. Senior and subject leaders know pupils very well and are clearly focused on meeting their different needs; pupil reports confirm that staff focus on developing the whole child. The strategic deployment of resources, particularly support staff and the former KS1 Coordinator is also ensuring earlier and more targeted provision of basic skills. The Coordinator now leads on Y1 and Y2 intervention; her effective support, robust tracking and dialogue about pupils with their teachers is resulting in fewer pupils having gaps in their learning as they move through the school. Discussion with other middle leaders shows them to be active and involved in leading basic skills. They regularly monitor standards in a variety of ways, share good practice and report to governors. Staff also organise additional clubs and intervention groups after school to engage selected pupils and help them reduce any gaps in their learning especially prior to SATS. Pupils say they enjoy these sessions and that they can ask to attend if they feel they need extra help with a concept.
- *RM Maths* and *My Maths* programmes, which had just been introduced at the last visit, have shown to be making a good impact on engaging pupils in the classroom, particularly in homework activities. Pupils say they enjoy the maths games and know teachers can track their progress through online assessments.
- A tour round the school confirms how the learning environment continues to be vibrant and stimulating with every space used for learning or supporting basic skills. Interesting displays show how basic skills are being developed in extensive topic work to engage learners of all abilities. Classrooms have several teaching aids and motivational posters; reminders about targets are also strategically placed where pupils work to keep them on track. Pupils' behaviour and manners are excellent and they present as active, motivated learners, working well in their groups or independently. Classrooms are well stocked and pupils have access to a range of tools and materials to support their literacy and numeracy learning. Support staff continue to be strategically placed, often working with intervention groups.
- Parents are full of praise for the school, recognising the quality of what it offers for their children. They say they are encouraged to be fully involved in school life and to work in partnership with their child's teacher to aid progress in learning. Parents receive good information about literacy and numeracy in a variety of formats including what is being covered throughout the term and their child's individual targets. Homework is said to be regular and the rich curriculum, visits and visitors are felt to

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enhance basic skills and independent learning for all pupils. Several parents can describe how the school has specifically helped their child and ensured they make the most progress whatever their starting point and personality. The termly TOM TOM school magazine is an excellent example of positive, supportive communication between home and school which highlights the importance of basic skills, cross curriculum learning and celebrates pupils' achievements and skills.

- There is good evidence of the continuing professional development of staff to ensure quality provision of basic skills. Staff meeting minutes confirm regular discussions about policy and practice. Links with the local cluster and partner schools give staff the opportunity to moderate standards and share good practice; feedback is always given following a book scrutiny or learning walk. The focus on evaluating standards is also being extended into the classroom where staff and pupils are being given increasing opportunities to self- evaluate and moderate the work of their peers.
- Pupils present as articulate and sociable. School Council representatives speak easily about their lessons and know that staff work hard to help them improve their skills. Pupils can recount their targets and know they must show some effort to achieve well. They know all staff will help or challenge them depending on their ability and say they really enjoy lessons which are usually interesting. Older pupils recognise the importance of practising how to solve real life problems in maths. All pupils value the newly introduced planner and initiative to work towards 25, 50 or 100 nights of reading. Overall, pupils say they have plentiful resources for literacy and numeracy. Younger pupils suggest they use the school library more for fiction than KS2 pupils who tend to use it more for non- fiction and research.
- The school is working hard to drive up standards in English and maths and has enhanced its programme of support, review, monitoring and evaluation to ensure that pupils' needs are fully met. Current evidence shows that consistency of staffing, policy and practice is making a positive impact on basic skills and learning for many pupils over time.

Congratulations on the successful renewal of the Primary Quality Mark!

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