

Pope Paul School

Governors visit

Name of Governor: Adam Bogusz

Class visited: Parent Workshops run by Mrs Catherine McNamara

Date of visit: 6 weekdays from 30 September to 7 October

Purpose of visit: Attend Years 1 to 6 Maths Strategy Parent Workshops

A separate workshop was offered to parents of years 1 to 6. Each workshop was a 45-minute interactive session. Mrs McNamara explained the aim of the workshop was to give:

- an insight into how maths is taught
- guidance and ideas about helping children
- the opportunity to ask questions and listen to their views.

She went on to describe the:

- focus of the new national curriculum on fluency, reasoning and problem solving
- the HLA-developed 'Essential Maths' scheme which Pope Paul follows (now into 3rd year) which breaks down topics into short learning sequences/manageable steps which helps secure key learning (the scheme is constantly being updated)
- Pope Paul approach to teaching maths, e.g. regular review points, checking for knowledge gaps, strategies to reinforce learning, small group working to understand concepts
- different teaching aids children can choose to support a variety of calculation methodologies that are taught.

Pupils are asked to explain workings using the correct mathematical terms. Language repetition helps to secure knowledge and ensures teachers have continuous feedback. This way the teacher can easily spot if a child finds a topic challenging or has misunderstood. In class there is much discussion and whiteboard work so not all the work children do will be visible in their jotters.

As they move up the school and their knowledge and skills grow children increasingly move from the Concrete to the Pictorial and then on to the Abstract representation of maths problems. They are however free to revert back to whichever representation helps their understanding.

At this point in the workshop parents were given a handout setting out what children

were expected to learn during in the year. Parents were then given a couple of problems to solve and investigate how a child might use the learning aids on display. A short discussion followed at which several calculation methodologies were examined and different types of problems children might be asked to solve were described.

Mrs McNamara then went on to expand on some of the ways learning is enhanced:

- Each new year teachers validate what pupils know and address areas of weakness
- One-to-one sessions are held outside of class time to secure learning
- Re-enforcing learning by applying mathematical knowledge in practical ways
- Use of destination questions to check understanding
- Speaking frames to help articulate answers and set out reasoning
- Activities for explaining and exploring ideas.

The workshop concluded with a discussion about home learning and the Mathletics online tool for homework. This is designed to help parents reinforce classroom learning. Mathletics has numerous curriculum-aligned lessons and activities which help engage children and make learning fun. Each child has an account and the teacher can login to see how the child is doing. Parents were asked to assist and encourage children to use play to develop their number sense, logic and learning generally. Mrs McNamara explained a child benefits most when stretched and the parent should resist explaining every minute detail. She asked parents with any concerns to speak with the class teacher.

The workshops were well attended particularly KS1 with parent numbers as follows:

Year 1 - 15; Year 2 – 15; Year 3 – 5;

Year 4 – 8; Year 5 - 9; Year 6 – 3,

making a total of 55 parents. The sessions were supported by the class teachers who demonstrated/spoke about some aspects of class work. They invited parents to provide feedback whenever parents thought it appropriate. This is an excellent example of how Pope Paul engages with parents.

Mrs McNamara prepared thoroughly for each workshop. There was an abundance of valuable information to help parents appreciate how their children are taught and understand the ways they can support their children. The expertly tailored sessions were a unique opportunity to enhance and develop children's learning. Parents were given a valuable insight into the thought and effort that goes into delivering the curriculum and the strategies used to ensure the detail of each lesson delivers the right

outcomes. We are fortunate to have someone so committed and dedicated as Mrs McNamara as our Maths Leader.

The presentation prepared by Mrs McNamara will be placed on the school website along with a glossary of maths terms.

Teacher's comments:

Signed: Adam Bogusz Governor

Signed: _____ Class teacher