

2009 Monitoring Evaluation and Review Policy

'Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community.'

This policy sets out the approach to accountability within St Thomas Junior School and specifically details Monitoring, Evaluation and Review (MER). As a school we are committed to, and excited by, knowing how we are doing. This policy sets out the processes for MER that we have designed, developed and agreed.

Who is accountable?

Accountability leads to improvement and opportunities to celebrate success.

The school appreciates that those that fund the school will want to hold it to account. Pupils, staff, parents, local community, governors, government, Church of England and society at large will want to know that the school is doing well.

The governors are legally held to account for the conduct of the school. The head teacher is accountable to the governors.

The head teacher is accountable for his/her actions. Various legislative requirements exist for head teachers (see governor.net.co.uk)

The school will account in a variety of ways e.g. School Profile, Prospectus, Governor Reports, Reports to Parents on Pupil Progress, Parents' Evenings and through a general openness.

What does 'monitoring' mean?

Monitoring refers to the collection of evidence. Monitoring at St Thomas' is regular and routine. We use data to inform future strategies – monitoring without action is pointless.

What does 'evaluation' mean?

Evaluation follows monitoring and assesses the value of something. Value can be judged as a balance between effort and effectiveness. Where effort is high and effectiveness is low – value is low. If effort is low and effectiveness is high, then value is high.

Evaluation is more complex than merely monitoring because it involves value judgements (along the scale from low to high value). Criteria are needed against which judgements can be made so that there is consistency.

What does 'review' mean?

Review refers to the process of deciding what to do – action. Jumping straight to 'review' leads to actions that are not based on sound judgements. At St Thomas' we avoid this and work hard to go through proper processes of monitoring and evaluation before deciding to review our actions.

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The Design of the MER Scheme at St Thomas of Canterbury Junior School

Our MER Scheme is designed to work across the school whether in a small scale class based situation, within a subject area, year group or school wide situation.

There are five phases:

1. Specify purpose

- a. What do we hope to achieve?
- b. What are the advantages/disadvantages?
- c. Is it important? Urgent? Neither?
- d. Do likely outcomes justify the costs of MER process?
- e. What significant improvements do we hope to see?
- f. Who are the target group?
- g. What is the focus?

2. Plan in detail

- a. Who will lead and manage the MER exercise?
- b. Will we need professional development/external input?
- c. What will be the size of the group?
- d. Which techniques shall we use to monitor?
- e. What will this cost (in terms of time and money)?
- f. What is the timescale?
- g. What are the potential risks?
- h. How will we keep track of progress?

3. Gather evidence (monitor)

- a. What sort of evidence will we collect?
- b. How shall we collect it?
 - i. Pupil progress data
 - ii. Surveys
 - iii. Questionnaires
 - iv. Structured interviews
 - v. Observation schedules
 - vi. Examination of recorded evidence
- c. Look for triangulation – credibility increases when consistent evidence comes from more than one source.

4. Judge evidence (evaluate)

- a. What are the criteria for evaluation? Are they valid? Appropriate? Reliable?
- b. Do accepted criteria exist or do new ones need to be devised?
- c. Who will do the evaluating?
 - i. Small group is better than individual
 - ii. Combining several points of view leads to strength
 - iii. Need sufficient status to ensure action is taken
- d. How will we report the findings and to whom?

5. Decide what action to take (review)

- a. Who will conduct the review?
- b. It is advantageous to do this through the normal mechanisms used in the school (e.g. School Development Plan)
- c. Reviewers should consider:
 - i. What action is needed?
 - ii. Do we have the necessary time and energy?
 - iii. Do we have the skills to implement the changes?
 - iv. Do we need outside help?
 - v. Are there alternative initiatives that are likely to bring greater benefits to the school?

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Self Evaluation and External Inspection

At St Thomas' we appreciate the need for both self evaluation and external inspection. A combination of both approaches is necessary.

Strengths of School Self Evaluation

The school is committed to self evaluation. We recognise that it leads to good knowledge of the school and we appreciate the opportunity to develop this over time. We use self evaluation to concentrate on what concerns us most and will choose to only take a 'light touch' on aspects that we already know about. We time self evaluation to suit our priorities and calendar (see Appendix 1: Overview of MER). Self evaluation helps us to prepare for external examination and our Self Evaluation Form (SEF) will be saved on line for OFSTED to view. The school development plan and our self evaluation process are explicitly linked and naturally work together.

Strength of External Inspection

We have enjoyed three 'Outstanding' (1998, 2003, 2008) OfSTED inspections and appreciate a close working relationship with our School Improvement Partner (SIP). Both offer external moderation of our judgements with a prescribed and thorough schedule, providing a basis for comparison with other schools. Inspectors and SIPs are external experts offering an opportunity for our school to be held to account.

Views from parents and pupils

We regularly seek views of parents and pupils (see Appendix 1). We appreciate that both pupils and parents will offer different perspectives and understand the need to listen to their points of view. It is clear that our engagement with parents and pupils has led to school improvement.

Conclusion

We are looking to continually improve and as such we are constantly evaluating pupil achievements and well being, the quality of learning throughout the school and the standard of teaching and support. We seek to set realistic targets based upon our findings informed by own self evaluation and the input from external agencies.

Our MER process promotes ownership among the whole school community. We value supportive self evaluation and discussion. Our MER allows good practice to be debated and shared. Target setting is supported through MER and we find that it leads to higher standards. However, it continually depends on purposeful action taking and this is hard work! Our school does not stand still, it does not coast or stroll! We are striving to be a strategically moving and improving school.

We are boosting pupil progress and preparing children for a changing world, we are always developing – looking for areas to improve and we know where we are going.