

Governors' Newsletter

Spring Term 2021



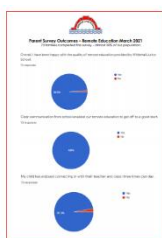
Happiness at the heart of learning

Dear Parents and Carers,

This last week has been a time for reflection for everyone across the country and beyond, on the impact of the pandemic. Everyone has been touched in some way, either directly or indirectly by COVID-19; some with the terrible sadness and loss of bereavement, some with changes to ways of working or loss of employment and everyone with very different experiences of everyday life.



I would like to thank all the members of the Whitehall community who have worked together so well to make sure that our children and families have been supported to keep safe and continue learning throughout all of the phases of the past year. In our Autumn Term newsletter in December, we were celebrating the positive return to school in September, unaware that schools would be closing again in January.



The response from the school staff in setting up a full programme of online learning was truly remarkable, and we know from the feedback from the parent survey that the learning experiences and communication from school were very effective. As parents, many of you had to adapt again to a different role, helping and supporting your children with their new routines for learning. I think across the country there is a new level of appreciation for the dedication, knowledge and skills of our teachers and teaching assistants!

The pandemic also highlighted the inequality in access at home to computers and the internet with some families having no equipment and other children having to share a laptop, tablet or phone. The school has secured the highest number of devices available for the school from the government scheme and we have also been extremely fortunate to receive donations from Xerox, Waterloo Road Church, Christ Church Uxbridge, and the Uxbridge United Welfare Trust. Staff within school and from our IT support provider worked quickly to set up the devices and help families to understand how to access the online learning. As governors, we will be working with the school to look at how we continue to ensure that all of our children have access to the IT equipment that they need as we move forward.



I would also like to thank the administration, welfare, premises and catering staff for their vital contributions to keeping the school running for children who were eligible to attend and for ensuring that everything was in order for the recent return for all pupils. Also, our neighbours in the Infant School and our external partners in Children's Services, the police and health who have continued to work with us so closely. Last but not least, a huge thank you from the governors to Mrs Mloi for leading the school so with so much care and compassion throughout this time. Also too, to the other members of the senior leadership team, Mrs Upfield and Miss Costa for helping to ensure that all the pieces of the jigsaw were in place!

Angela Doherty, Chair of governors

Our vision, values and strategic priorities

As governors, we are responsible for the vision, values and strategic priorities of the school. Over the last year, we have been proud to have these as our guiding principles and to have seen so many aspects of these statements in action across the school community.

Our Vision

'Happiness at the heart of learning'

In our welcoming and inclusive school, we strive to be the best in everything we do.

Our Values

Bravery, Respect, Integrity, Determination, Generosity, Excellence

Our strategic priorities

To improve achievement across the curriculum
To ensure the safety and well-being of all our school community
To use our resources effectively to meet our goals

Behind the scenes

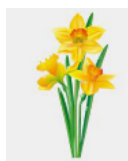
Schools are complex organisations to run with lots of work going on behind the scenes. In the Resources' Committee of the Governing Board, we look in more detail at the business side of the school and making sure that our site and buildings are safe. We are delighted that the windows project, that has been on the agenda for a



while, has now been completed. I am sure that you will agree that this has given a smart new look to our valued traditional building (we are 110 years old this year!)



We are also very fortunate to have lovely school grounds with our playing field and lots of trees, but these also have to be regularly checked as part of our health and safety responsibilities. The tree survey and follow up actions have also taken place this term. Thank you to Mrs Tudorescu, our School Business Manager, for her excellent work on these projects and many more aspects of the behind-the-scenes work.



New ways of working

As well as learning going online, the governors at Whitehall Junior have also adapted to new ways of working over the past year. Last March, in the first lockdown, we held our first virtual 'meeting' by email with everyone adding comments or queries to Mrs Moloi's original



COVID-19 risk assessment plan. With the help of our excellent clerk, Rebecca Wilson, we quickly moved to online meetings using Google Meet and we have found this to be a very effective and efficient way of continuing our work as governors. This term, attendance by governors at our committee meetings has been 100% and last term, many governors met with teachers online in their link subject areas as they reported to you in the December newsletter. Thank you to Anu, James, Kelly, Kieran, Marcia, Mary, Matthew, Peter, Sally and Tanya for your commitment to the school and also to Rebecca, for keeping us organised. More information about the governors can be found on the school website: <https://www.whitehalljunior.org/school-governors/>

Wishing you and your families a safe and happy Easter break.