

Governors' Newsletter

Autumn Term 2020



Happiness at the heart of learning

Dear parents and carers,

As we reach the end of a truly extraordinary and for many people, a very difficult year, I would like to thank you all as Whitehall families, for your fantastic support for the school. We were delighted to welcome so many Year 3 and other new pupils for the first time this term and to welcome back all of the other pupils after the long school closure. Attendance has been fantastic which indicates to us how much the children love coming to school and your confidence in the school in keeping your children safe.



As governors, we are so proud of the work that Mrs Moloi and all the staff at the school have put in to make the school a safe place but also a school that continues to reflect our motto and school vision:

'Happiness at the heart of learning'

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

I am sure as parents that you are aware of the many changes to school life and the attention to detail put into all of the adjustments from drop off and pick up, playtime and lunchtime, in the classroom and in the way different subjects such as PE have to be taught.

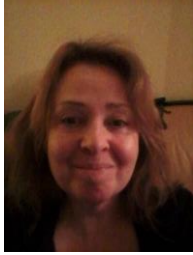
It has taken huge optimism, creativity, thorough planning, lots of hard work and co-operation from everyone, so thank you to all the Whitehall Junior School community for a great team effort!

Angela Doherty, Co-opted Governor, Chair of Governors

Our governors

We are really pleased that we have a full governing board with no vacancies for the first time in a long time. We welcome Sally Davies as our most recent governor. More information about the governors can be found on the school website: <https://www.whitehalljunior.org/school-governors/>

Ms Angela Doherty - Co-opted Governor, Chair of governors
Mr Peter James - Local Authority Governor, Resources Committee,
Mr Matthew Ralph - Co-opted Governor, Resources Committee
Mrs Marcia BEEPUP - Co-opted Governor, Pupils' Committee
Mr Kieran Bassan - Parent Governor, Chair of Resources Committee
Mrs Anu Short - Parent Governor, Pupils' Committee
Mrs Mary Clancy - Co-opted Governor, Chair of Pupils' Committee
Miss Tanya Costa - Staff Governor, Pupils' Committee,
Mr James Cantwell - Co-opted Governor, Pupils' Committee,
Ms Kelly Barter - Co-opted Governor, Pupils' Committee,
Ms Sally Davies - Co-opted Governor,
Mrs Rebecca Wilson - Clerk to the Governors



I was pleased to be co-opted in September to the governor vacancy in the Resources' Committee. It has not yet been possible for me to visit the school and meet staff and pupils in person but I have met some of the team at online meetings. I retired from a London local authority education learning partnership in January and know from that role, the huge and complex job schools do for young people, families and the community. I have been so impressed by the creative hard work of the school during this exceptional time in all our lives to ensure the continued learning and achievement, as well as the health and safety of pupils. I have been able to join some of the virtual training sessions available for governors in Hillingdon as well as read some of the excellent information about the school on the website and elsewhere. This will help me get to grips with the expectations of my role in supporting the school to continue its vital work in whatever ways I can. I am looking forward to getting more involved. **Sally Davies - Co-opted Governor, Resources' Committee**

Our strategic priorities

In this newsletter, we hope to give you an idea of the work the governors have been doing this term in relation to our three strategic priorities:

To improve achievement across the curriculum

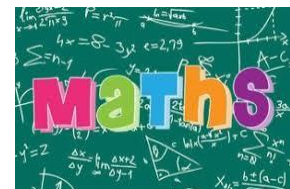
To ensure the safety and well-being of all our school community

To use our resources effectively to meet our goals

To improve achievement across the curriculum

This half term, governors have met online with teachers who lead on different subjects across the curriculum. We have included extracts from the discussions which I hope that you enjoy reading.

I am lucky enough to be the link governor for maths. At our most recent online meeting, it was important to understand how children have settled into the new school year and adapted to a slightly different environment and way of learning. While a small number of children may have been slightly nervous at the very beginning, it was good to hear that everyone is very much used to the school environment and that children are taking it all in their stride.



Teachers are putting in a phenomenal effort to ensure that children's learning achievements did not suffer due to the school being closed. While the school provided work during the closure and maintained regular contact, there is no substitution for face-to-face teaching in the classroom.

Many thanks to everyone at Whitehall Junior for the unprecedented effort that has been made to ensure children can continue to learn in a happy and safe environment. **Matthew Ralph, Co-opted Governor – Resources' Committee**



I was really impressed with the way the teachers have adapted to making PE COVID-safe, I would say one of the most challenging too! Miss Costa has briefed the teachers on different ways to deliver lessons and set up bubbles for the equipment to be used by classes on a two-weekly rotation. A positive from COVID-19 changes is that the children now go into school on their PE days in their kit and they can maximise the time for physical activity- an initiative that potentially could continue post-COVID. **Kelly Barter, Co-opted Governor – Pupils' Committee**

“To echo what the other governors have said, the adaptability and resilience of the staff at Whitehall Junior continues to amaze me, and as a parent and a governor, I am very grateful the school not only remains open, but that the children are happy and safe. In the last term, I have also become the Vice Chair of Governors and look forward to attending the strategy meetings, where I can further support the school.



*This term, I have met virtually with my subject links for Art – Miss Lusher and Miss Brown – DT. Many children missed out on Art & DT-related activities during lockdown and have embraced these lessons since coming back. Art has not only helped the children with confidence and independent learning, but has also encouraged discussions around different cultures, travel, their own identity and feelings around lockdown. Despite COVID restrictions, meaning that resources can't be shared, DT still remains on the curriculum with one year group, per half term being able to enjoy this subject. This term, the children have been making Egyptian masks out of paper mache and clay models. ‘Happiness is at the Heart of learning’, definitely with these subjects, and how the children are able to express themselves creatively. **Anu Short, Parent Governor – Pupils’ Committee, Vice Chair of Governors***

Whitehall Junior School continues to focus on academic standards and to evaluate the children’s performance. It’s delightful to see that the school has given a small group of children the option to do a computer programme in collaboration with Brunel University. In addition to this, all teachers have selected children who will benefit from extra lessons, funded from the government ‘Catch-Up Premium’. The extra lessons which take place on Monday to Thursday mornings focus on specific aspects of English and maths.

*Well done to all the teachers who have worked so hard for the school performance. Also, special thanks to the teachers who have arranged meetings after school finishes to discuss the subject areas with assigned governors. The children’s safety is also paramount at dropping off and collection. The headteacher can always be seen at the gates to ensure that the children are arriving/leaving/collected safely, how delightful to see!” **Marcia Beeput, Co-opted Governor, Pupils' Committee***



*“I recently had the pleasure to speak to Miss Sadanandan, the subject lead for History, about how our pupils are engaging with history this year. Despite the fact that teachers this year have faced a number of challenges, she felt that students were engaging with the subject as well as having fun at the same time. Many pupils love to get stuck into the debates around historical topics as well as looking at sources and writings from the time. It’s really great to see so many students loving learning about British history and we hope to further expand their horizons. In particular, Miss Sadanandan and I hope to bring up to the pupils’ attention to the range of people from different backgrounds who have contributed to British history, for example the Gurkhas and Kings African Rifles in the Second World War. We hope that students will find it interesting to learn more about these important aspects of our nation’s past.” **James Canter, Co-opted Governor, Pupils' Committee***

*I recently met with my subject link, Miss Hyland, to find out about the current school curriculum in the Computing subject. We reviewed online classrooms (G-Suite) as well as tools like Oak Academy which have presented opportunities to look at different technology options for general curriculum delivery. The children enjoy the subject but there are challenges with children’s basic knowledge of computer hardware. It was excellent to see the school having such a varied set of curriculum goals in this area. The skills that can be learnt in this subject can lead to many opportunities. **Kieran Bassan, Parent Governor, Chair of the Resources’ Committee***



I am proud of the resilience of the entire school community and of the commitment and ingenuity shown by our teachers at this difficult time. Whilst watching a recent film about World War Two evacuees, I was struck by some of the parallels between the role of teachers at that time and in the current COVID-19 circumstances. Then, as now, there was a blurring of the home and school environments. Many teachers from urban schools accompanied their pupils as they were evacuated to the countryside, providing stability in the face of unprecedented changes. They were responsible for keeping their students safe and ensuring continuity of learning. Then, as now, teachers rose to the occasion.



As the subject link for geography, I recently met with Mrs Perez. The pupils enjoy geography, as initially it is set in their environment, e.g. learning about London. With the new systems this year, it has enabled Mrs Perez to get to know the children and their families better. As parents who have been home-schooling this year will testify, it is no small task to keep the lively minds and bodies of young people occupied! I would like to thank the staff for their extraordinary efforts this year. **Mary Clancy - Co-opted Governor, Chair of Pupils' Committee**

To ensure the safety and well-being of all our school community

As governors, we have worked closely with Mrs Moloj to ensure that all safety measures are put in place in the school. All of the additional measure needed this year are included in detailed risk assessment documents. This term, as link governors for safeguarding, we have also conducted a safeguarding visit to check the Single Central Record. This document, which is a legal requirement for all schools, is evidence that all staff and visitors to the school have received the correct safety checks.

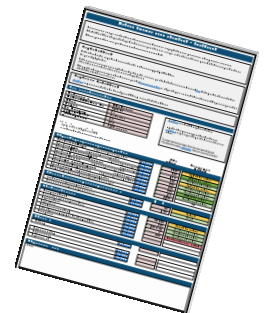


<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Angela Doherty and Matthew Ralph, Safeguarding link governors

To use our resources effectively to meet our goals

Every year the governors work with the Headteacher and School Business Manager to complete a document called the School Financial Value Standard which is then submitted to the Local Authority at the end of this term. The document includes a checklist covering all aspects of financial management and a dashboard which compares the school's spending to other similar schools nationally. More details of what is included in the process can be found at:



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-financial-value-standard-sfvs>

Kieran Bassan, Chair of the Resources' Committee



Wishing you and your families a safe and happy Christmas holiday.