

## Governors' Newsletter

Spring Term 2022



### *Happiness at the heart of learning*

Dear Parents and Carers,

This time last year we were emerging from the second lockdown, with the majority of children just having experienced another term of online learning. That may seem a long time ago, but the impact of COVID-19 this year has been no less of a challenge for schools. Headteachers across the country have faced higher levels of staff and pupil absence this term, than since the start of the pandemic, as infection levels have risen. This has also been the picture at Whitehall Junior School and as Governors, we are very grateful to Mrs Moloi and all the staff at the school for their flexibility, creativity and willingness to go the extra mile to ensure that the school continued to run smoothly despite these challenges. Hopefully, with the warmer weather and everyone spending more time outside, the levels will reduce again for the Summer Term.



Despite all the disruption, we are delighted that the school continues to provide an excellent education for our pupils. In this edition of the newsletter, you will hear about music at the school including one of the wider opportunities for children that took place this term, and some of the Governors' work behind the scenes in the Resources' Committee. We look forward to seeing pupils and parents when we come into school for Governors' Day, in late April.

**Angela Doherty, Chair of Governors**

**Voice In a Million** On the 23<sup>rd</sup> March, the choir from Whitehall Junior School sang at Wembley Arena, for Voice In a Million. Known as VIAM, it was founded in 2009 to raise awareness for children who have been orphaned, abandoned or separated from their parents. The project achieves this by staging arena concerts with one of the largest children's choirs in the world. This choir is made up of many schools taking part, one of which was the choir from Whitehall Junior School.



It was such an uplifting event at Wembley listening to thousands of children singing along with a lead choir and special guests on stage. I, along with other parents, watched our children sing their hearts out to songs they have been rehearsing for weeks at school. My son Sam in Year 6 said...



'It was an amazing experience to represent our school and take part in this event. My favourite song we sang was 'Happier' and my favourite to do the actions to was 'Uptown Funk'.'

This is a fantastic opportunity for any children in Years 4-6 who love singing. A huge thank you to Mr Papadakis for preparing them for the main event and Miss Hyland, Mrs Garnie and Miss Holley who accompanied them on the day.

**Anu Short – Parent Governor and Vice Chair**

## Music

My link governor conversation with Music Lead, Mr Papadakis, revealed a great enthusiasm for music at WJS which is organised around the **Charanga Music Programme** - an interactive, online subscription service and comprehensive one-stop music teaching tool. It is tailored to meet all music objectives in the national curriculum, supporting all teachers in the school to deliver their one music lesson per week.

It is highly inclusive with music from around the world and from all genres, which gives teachers confidence in a subject they may not have had any experience in.

Whole-class experience and practical use of instruments and choir activities were lost during the pandemic but teachers continued to support music learning remotely focusing on the development of important listening, appraising and assessing skills. Children have got back into practical aspects quickly since the autumn term and are again enjoying whole class listening and playing activities best. A highlight recently for years 4, 5 and 6 has been around the annual 'Voice In a Million' national school choirs' event.

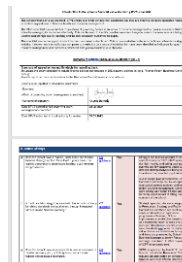


## Sally Davies Co-opted Governor

### Behind the scenes

The Resources' Committee of the Governing Board ensures that the school budget is spent wisely to provide the best education for our pupils and also makes sure that the site and buildings are well-maintained and safe. A couple of examples of the work discussed at the committee this term, are outlined below.

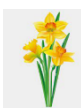
Every year, the school has to complete a document called the **Schools Financial Value Standard** and submit this to the local authority by the end of March. This contains information about the school's financial processes and how the school finances compare to similar schools. Information on the finance of any school can be found at the following website:



[Whitehall Junior School - Schools Financial Benchmarking - GOV.UK \(schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk)

This term, we have experienced a wide range of weather, including torrential downpours, that turned the field to mud and a number of strong storms that resulted in damage to trees across the area. Mrs Mloi responded quickly to amend the collection arrangements from the top field! Due to the thorough tree condition report that Mrs Tudorescu, our School Business Manager organised last year, the storm caused only minimal damage to our many trees on site.

**Changes in the Governing Board:** The Governors send their thanks and good wishes to Marcia Beeput, Co-opted Governor, who completed her four-year term of office this term. Jennifer Bull will join the Governing Board to replace her next term. Mrs Lakshmanan, who retired at the beginning of this term, also spent several years as a support staff governor. We wish her well for the future.



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

To contact the Governors, please email: [governors@whitehalljunior.org](mailto:governors@whitehalljunior.org)