

## Governor's Newsletter

Autumn term 2019



**Happiness at the heart of learning**

Dear parents and carers,



Welcome to the first Governors' newsletter for 2019-20. As chair of the governing board I would like to welcome all the parents of pupils who have joined the school this year. I hope your children have settled well in our school.

As governors, we have three main functions in the school:

- **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;**

Our vision statement summarises the type of school we want to be. We support the headteacher and staff at the school to make this happen and visit the school to see it in action. In this newsletter, you will read about some of our visits this term covering a wide range of aspects of school life.

**Our vision**  
'Our school is a welcoming and inclusive community providing all children with high quality learning in a respectful and safe environment. Through inspirational teaching and a positive, encouraging atmosphere, we enable children to aspire and embrace lifelong learning in an ever-changing world.'

- **Holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff;**

Through the **Pupils' Committee** we look at information about the performance of pupils in the school across all year groups and ask about the strategies that are being used to support learning.



A development that we have introduced this year, as the new Ofsted framework, (which has been in place since September 2019) has an increased focus on the curriculum, is to link all governors to subject areas. We will all visit the school during the year to find out more about the teaching and learning in each subject, how knowledge and skills are developed each year and how pupils are helped to learn and how to remember more. We will tell you about these visits in future editions of our newsletter.

- **Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.**

**The Resources' Committee** looks at the school budget and how it is being spent. The money received by the school is determined by the numbers of pupils in the school and we also receive additional funds for pupil premium, sports premium and for some pupils with special educational needs.



### **We currently have two vacancies on the governing board.**

If you would like to find out more about being a school governor, or know someone who may be interested, please speak to Mrs Mloi or email: [ctogovernors@whitehalljunior.org](mailto:ctogovernors@whitehalljunior.org) and we will contact you. You can find out more details on all areas of our work on the school website:

<https://www.whitehalljunior.org/>

Angela Doherty, Chair of Governors

## Welcome to new governing board members

### Welcome



We have some new members on the governing board this year. Mary Clancy (left) has taken on the role of link governor for Special Educational Needs (SEND) and geography and Chair of the Pupils Committee, and James Cantwell (right) is linking to Personal Development, PSHE and history. Assistant Head, Tanya Costa also joins us as the new staff governor.

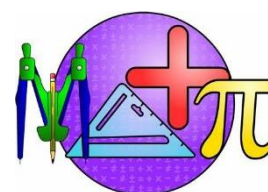


### ***Governor visits to the school this term***



#### **Maths Ambassador interviews in October**

It is always a pleasure to be asked to assist with interviewing the next batch of Maths Ambassadors and once again back in October I sat on the interview panel for the next group of applicants.



Prior to selection for interviews, children have to complete an application form which includes space for a reference from their teacher. As well as supporting younger children in Year 3 and cementing their own ability within Maths, the process introduces children to a formal environment such as interviews. Although children are interviewed in groups, they are still required to answer certain questions on an individual basis as well as having the opportunity to demonstrate the ability to explain maths principles.

The whole process was very well organised and as usual the children conducted themselves very well in what for most would have been a very new and daunting experience.

*Matthew Ralph - Vice Chair of Governors and Maths link governor.*

#### **SENDCo Governor visit**

I have recently been appointed as a school governor and my focus is Special Needs and Disabilities. In this role, I visited the school on 21<sup>st</sup> November for a meeting with the school's SENDCo, Mrs Huse. My overall impression is that the school is very fortunate to have a SENDCo who is passionate about her role and is determined to meet the needs of the pupils in her care.

There are a number of well qualified staff in the SEND department and the SENDCo also liaises with a range of providers of external support including an educational psychologist and speech and language therapist.

All staff at Whitehall Junior School receive training on meeting the specific needs of pupils and work closely with the SENDCo to ensure that this group of pupils enjoy learning and make good progress.

*Mary Clancy – SEND Governor and Chair of Pupils Committee*

### **Pupils' Committee Governor visit**

As part of my role within the Pupils' Committee, I visited the school in November and had a meeting with Miss Costa for an update on how we are spending our pupil premium funding. It is vital that each child is given the same opportunities and start in school and the staff at Whitehall go to great lengths to ensure this. Development plans are tailored according to each child's needs, extra activities are organised for children to give them culturally rich experiences, as well as the continued focus on Reading, writing and Maths. Our meetings enable me to feedback to the Pupils' Committee on areas where the school and Miss Costa may need support.



### **Back to school for lunch with our children**



Dozens of parents had the pleasure of joining their children for a school dinner back in October. I was invited to this as a parent and wanted to highlight it as such a special experience – one that will stay with me for a long time. My Year 4 son took great pleasure in hosting me, talking me through the menu and showing me to my seat. It filled me with pride to see all the children lovingly looking after their guests and the food was delicious!

This is a definite must to do if you ever get the opportunity – thank you Whitehall Juniors.

### **Christmas Fair, 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019**



The playground came alive on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November when both Junior and Infant Schools joined forces to put on their Annual Christmas Market. Everyone was entertained by the choir who sang so beautifully and helped us all get into the Christmas spirit. Houses competed to raise

the most money – selling wonderfully crafted items they had made such as Gingerbread men. Watching past students come back to see their teachers and join in the fun was really touching, whilst the younger ones devoured candy floss and had a brilliant time on the fairground rides. A fantastic afternoon brilliantly organised by the staff and pupils.



### **Year 4 Christmas production – The Grinch in Whoville**



We had the pleasure of watching the year 4 production - The Grinch of Whoville. The talent amongst the students was outstanding and they all looked like they were having so much fun on stage. The children entertained us with Christmas songs and superbly choreographed dances. All characters seamlessly acted out their lines with such confidence and character... not to mention the brilliant

costumes and set design. Every audience member left with a warm feeling and huge smiles on our faces ready for Christmas.



*Anu Short, Parent Governor*

### Year 3 Christmas Carol Concert



What a great way to begin the last Friday of the term! Over 70 parents were treated to a cup of tea with scones, jam and cream while listening to the 90 Year 3 children perform their Christmas carol concert. The children dressed in their Christmas jumpers, Santa hats and reindeer antlers and with their



best singing voices, treated us to a range of Christmas songs including the traditional carol 'Silent Night', a modern carol 'Hey Shepherds!' and the Christmas favourites 'Rudolph the red nosed reindeer' and 'Santa Claus is coming to town'. The classes performed some of the songs together and each class performed a song on their own. The children enjoyed time for a photo and a drink and biscuit with mum or dad afterwards before going back to class. Another lovely example of the wider learning and enjoyment of school that we value so much at Whitehall.



### Thank you!



We would all like to thank Rayna Ramtohl-Butler for her excellent contribution to the governing board since 2017. Rayna was chair of the Pupils' Committee and has linked to a number of areas in the school in her time with us. Her experience as a teacher has been very useful to the board and she has shared some great ideas including for the use of IT in schools. We wish Rayna well in her further studies which she is starting in January 2020.

### Governors Day in school: Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020

Next term, all governors will spend the day in school hearing about developments in the curriculum and visiting classrooms to see the school in action. We will be in the playground in the morning to speak to parents so we look forward to listening to your views about the school.

You can also contact us at any time by leaving a message at the school office.

*Wishing all of you a peaceful and restful Christmas break and very best wishes for 2020.*

*Angela Doherty (Chair of governors)*



Happy  
Holidays

