

## Governors' Newsletter

Spring Term 2024



**Happiness at the heart of learning**

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the Spring Term edition of the Governors' newsletter. As Governors, we would like to thank the headteacher and senior leaders, all teachers and support staff and, of course, the children and parents for making this short but extremely busy term a great success.



Governors have attended our usual meetings and we have also visited the school to see it in action. All governors are linked to teachers who lead on different subjects and those with responsibility for different aspects of the school. Several Governors came in to meet their link teachers and in March we held the Governors' Day during which we talked to staff, pupils and parents, listened to presentations from members of staff and visited lessons. In the newsletter this term, we will share some of the comments from members of the Governing Board about their time in school.

**Angela Doherty, Chair of Governors – Co-opted Governor**

### **Governors' Day: Friday 08 March 2024**

Governors who attended: Angela, Ashish, Jane, Kieran and Manish.



We started the day at the school gates, greeting the children as they arrived. Pupils were polite, friendly and pleased to be coming to school. They were happy to talk to us about their lessons and what they enjoyed about school. Manish and Ashish talked to parents and found them all very positive about the school.

Miss Shaw, the Modern Foreign Languages Lead gave us an introduction to Language Angels, the scheme used to teach French, and then we all visited a French lesson. Pupils were enthusiastically engaging in their learning in the Y4 class I visited.



We also had an update from Mrs Norman on the new 'Talk for Writing' approach which is already helping children to improve their writing in English and across other subjects. We visited lessons to see some of the ideas in action. Following recommendations made by Ofsted, Mrs Upfield explained the new approach to assessing foundation subjects using a quiz approach. Miss Sadanandan, our History Lead, shared an example from History, Miss Shaw from French and Miss Costa gave feedback from using the PE quiz. Pupils had been very happy to share the knowledge they had on the rules of netball and some of the specific language used in the game.

We finished the morning with a safeguarding update and quiz from Mrs Moloï who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the school.

Staff and pupils were very welcoming and they had put a lot of time and effort into organising the day for us. Governors found the day extremely informative and supportive to our role. We really appreciate the hard work and care that is provided by the entire staff at Whitehall Junior School.

**Jane Guest, Vice-Chair of Governors – Co-opted Governor**

## World Book Day – Judging the doors!

World Book Day took place the day before Governors' Day on 7 March. Governors were given the unenviable task of judging the classroom doors that had been decorated as a book cover for the World Book Day competition.



All of the doors were really impressive but we settled on these as the winning doors. A key factor was the amount of input from the pupils, as well as the overall design.

Following the judging, we had a lovely lunch shared with staff in the staffroom, giving Governors and staff some time to engage with each other.

**Kieran Bassan, Chair of Resources' Committee** - Parent Governor **Manish Lath, Ashish Seksaria, Co-opted Governors**

## Curriculum Visits

After each visit, Governors write a brief summary of the things that they discussed. From the information in the notes, we may follow up in Resources' Committee if more equipment is needed or in Pupils' Committee about time allocation, approaches to teaching, etc.

Below is a selection of extracts from the notes which hopefully give a flavour of the range and breadth of learning going on in our classrooms and beyond.

### Art

After attending a borough-run course for art subject leaders, Mx Spacey-Mageean learned a very useful approach known as the 'superpower of looking'. This will be used when a new artist is introduced to look in detail at a small section of a painting to identify the techniques being used. This will be added into the schemes of work for next year. We looked at some of the children's art books which demonstrated the wide range of skills and knowledge already covered in Year 3. Mr Hopkins is looking at books from all year groups to identify areas for staff training. There was a classroom display that can be used as a teaching resource, giving examples of the techniques currently being taught, and pupils' work is displayed in the corridor outside in 'Our Art Gallery'. The current display relates to work inspired by Georgia O'Keeffe.



### Music

Miss Rosser has taken over the organisation of the *Voice in a Million* event which took place at Wembley on 20 March 2024 with 44 children from Y4-6 taking part. She is enjoying the challenge of leading the event for the first time. At the time of my visit, Miss Rosser was leading regular rehearsals so that the children knew all the songs!



The school uses the Charanga music scheme which has lots of resources. Mr Hopkins is providing drop-in sessions for staff to improve their knowledge of music terminology and notation so that they can make the best use of the resources. Miss Rosser is working on information sheets to go with the percussion boxes – how to pronounce the name of the instrument, country of origin, how to hold and pictures, etc. The children really enjoy using all the different instruments available.



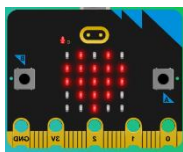
**Angela Doherty, Art and Music Link Governor**

### **Computing**

The computing visit covered the curriculum and the wider topic of online safety.



The curriculum is very hands-on using specific equipment known as *Crumble* and *micro:bit* hardware kits. Crumble kits enable pupils to design, build, test and evaluate four different computer controlled working models incorporating structures, mechanical and electrical systems.



The *BBC micro:bit* is a programmable device that allows hands-on coding and digital making. Other parts of the curriculum require additional hardware, for example, microphones for podcasts, or increased processing power to enable the software, such as video or music editing, to operate efficiently.

The school website includes the Online Safety policy on the main safeguarding page, with a link to the page on the site dedicated to the topic. The Online Safety page has a wide range of supporting content, including various additional useful guidance for parents / carers sourced from NOS and links to additional resources.

**Kieran Bassan, Computing Link Governor**

### **Maths**



Mr Jones had attended a session for maths subject leaders at Oakwood School. Several of the secondary colleagues at the meeting were unaware of the range and depth of topics covered at primary school. For example, 31 out of 34 GCSE foundation level questions are taught to the most able pupils by the end of Y6. He has been asked to lead a session at the next meeting.

Year 3 are enjoying 'Fortnightly Friday', something which Mr Jones put in place and is enthusiastic about. They often ask about it and are looking forward to it. The sessions focus on investigations which apply knowledge and use problem-solving skills. Year 6 also enjoy these challenges.



Maths is taught for one hour each day with Times Tables Rocks Stars tests taking place three times per week.

**Jennifer Bull, Local Authority Governor, Maths Link Governor**

### **Please consider joining us!**

***If you have enjoyed reading about the work of the Governors this term, we hope you will consider becoming a school governor.***

Please speak to Mrs Moloi or email the Governing Board at: [governors@whitehalljunior.org](mailto:governors@whitehalljunior.org) to arrange an informal chat.

## **Personal, Social, Health, Education (PSHE)**



Fundraising initiatives and giving to charity is an area covered in PSHE lessons. The focus is on understanding the reasons behind giving, as well as the impact it has. The children have collectively chosen to support the causes of GOSH (Great Ormond Street Hospital), Save the Children and Royal Brompton & Harefield Hospital.

## **Physical Education (PE)**

A number of PE developments have taken place recently. Playtime arrangements have changed so that children have the freedom to engage in play activities at any time during the break rather than having to wait for specific times. The role of play leader has also been developed to promote inclusivity and engagement among the pupils.

The netball, football, and cross-country teams have been highly active, participating in various competitions and events. Notably, the netball team has achieved success by advancing to the quarter-finals, showcasing commendable skill and teamwork.

Year 3 pupils were the first pupils to visit Heathrow Gym, providing them with a first-hand experience of professional facilities with the aim of inspiring the pupils to enjoy the sport.

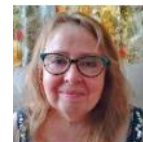
The school also actively participated in celebrating International Women's Day, fostering awareness and appreciation for gender equality and female achievements in sport. Miss Costa ran a hugely popular girls' football afternoon as part of the day. There have been many requests for another session!

**Kelly Barter, Parent Governor, PSHE and PE Link Governor**

## **Other visits**

### **Health & Safety**

After completing a Health & Safety walk round the school on my last visit, the focus this time was on looking at documentary evidence of risk assessments and record keeping across all aspects. I looked at the online system used in conjunction with the H&S consultants from Adeptify. Very thorough systems are in place.



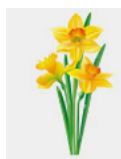
**Sally Davies, Co-opted Governor, H&S Link Governor**

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is the key priority for all schools so we carry out a termly visit. The Spring Term visit took place in January and covered staff training, the curriculum, online safety, including: filtering and monitoring, the LA safeguarding audit and attendance.



**Angela Doherty and Sally Davies, Safeguarding Link Governor**



**Wishing you and your families a safe and happy Spring break!**