

## **Governors' Newsletter**

**Autumn Term 2025**



### ***Happiness at the heart of learning***

Dear Parents and Carers,

This is the first edition of the Governors' newsletter for the academic year 2025-26. We are very pleased to hear how well all the children and new staff members, who have joined us this year, have settled into our school community this term.



The Autumn Term is always a very busy term in school and this year is no exception.

As Governors, we have held two Full Governing Board meetings as well as a Resources' Committee meeting, where we discussed all aspects of the school's finances, our school buildings and estate, health and safety and the business aspects of the school. One key area of work is the various contracts we have as a school. Last term, Governors were involved in the tendering process for the school's catering contract. In this newsletter, Matthew Ralph, reports back on a visit to school to see the new Accent Catering contract in action and an additional visit to the Christmas lunch. We also hear from Karen Rouse, a new Governor to the school, and about my visits to some of the Christmas events at school.

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

### ***My First Term as a Governor***



Being a school Governor offers the opportunity to become deeply involved in the school community, serving as a critical friend to the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team. Each Governor is assigned a specific responsibility, acting as the liaison between the Governing Board and a particular subject, curriculum area, statutory obligation, or another aspect of the school's operations.

Governors undertake comprehensive training to develop essential skills for their strategic oversight role. This training covers key areas, such as safeguarding, finance, and school improvement, ensuring that Governors can effectively hold school leaders to account, fulfil legal responsibilities, and contribute to the overall enhancement of educational outcomes. Several Governors are new to this role and may lack prior experience, making this training particularly valuable.

I recently became a school Governor and have completed both the mandatory training and additional sessions. This training has been incredibly helpful, allowing me to contribute meaningfully and effectively in my role.

***Karen Rouse, Co-opted Governor***

## ***Lunchtime with the Children – A Governor’s Perspective***



Last week I had the pleasure of spending the afternoon dining with children from every year group, sampling the meals now provided by our recently appointed catering company, Accent. Having been involved in the tendering process, it felt important to check in and see first-hand whether the promises and expectations set at the start were being met, after all, choosing the right provider is about much more than menus and meeting minutes.



As always at Whitehall Junior School, what made the experience truly joyful was the time spent with the children. They were wonderfully open, honest and refreshingly unfiltered about their likes, dislikes and strong food-based opinions. Unsurprisingly, pizza and sausages continue to reign as undisputed champions of the lunch hall. However, I was really encouraged to hear how much the children enjoy the self-service salad bar, as well as their enthusiasm for seeing fresh fruit being cut in the kitchen—small touches, big impressions!



It was also reassuring to hear that pupils don’t leave feeling hungry, and that there is always something they like, a key goal in ensuring our provision is both balanced and inclusive. Their suggestions for improvements were particularly inspiring.

Thoughtful, creative and culturally rich, they reflected the wonderful diversity that makes up the Whitehall Junior family. I came away genuinely impressed... as well as sporting a rather noticeable gravy-stained T-shirt, which I choose to view as a badge of honour rather than a culinary hazard.



Overall, I left with a strong sense that our meal provision is varied, nutritious, child-focused and responsive, giving parents the confidence that their children are receiving healthy food with plenty of options, and the ability to customise their plates. And yes, the occasional treat too, although I suspect the Caramel Mc Flurry suggestion won’t be appearing on the menu anytime soon (I promised I’d at least ask).

Finally—and not that I’d expect anything less from Whitehall Junior pupils—I was genuinely blown away by the polite and courteous way I was welcomed. Many came up to ask who I was and what I do, and a few even guessed I might be from ‘the Government’ (which, I assured them, I am not!).

A big thank you to every child who took the time to speak to me; your honesty, warmth and humour made my visit an absolute pleasure.

***Matthew Ralph, Co-opted Governor***

## Christmas at Whitehall Junior School!

### Whitehall Junior School Festive Dinner – 12th December 2025



On 12th December, I had the pleasure of joining pupils and staff for the Whitehall Junior School Festive Dinner, and it truly captured everything that makes Whitehall Junior School such a special place. The hall was transformed, with tables laid out banquet-style, creating a wonderfully warm and friendly atmosphere that reflected the strong sense of Whitehall Junior family spirit.



As always, all dietary requirements were thoughtfully catered for, although I suspect I drew the



short straw when assigned as the server of Brussels sprouts! That said, after a few good-natured negotiations of "I'll eat one if you do," I'm pleased to report that several sprout sceptics were successfully converted.



The meal was a great success and was made all the more enjoyable thanks to the fantastic team of staff and teachers, all suitably and festively dressed, who helped to create such a joyful and inclusive occasion. My thanks, once again, to everyone involved for making me feel so welcome and for delivering a truly festive experience for the children.

**Matthew Ralph, Co-opted Governor**

### Christmas Market



The buzzing Christmas Market was brimming with stalls providing delicious food and drink,



opportunities to win prizes and a whole range of gifts for Christmas. Year 6, who had produced all of their beautifully presented stock, very impressively ran their hot chocolate gift stall themselves.

### Year 6 Christmas Carols



It was wonderful to see so many parents at Year 6's final Christmas Carol event at Whitehall Junior School. The children sang their medley of festive songs, which they had learned off by heart, loudly and clearly and with great enjoyment.



All year groups held a similar event showcasing the talent and enthusiasm for singing across the school.

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

**Wishing you and your families a happy and healthy Christmas holiday and best wishes for 2026.**