

Governors' Newsletter

Spring Term 2025



Happiness at the heart of learning

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the Spring Term edition of the Governors' newsletter. During this term, there have been several opportunities for governors to meet with staff and see the school in action. Firstly, as governors, we are all linked to curriculum subjects and so we come in to meet the teacher leading the subject to discuss the priorities for the year and learn about any changes. Secondly, on our Governors' Day in school on Friday 21 March 2025, a number of governors were able to attend and take part in a variety of activities. In the newsletter this term, we will share some of the comments from members of the Governing Board about their subject visits and Governors' Day. We also welcome our new parent governor, Mr Aakeel Osman, to the Board.

Angela Doherty, Chair of Governors – Co-opted Governor

Welcome to our new parent governor



My name is Aakeel Osman, and I'm honoured to take on the role of Parent Governor at Whitehall Junior School, a place that has been a significant part of my life, both as a former pupil and now as a parent with my children attending. Having lived in Uxbridge my entire life, I'm deeply connected to the local community and excited to contribute my professional skills to support the school's future. I look forward to collaborating with fellow parents, school staff, and the Governing Board to create the best possible learning experience for every pupil, ensuring all children have the opportunity to thrive.

Aakeel Osman, Newly-elected Parent Governor

Governor's Day: Friday 21 March 2025

Governors who attended: Angela, Jane, Kieran, Manish and Sally



We had a great morning in school during which we had updates from staff, visited classes and had lunch with staff. We started the day greeting pupils and parents at the gates. Parents were overwhelmingly positive about the school and pupils arrived cheerfully in the clothes that they felt 'made them happy' on Red Nose Day. There were a few pairs of pyjamas, some very glittery tops, as well as the red noses.



We then had several presentations and lesson visits. The presentations covered 'Deepening



Mathematical Understanding', 'The Digital Strategy', safeguarding updates and looking at Spelling Shed. We interviewed pupils from all year groups on safeguarding and visited maths and English lessons.

Pupils are keen to talk about their learning and are clearly very aware of important safeguarding issues, including online safety. They are happy at school and when we walked around, the behaviour for learning was excellent. The classroom doors were looking splendid following World Book Week and the general displays around school are of a very high quality. Everyone appreciated the get together and the most delicious lunch, cooked by the Headteacher for all staff. **Jane Guest, Vice-Chair of Governors - Co-opted Governor**



Our Governors' Day visit this year was thoroughly enjoyable. The whole school was buzzing with enthusiasm, great teaching and learning, amazing strategies, fantastic artwork and displays and a wonderful focus on the particular needs of all pupils.

Developments in mathematics and English were presented and demonstrated to us and inspired admiration for the amazing leadership, teaching, partnership with families and aspirations for all pupils. This was all echoed in the voices of the parents and children spoken to on the day. The welcome for us was very encouraging.

Sally Davies, Co-opted Governor

Curriculum visits

Art

Mx Spacey-Mageean continues to ensure that the art curriculum is challenging and enjoyable for all pupils. Following the introduction of an artist, examples of their work are explored and then pupils experiment with different media used by the artist. All the learning is then brought together in a final piece. Here is a lovely example from Year 3 of a painting inspired by L. S. Lowry.



The current display for Y3 on the corridor wall is an installation of cave paintings inspired by the Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama.

The quality of the work in pupils' sketchbooks indicates how much they are learning and developing their art skills and their enthusiasm for the subject.

Angela Doherty, Chair of Governors – Co-opted Governor

Computing



The school is using the DfE Teach Computing curriculum with Miss Hyland, the Computing Lead, having allocated time to support each year group, which has improved teachers' confidence with the subject.



Miss Hyland also has responsibility for online safety and reported that the filtering of the content and alerts work well and regular reports are shared directly with the leadership team. Regular newsletters for parents in relation to online safety are produced and there are links for parents: [Whitehall Junior School - Online Safety](#) and children: [Whitehall Junior School - Internet Safety](#) on the school website.

360 review process is used to self-evaluate where the school is in different areas relating to Computing and Online safety - this includes a governor section which needs to be reviewed and updated. (This was reviewed on Governors' Day and we all agreed to add the Online Safety module to the list of mandatory training for governors.)

Kieran Bassan, Chair of Resources' Committee -Parent Governor

English

An excellent handwriting booklet has been produced to help parents support their children with their handwriting. Teachers from Whitehall Junior School have also worked with staff from other local schools to discuss children's writing. Together, they agreed that there is a good range and quantity of writing within the books at our school.



The school is always reflecting and looking at ways to improve approaches to teaching. As a result of feedback from staff, each year group is trialling a 'Literacy Tree' unit this term, which is a book-based approach to teaching English. There has been a positive response so far from pupils and staff.

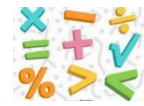
Reading is a key focus for the school and each class now has a Reading Ambassador. The Ambassadors had to apply formally for the position and those appointed are very excited about their role. They will be key in helping run the library and are involved in book groups running in the school.

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

Maths



When I met with Mr Jones, we discussed changes that have happened in maths in some year groups such as grouping the children in broad ability groups to better meet their needs and address any gaps in learning. Extra staffing has been added to some groups including dedicated support for children who are at early stages of learning English to help identify those where language is the main barrier in terms of maths. When the termly assessments are completed, a full analysis of the answers is used to identify the areas that need to be followed up. **Jennifer Bull, Local Authority Governor**



Music



The school is very fortunate to have appointed Mrs Hampton who is a music specialist with a music degree and who has a strong background in music to lead on the subject. Her passion for the subject and depth of skills and experience was apparent throughout our meeting. Mrs Hampton took over as subject lead for music in September and is using the expectations of the national music plan to review what is in place at the school. A couple of developments are to introduce whole class teaching of the ukelele and to have more live music performances. Pupils were recently treated to a visit from the RAF brass quintet who impressed them with a medley of familiar tunes. **Angela Doherty, Chair of Governors – Co-opted Governor**



PE



My conversation with Mr Mitchell and Ms Groves who have taken on PE co-ordinator role from the autumn term was enlightening. PE is a surprisingly big area with a lot involved e.g. many after school clubs/activities, lunchtime and breaktime activities, area fixtures and competitions etc. Previous lead, Miss Costa has been brilliant providing training and ongoing support. All pupils receive 2 hours per week PE (statutory minimum) and Year 5s have an intensive week of swimming lessons.



In addition, and due to the considerable time given by all staff (and some parents), children have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of sporting activities in and outside of school. Recent pupil-voice feedback showed 99% love PE and enjoy aspects such as teamwork, clubs, working with friends, organised games etc. Great skills for life are gained from all aspects and to instil a love of activity improves holistic outcomes for children. Well done WJS for all your sporting achievements. **Sally Davies, Co-opted Governor**



PSHE

I met with Ms Guernieri and Mrs Sharma who are PSHE subject leaders for lower school and upper school respectively. We looked at the three themes of Health & Wellbeing; Living in the Wider World and Relationships that are covered in each year group with knowledge building each year.



In addition to weekly PSHE lessons, there are focus days and themed weeks which provide opportunities to think about an aspect of the curriculum in more depth. They shared some brilliant work completed by children from various year groups on the theme of 'Know yourself, grow yourself' which were completed as part of Children's Mental Health Week. School Councillors were asked to select some of the best examples and bring them to the School Council meeting.

Angela Doherty, Chair of Governors – Co-opted Governor

Science



It was a great pleasure to meet and talk with Mrs Mulvihill in March and experience her great enthusiasm for the role of Science Lead, which she took on in the Autumn Term. Staff have confirmed a high level of confidence in teaching science and their passion for teaching the subject is very encouraging. They requested some interesting new equipment to support learning different aspects e.g. models of teeth. Each science session includes a practical element can impact on children's understanding e.g. even simply experiencing the wind in the playground whilst learning about forces. Science vocabulary can be difficult so there has been a push on that this year. WJS is great at this and has lots of effective strategies in place. Mrs Mulvihill's professional development this year has given her the opportunity to hear about national strategic direction for the subject and share practice and ideas with a number of schools. I look forward to seeing how her exciting projects develop.



Sally Davies, Co-opted Governor

Behaviour Champion

It was very interesting to hear from Miss Treanor about the work that she has been doing with the lunchtime supervisors to help improve behaviour in the playground at break and lunchtimes. A very useful training programme has been used called Behaviour 360 which includes short videos, discussion questions and activities focusing on different scenarios and strategies. These were then put into practice and discussed at the next session. The feedback on the training has been very positive.

Angela Doherty, Chair of Governors – Co-opted Governor

Do 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 to arrange an informal chat. More information can be found at: [Whitehall Junior School - Our Governors](#)

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