



Northchapel Primary School and Little Oaks Pre-school Governors' Newsletter

Governors' Newsletter December 2021



As it is two years since we last wrote to you, we thought it might be helpful to remind you about who we are and what we do to support our School.



1 - Anthea Martin-Jenkins – Chair



2 - Andy James – Vice Chair & Chair of Finance & Facilities Committee



3 - Head Teacher & Safeguarding Lead



4 - Heather Lucas – Safeguarding, Special Needs & Well-being



5 - Andy Tate – Premises & Forest School



6 - Lynda Bell – Chair of Teaching & Learning Committee



7 - Staff Governor, Teacher R & Y1 & English and Geography Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead



8 - Parent Governor

Governor Vacancy



There is currently a vacancy for a Parent Governor. We are looking for a Parent, who is keen to be an enthusiastic supporter of the School, and who can put his or her skills towards helping the Governing Body to be as effective as possible. If you are interested, please have a word with Anthea Martin-Jenkins or Deborah Coggin as we would be delighted to tell you more about how you could help.

We give our time voluntarily to ensure

- The clarity of vision and ethos of the School
- The Head Teacher is accountable for the education performance of the School
- The financial accountability of the School

There are termly meetings of the Governing Body and the committees meet regularly to set targets and review progress. We support the Head and Staff to achieve the best possible results and ensure that we continue to improve standards by offering an exciting and broad curriculum. This term we have re-drafted the strategic vision, which can be found on the School website, and we hope you will let us have your comments. These may be sent to the Chair of Governors or to the Head by 15 January.

How is the School doing?



Teaching & Learning



Despite all the challenges of 2020/21 the school has continued to strive to “grow kind and curious children who aspire to succeed” Teaching has focused on the 7C’s - Confidence, curiosity, collaboration, communication, creativity, commitment and craftsmanship.

The children returned to school in September 2020 having been out of school for almost 6 months. All schools were then closed again from January until early March 2021 when once again remote learning was offered to all pupils not in school.

All pupils at home eventually had access to a tablet or device to enable them to participate in remote learning. Prior to that work packs had been delivered to the home.

Governors monitored the remote learning offer and observed some online lessons.

Teachers had the challenge of providing lessons for vulnerable children and key workers' children in school while engaging remotely with the rest of the class.

Returning to school in March 2020 all pupils and staff remained in bubbles for teaching and recreation until the end of term.

Against this backdrop, like many schools, pupils have fallen behind in some areas and the focus remains on catch up.

There were no formal assessments in this period due to the pandemic but recent internal school assessments are showing the following:

Early Years Foundation Stage

43% achieved a good level of development. (No National or County figures to compare with)

Phonics Y1 and Y2 retakes

75% passed the test

Key Stage 1 – 2020/21 Year 2 – Statutory assessments were cancelled. Internal assessment used.

The summer data is not based on SATS but PIRA, PUMA and teacher assessments.

Teacher Assessed Outcomes for pupils in Year 2

Percentage of children that reached the standard using teacher assessments:

Reading

Expected standard or better

58.3%

Greater Depth Standard

33.3%

Writing

Expected standard or better

50.0%

Greater Depth Standard

0%

Maths

Expected standard or better

58.3%

Greater Depth Standard

25%

Key stage 2 2020/21 Year 6



Outcomes for Year 6 Pupils

TA – Teacher assessment

There were 8 children in Year 6 with 2 children identified as having special educational needs in some areas.

Percentage of children that reached the standard using teacher assessments in all 3 subjects:

Reading (test), Writing (TA), Maths (test)

Expected standard or better

50%

Greater Depth Standard (GDS)

25%

Reading (test)

Expected standard or better

100%

Greater Depth Standard (GDS)

37.5%

Writing (TA)

Expected standard or better

50%

Greater Depth Standard (GDS)

25%

Maths (test)

Expected standard or better

87.5%

Greater Depth Standard (GDS)

50%

Across the school, better performance in Maths continues to reflect the input in previous years.

In this academic year the school has started to implement the Cornerstones curriculum adopting new topics to ensure a breadth of knowledge and skills are planned and taught across the foundation subjects and this work is being lead by Mr Eddy.

Academically, the focus will be on phonics. The scheme Floppy Phonics has been adopted and new resources and training have been purchased to facilitate this and will be used on a daily basis across the school.

Writing will focus on making good the gaps caused by the pandemic using 'the Write Stuff' approach.

Lynda Bell

Special Needs, Safeguarding & Wellbeing



2020 – 21 flew by in a haze! From a Governor point of view it was challenging keeping an over-sight on Safeguarding, SEND and Wellbeing whilst trying not to come into contact with anyone. However, through emails and Zoom meets we still managed to adapt the way we look out for those potential needs. Watch lists were created and expanded and conversations continued about how we were shaping our provision in response to all of the unpredictability and by the end of the summer term we were able to re-introduce face-to-face meetings. I meet with key staff regularly in school every term, but I have found that I am now much better at using the mix with video too. County wide Governor, SENDCo and Safeguarding Network Meetings continue to be very useful over video link particularly.

Wellbeing deserves a special mention as it is probably the trickiest right now. The staff team have (and continue to have) extraordinary demands on their time and the constant breadth and depth of these can mean staff put their own wellbeing on the back burner. We are trying to encourage staff and pupils to see Wellbeing as a foundation to all that we do and try to work out ways to keep that balance healthy. Pupils have also missed out on so much that we take for granted in usual years and we need to remain vigilant to this and to the very fast moving, technological and information rich

world that they are in. There are lots of ways we are doing this through the curriculum, special events, school development planning and also simple Random Acts of Kindness (RAKs) **.

**Please get involved with your child and see where you can encourage a simple act of kindness, it doesn't have to cost anything. Also if you are a recipient of a *RAK please post a comment onto the Twitter @NorthchapelSch and keep the idea afloat with the tag #RAKatNCSch.

This Autumn Term has been very busy as we audit and set up for the coming year and I am enjoying being physically in school again. The staff team have been amazing and it is a pleasure to be a part of the process of support and challenge that enable us to keep adapting and improving.

Heather Lucas

Finances & Facilities



After yet another difficult year, we have again been able to balance the books. School funding remains very tight and the Governing Body, together with the Head, continue to allocate our scarce resources to maximise the teaching staff.

With a natural shrinkage in pupil numbers, which we believe is short term, this led to some difficult decisions earlier this year in order to protect our financial position for the next financial year. Sadly, this necessitated making some reductions in our teaching assistants – a decision that was not taken

lightly. Looking at census data, we are hopeful that we will see an uplift in pupil numbers in the next few years and, if this is realised, it will bring funding to allow additional investment.

The PTA, Parish Councils and the Lurgashall Hardship Fund have provided some much-welcomed extra money and ten new laptops, for which the Governing Body is extremely grateful.

Fortunately, we have not needed to make a major investment in premises repairs this year but are aware that some of our ageing outdoor equipment will need some improvement over the next couple of years.

Andy James

What next?



- We have a strong and experienced staff team
- We are focusing on Phonics and Reading this year
- We are offering a wide range of clubs

And finally....



We are very proud of our small, rural School and appreciative of the energy and enthusiasm that our Head Teacher and the Staff put into encouraging and supporting our children in their learning journeys. It has been a difficult and uncertain year for everyone and especially for the children, but the Governors are delighted that the Northchapel Team, parents, carers and children have worked so hard in spite of all that the pandemic has thrown at us.

We can only hope that, as 2021 draws to a close, the dawn of a New Year will enable us all to lead more normal and easier lives. We wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a Happy 2022.

Anthea Martin-Jenkins, Chair of Governors.