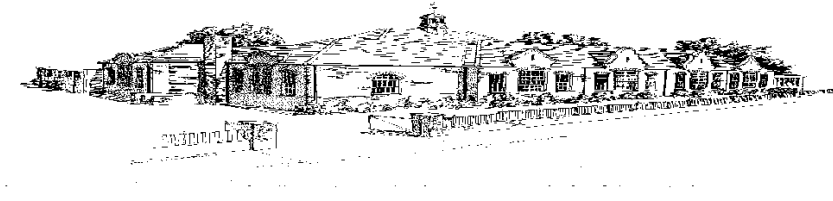


# **SLADE PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY**



Summer Term 2022.

## **Welcome to our summer parent/carers newsletter**

I hope this newsletter finds you and your families safe and well.

As we approach the end of the school year, I wanted to provide you with a brief update on the work of the Slade Governing Body.

By the end of the academic year, we will have held a full programme of meetings including five Full Governing Body meetings, three meetings each for our Curriculum, and Finance and Property committees and two meetings of our Personnel and Professional Development committee.

Trying to take the positives from the pandemic, these have been a mixture of virtual, face-to-face and hybrid (face-to-face with some attending virtually). The flexibility this has given us has allowed governors to participate fully in meetings without having to come into school, which has been particularly useful for those governors who travel for work or need to juggle childcare arrangements. We are planning to continue with this approach to our meetings for the foreseeable future.

## **COVID-19**

Due to the spread of the Omicron variant during the first half of the academic year, the school had to cope with the highest levels of Covid-related staff absence seen at any point during the pandemic. It is a great credit to the team at Slade that cover was maintained and lessons continued despite daily staffing challenges. Although the situation is improving, we are aware that Covid continues to disrupt staffing plans and we do not anticipate this will change significantly for some time yet.

We also appreciate the disruption Covid has caused to Slade families and recognise the support the school has received from parents and carers who have followed the guidelines the school implemented, particularly at drop-off and pick-up, in order to minimise the risk of a significant Covid outbreak at the school.

As we continue to track the impact of the pandemic on the school, governors have used our meetings and monitoring to understand the comprehensive process the school has gone through to identify gaps in individual children's learning and the support put in place to ensure they catch-up where necessary. We are also aware of the significant pastoral support the school is able to offer children and any families struggling as a result of the pandemic or, more recently, the deteriorating economic situation.

We are aware that recovery from the pandemic will be a long process, especially for some of our more disadvantaged children, and we expect to be tracking the impact of Covid for several years to come.

## **School Monitoring Visits**

We were pleased that the guidelines meant we were able to start visiting the school again in person, particularly during the second half of the academic year. While our remote monitoring has enabled us to keep in touch with many aspects of the school's work, this could never be as effective as being able to come into school and talk face-to-face with teachers, observe lessons and look at work in the children's books.

This year we have completed monitoring visits for all the major curriculum areas including English, Maths, PE, Computing, Science, Forest School, DT, History, Geography, RE, Modern Foreign Languages, as well as our statutory visits covering

Safeguarding and Health and Safety. We noted that despite the challenges of the pandemic, work has continued in developing the curriculum and in particular curriculum maps which clearly show the progression of each subject for each year group to ensure consistent learning as the children move through the school. These are available on the school website and I would encourage you to take a look.

We also completed a monitoring visit covering Personal Development and Wellbeing and were pleased this year to have adopted the school's first '*Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy*' which formally recognised many of the things the school has in place to support its staff.

During our visits we noted the calm and happy atmosphere in the school as the children and staff have settled back into a more normal routine. It has been particularly pleasing to see the school's commitment to developing sport and physical activities, the continued development of the Forest School, as well as progress across many curriculum areas.

### **Ofsted Readiness**

At the start of this academic year the government lifted the exemption which meant schools previously rated Outstanding would not receive a routine Ofsted inspection. Slade was last inspected in 2011 and governors have taken the time to update their skills and knowledge of the Ofsted inspection process in preparation for the inspection when it comes.

### **'Opportunity for All' White Paper**

You may have seen in the media that the government have recently published a White Paper about the long-term future of education in England. Governors have attended briefings to understand what this could mean for schools but, as yet, there is insufficient detail in the plans to understand how these proposals may impact Slade. We will continue to monitor developments and will update our strategy for the school when we are able to consider all the options which may be open to us.

### **Governor Joiners and Leavers**

School governance is an unpaid voluntary role and we thank all those who have joined us this year and existing governors who continue to freely give of their time for the benefit of the school and it's pupils.

We would like to thank Claire Pearson who stepped down after 8 years as a governor and our safeguarding lead for much of that time, Lucy Jeffreys for her time with us and her safeguarding expertise and Philip Deakin, our link governor with Tonbridge School, who will be stepping down at the end of the school year as he leaves Tonbridge for pastures new.

### **Governor Annual Survey**

We will be carrying out our annual online parent and carers survey during July. I would like to encourage as many of you as possible to respond, as this survey gives us important information about the parents view of the school and the areas the school's leadership and governors may need to focus on.

### **The Governors Website**

You can find out more about the work of the governors by visiting our page on the school website. This describes our committee structure, contains the names of all the governors and their committee membership along with our '*Terms of Reference and Standing Orders*' which explain in detail how we carry out our responsibilities. You can also find our contact details and links to the Kent County Council and National Governance Association websites which provide more information about the role of school governors.

We hope you and your children enjoy the remaining weeks of this school year and have a safe and happy summer break when it arrives.

*Simon Griffiths, Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Slade Primary School Governing Body.*