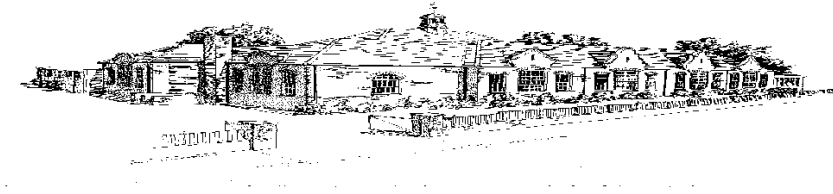


SLADE PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY



Summer Term 2021.

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.

We held a full programme of meetings this year which has included five Full Governing Body meetings and three meetings each for our committees, Curriculum, Personnel and Professional Development and Finance and Property. Like the parents, children and staff, the governors have become accustomed to working virtually with all our meetings this year held online. We have found remote working to be very effective, with full agendas for all our meetings. We are planning a mix of online and in-person meetings next year should the guidance allow.

COVID-19.

As the children returned to school in September I'm sure we all hoped for a steady return to normality, but as we are all aware, no aspect of school life has been left untouched by the pandemic during this school year. Throughout the planning for the resumption of face-to-face teaching in September, the 'bubble-system', the need for a further period of remote learning and the eventual return to school in March, the governors worked closely with the school's leadership to ensure Slade remained a safe place for staff and pupils to work and learn. We regularly reviewed the schools risk assessment, ensuring it met the latest guidance from the Department for Education and Kent County Council.

We fully endorsed the school's priority which was to remain open as a place of learning for as many children as possible. We were mindful of the impact time out of the classroom has and also the practical impact on families should a bubble have to close. We endorsed staggered start times and the suspension of the school's wraparound care provision as it was impossible to safely maintain the necessary separation between bubbles. We fully appreciate these arrangements were inconvenient to many Slade families, especially those with children in different year groups, and we thank everyone who has supported the school in its efforts to stay safe and remain open.

We sincerely hope there will be a return to a more normal start and end to the school day when we return and we are pleased the school will be reintroducing a revised wraparound care provision.

Catch-Up & Remote Learning.

The governors have remained focussed on the educational impact of this atypical year on Slade children. We were aware that the remote learning during the first lockdown in March 2020 had not, in all cases, met the high standards the governors and school set. With the return to lockdown, we were pleased to see significant improvements in this provision and were confident the children received a good quality of education while learning from home.

We have been encouraged to hear how so many children have taken the challenges of this year in their stride and rapidly settled back into school life. We are confident the school has been able to accurately assess each child and is able to offer any additional support required, both academic and pastoral, to ensure no child will suffer long-term negative impact to their education due to the pandemic.

We will continue to monitor progress as we work through the recovery phase of the pandemic. We will focus on how the school plans to utilise the governments COVID-Catch-up funding and will be paying particular attention to our more vulnerable pupils who are in danger of suffering a disproportionate impact to their education.

Governor Joiners and Leavers.

Over the last academic year we said farewell to Karishma Peermohamed who had served as a governor for 8 years. We will miss her thoughtful contributions and dedicated service to the school. We also said farewell to David Pinker as a job move meant he had to step down as one of our three parent governors.

We were delighted to welcome Eleanor Hoyle as our first parent governor to be elected by electronic ballot. We also appointed Farah Brooks-Johnson and Philip Deakin as new co-opted governors. Philip is the head of science at Tonbridge School and continues the tradition of having a governor from our nearest educational neighbour on our governing body. At our final meeting of the academic year we reappointed Stuart Concannon as our Local Authority governor. Stuart has been a Slade governor for 12 years and we are pleased the school will continue to benefit from his considerable experience.

We never lose sight of the fact that 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 their time for the benefit of the school and it's pupils.

School Monitoring Visits.

Following the guidelines from the Department for Education and Kent County Council's governor services, governors have been unable to make in-person visits to school this year. We have however been able to remotely continue our work of monitoring the school's compliance with its statutory obligations towards safeguarding and health and safety. We also completed a full programme of virtual curriculum visits with subject leads which have allowed us to review and discuss the educational performance and future plans for all subjects across the school.

Strategy Review.

The governors are responsible for setting a 3 to 5 year strategy. This sets-out the longer-term objectives for the school which, in turn, helps determine the priorities to be included in the annual school development plan.

Our previous strategy was agreed in 2017 and we had started the process of reviewing it just as the pandemic struck. We put this work on hold, but I'm pleased to report that we have now been able to complete the review and the governors have recently adopted the schools 2021-2025 strategy which we look forward to sharing with all the school's stakeholders in the new school year.

Governor Annual Survey.

I'm pleased we were able to hold our parent and carers annual survey electronically this year. We did however miss the opportunity to meet with parents face-to-face at the school open evening and I sincerely hope by this time next year we will once again be able to invite you to complete this survey in person.

The results of this survey help us to fulfil an important part of the governor's role as it helps to highlight any area of concern which we can address with the school and which can be included in the school's development plan. We look forward to sharing the result with you in the new school year.

The Governors Website.

If wish to learn more about the work of the governors please visit our page on the school website which 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.

At the end of this challenging year for all Slade families we hope you and your children have an enjoyable and safe summer break and we look forward to seeing you in September.

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