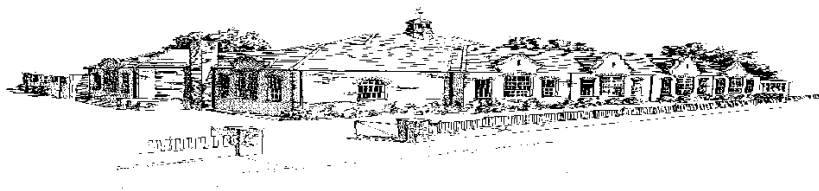


SLADE PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY NEWSLETTER



July 2023.

Dear parents & carers,

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

As you may be aware, the core role of the Governing Body is to set the school's strategy and vision, hold the school accountable for its educational performance and ensure the finances are well managed. We achieve this primarily through governing body meetings and monitoring visits which cover a wide range of the school's activities, alongside regular meetings with school leaders, annual surveys and meetings with the pupil council.

Governor Meetings

The Full Governing Body (FGB) meets five times each academic year, and our three committees (covering personnel, finance and curriculum) meet three times each year.

The FGB meetings received updates from the Headteacher, reviewed and adopted school policies and we started a review of the school's post-pandemic strategy. Curriculum meetings have focussed on the educational performance across all subjects and year groups, the finance committee set the schools budget and monitored expenditure against this over the year and our personnel committee discussed staffing issues which this year has included the impact on staff of the increased cost of living.

Monitoring Visits

We value the opportunity to visit the school as governors and meet with the children and staff. We use these visits to increase our understanding of the work taking place and to discuss progress, challenges and future plans. This year we completed a full range of monitoring visits for each curriculum area and the leader of each curriculum group had the opportunity to make a presentation to the governors about the progress and challenges in their areas. We have continued to closely monitor the progress of our disadvantaged and SEN children to ensure the school is providing the support they need.

While government policy has transitioned to 'living with COVID', the governors recognise that every child in the school is likely to have been impacted to some extent by the disruption to education during the pandemic. Some of our younger children, who were most impacted during their pre-school and Reception years, are still working to catch-up with both their academic and social skills. The governors will continue to monitor these groups, and progress across the whole school, recognising the impact of the pandemic is going to be with us for some years to come.

In addition to our curriculum-related visits, we also completed a number of statutory visits covering safeguarding, health and safety and finance. We have noted the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on many aspects of school and home life and have developed a good understanding of the support the school has put in place for children and families who may need additional help.

Our monitoring visits allow us to understand more about the work we hear about in our meetings and help us to develop a deeper understanding about some of the day-to-day issues faced by staff, children and parents. We are always grateful to the staff for the time they take to talk with us and prepare for our meetings and for the open and honest opinions your children share with us.

Ofsted

Slade was last inspected by Ofsted in September 2011. Having been graded outstanding overall, the school was deemed exempt from further inspection. The government has now lifted this exemption so Ofsted is working to inspect around 3,000 previously outstanding schools in a process which could take until 2025. We obviously have no idea when we will receive our Ofsted visit, but governors have taken the time to develop and maintain their skills and knowledge of the Ofsted inspection process in preparation for the inspection when it comes.

Pay Dispute

As a local authority-maintained school, where the governing body does not directly employ the school's staff, we are not formally involved in the dispute between the teaching unions and the government. We have, however, remained up to date with the strike action which has impacted some classes and appreciate the practical impact this has had for Slade children and families.

Governing Body Membership

School governors are not paid for their time as it is an entirely voluntary role. According to the National Governance Association, over a quarter of a million people volunteer their free time to act as school governors in England, making them the single largest group of volunteers in the country.

During the year, two of our parent governors, Sahar Zaidi-Shirazee and Scott Miller came to the end of their 4-year terms. Both kindly agreed to continue as governors and became co-opted (that is appointed by the governing body) governors for a further 4 years. The vacant parent governor roles were filled by Daniel van Bregt & Bérengère Mauduit who were elected to their positions unopposed. Laura Fisher will be stepping down at the end of the school year to devote time to her growing family. I would like to thank Laura for bringing her educational experience to the governing body during her time with us.

At the final FGB of the year, I was appointed to a further 4-year term as a co-opted governor, however, having first become a governor in January 2013 and chair of governors in September 2015, I informed the governors earlier in the year of my intention to step down as a governor, and chair of governors, as soon as practical following the school's Ofsted inspection. A succession plan is being developed, recognising we have no control over when our inspection will happen.

We are very lucky at Slade that we have governors who care greatly about their role in supporting the school to ensure it can be the best place possible for your children to be educated. As ever, I would like to thank all the governors for devoting their time and energy to our work over another busy and challenging year.

Governor Annual Survey

We will be launching our online annual survey just before the end of the school year. To allow some time for reflection over the summer break, the survey will remain open until the end of September. The governors find this survey highly valuable as it helps us to understand which areas we should focus on in our discussions with the school. Please keep an eye out for the links to the survey which will be shared via the school newsletter and other regular communication channels and thank you in anticipation of your responses.

Further information

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, meeting minutes and links to the Kent County Council, Department for Education and National Governance Association websites which provide more information about the role of school governors.

Thank you for taking time to read this newsletter and we hope you and your children enjoy a safe and happy summer break.

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