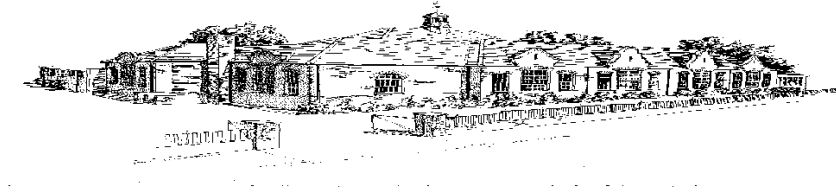


SLADE PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY NEWSLETTER



July 2024.

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 Primary School Governing Body.

The Governing Body is made up of representatives from all the school's stakeholders, including parents & carers, staff, the school's leadership and the community. Our constitution allows for there to be up to 14 governors on the Governing Body at any one time and we currently have 12 governors in post, with two co-opted governor vacancies.

All governors are volunteers, giving their time, skills and energy for free to help the school to be the best place possible for your children. Governors set the school's strategy and vision, hold the school accountable for its educational performance and ensure the finances are well managed. We meet regularly throughout the school year, both as a full governing body and as three committees - covering finance, personnel and the curriculum. Governors also undertake regular monitoring visits to the school, covering statutory responsibilities such as safeguarding and health and safety, alongside curriculum-related visits to monitor progress across all subjects.

Ofsted

We were pleased that the long wait for our Ofsted inspection came to an end in early March. During the inspection the governors had an opportunity to meet with the lead inspector where we discussed a wide range of subjects including safeguarding, staff and pupil wellbeing, inclusion and the progress of our disadvantaged children. Governors were also invited to attend the verbal feedback at the end of the inspection. We were pleased governance was acknowledged for having a strategic view and being effective at offering support and challenge, although we were disappointed not to see this mentioned in the final written report.

We felt the overall grade was fair and was consistent with our own assessment. We look forward to working with the school on those areas Ofsted identified as opportunities for further development.

Monitoring Visits

Governors always welcome the opportunity to visit the school and in particular the chance to see the children being taught in their classes. We look at the work in books across all age groups and talk with the children about their learning. We also invite the staff who are curriculum leads to present to the curriculum committee once each year to give us an update on their individual subject areas. This is a good opportunity for the staff to understand the role of the governors a little more and for the governors to celebrate success and understand the challenges in each subject.

This year we have completed monitoring visits for all subjects, alongside non-subject visits including safeguarding, health and safety, finance, SEND, pupil premium and wellbeing. As ever, the teaching and non-teaching staff have all been very welcoming and we thank them for the time they take to meet with us and for their preparation beforehand.

Cost-of-Living

Throughout the year, we have noted the continued impact of the cost-of-living crisis across many areas of the school as families have found it harder to make ends meet and staff have been forced consider employment opportunities in other sectors. We have worked with the school to understand the impact on pupil progress and staff and pupil wellbeing and the support the school has put in place for families who are struggling.

We have also continued to monitor the longer-term impact of the pandemic on those year groups most affected by it in their pre-school and early years education. It is clear it will be some time yet before we can put the impact of the disruption caused totally behind us.

Stepping Down

I had previously advised the governing body that it was my intention to step down as Chair of Governors following our Ofsted inspection. Accordingly, I will formally be stepping down at the first meeting of the new school year in September, although I will remain as a governor until the end of December to help with transition. I'm pleased to report that a current governor has agreed to be nominated as chair and it will be a decision for the governing body whether to formally appoint them in September.

It has been a privilege to be a governor at Slade since 2013 and to have been chair for 9 years. Much has changed over that time, but the school has continued to meet new challenges with a kind, positive and forward-looking approach. I never cease to be amazed by the energy and dedication shown by the staff and leadership who have worked tirelessly to develop the caring and inclusive school that benefits your children today.

Governing Body Membership

As the year comes to an end, we say goodbye to Nicky Hill who has been the staff governor for almost 4 years. We have all benefitted from her vast experience and endless good-humoured enthusiasm to do the best for all children at the school. We wish her well as she moves to pastures-new and the next exciting stage of her teaching career.

We welcomed Jessica Watson-Reynolds as a new co-opted governor. She is an experienced secondary school teacher, currently working at Tonbridge School, and we are already benefitting from her insight, knowledge and experience.

Viki Garrett was re-elected to a new 4-year term as a co-opted governor. Viki is one of our longest serving governors and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the governing body covering all aspects of the school and safeguarding in particular. Viki also manages the large number of school policies, which is no mean feat and greatly helps with the work of the governing body. Thank you, Viki, for your continued support.

We are very lucky at Slade that all governors care greatly about their role in ensuring the school is the best place possible for your children. As ever, I would like to thank them all for devoting their time and energy to our work over another busy and challenging year.

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. We hope you and your children enjoy a safe and happy summer break, hopefully with some better weather.

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