

Oaklands Junior School

Headteacher - Mrs H West

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Dear Parents and Carers.

At this time of year, the Governing Body reflect on the past school year. We consider what we have done to fulfil the primary responsibilities of Governors and then report back to you as the stakeholders in the school. We look forward to the future and our plans for the coming academic year and we also take this time to thank the fantastic staff, PTA, parents and everyone who has contributed to the wellbeing of the school throughout the year.

Being a Governor is a key role in the leadership and management of the school. As effective Governors we act as the school's critical friend – we both challenge and support our school by:

- Working with the headteacher to promote and maintain high standards of educational achievement.
- Ensuring that the governing body sets a clear vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and for the performance management of staff.
- Ensuring oversight of the financial performance of the school and effective use of the school's resources (a report from the Finance and Premises Committee is included at the end of this letter).

As Governors we also share a common objective which is the wider school community – working in partnership with you as parents/carers and staff to ensure that every child can succeed and reach their full potential. To achieve this, and to carry out our role as Governors effectively, we need to know what issues are important to you (so we remain responsive) and ensure that you know what issues Governors are discussing.

That is why as Governors we work closely with Mrs West and staff to ensure that we continue to deliver a high standard of education to our children at Oaklands Junior School. I think that the most important thing to note is that the Governors work as a team, not a collection of individuals or groups with separate agendas. We may differ in our experiences, but we are united by our commitment to the school and the responsibility we share for the school's long-term success.

This academic year we have surveyed all of our key stakeholders; pupils, parents and staff. We have also completed a wellbeing survey to understand further how this difficult time has impacted our families. We were delighted that 124 of our 222 families completed this survey which will provide the teaching staff with valuable information to enable them to further support your child(ren). We are also completing the pupil and parent survey over the next two weeks and greatly appreciate all of your feedback. We will report back in September with a summary of these surveys and actions taken/planned.

I know you will be fully aware the Year 6 SATS did not go ahead in 2020 due to the current climate, however the KS2 summary data from the SATS results released in 2019 can be found on the gov.uk website (<https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/145282/oaklands-junior-school/primary>). I would like to summarise this data:

- 🌀 Our Maths SATS result is ABOVE the national (79%) and Local authority (84%) results with 87% of our pupils achieving the expected standard or above.
- 🌀 The percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard or above in Reading, Writing, Maths, Reading-writing-maths combined and the percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard or above in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling are all ABOVE the national England average percentages.
- 🌀 The school has increased the percentage of pupils year on year achieving the expected standard or above in Reading, Writing and Maths combined, Maths, Writing, Reading and the percentage pupils achieving the expected standard or above in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling.

As you can all attest this year has been very different to other years so I would like to thank the fantastic staff team at Oaklands Junior School, plus my heartfelt thanks for each and every one of you that are part of the School Family and our wider community. From the moment the knowledge of the pandemic began to circulate the staff, children and local community have come together to support each other and to adapt to a new way of living.

Although school “closed” back in March it has never been completely closed with provision being made initially for our most vulnerable and the children of keyworkers and the staff have been working tirelessly since then supporting the children, parents and families. They have been the central point between government’s rapidly changing guidance and advice and families who have been overwhelmed by the changes in society in such a short period of time. We are pleased that in line with government guidance the school’s provision was extended to Year 6 on the 1st of June, we welcomed back 83% of Year 6 and over the following weeks 86% of Year 5. This week we have seen 86% of Year 3 and 75% of Year 4. Although the lower school visits were short due to no classrooms being available, we are delighted so many parents have extended their thanks and appreciation to the Senior Leadership Team for the opportunity of these pupils being able to come in to see their friends and the teaching staff.

All the staff at Oaklands Junior School have been juggling several things at once to keep everything going and I wanted to share the following with you about some of the staff who do not normally get a mention:

IT Team - Their workload has trebled during lockdown and they have put in some long shifts, but without all their hard work we would not have been able to offer you the service we have. They have introduced new systems and supported teachers and pupils to get the most out of our technology.

Office Team - Many of you will have appreciated the amount of information the school has been sending out to keep you up to date. The team has been working extremely hard to support everyone, alongside their increased workload of having to submit daily additional returns to the government and the local authority.

Site Controller and Cleaners - As with all work places, changes had to be made to make the school safe to open in accordance with risk assessments. Additional cleaning materials purchased, and increased regular cleaning carried out.

As I have already mentioned in a previous letter, the Teachers have all had to come to grips with a new way of working, without their classes in front of them and challenging IT. Many have children at home too that they are also having to home school. Those that have been able to come into school have done so on a rota basis often teaching children from different Year Groups to their own. Whilst in school they have also been calling parents to discuss possible concerns they may have. The Teaching Support Staff that have been able to come into school have been supporting teachers in the classroom on the rota. Others have been working remotely ordering stock, labelling books and getting everything ready for the new academic year. There have been numerous virtual meetings, and some have also completed training courses. Our PSA and other staff with Nurture Training, have also been in contact with many parents and pupils to help in any way they can.

As well as drawing up risk assessments, organising and then reorganising rotas and class lists, reading extensive daily Government and local authority guidance, teaching classes, covering lunch and break times, and attending all the usual meetings that take place within the Trust and with local authority colleagues, the Senior Leadership Team have been looking after the wellbeing of the staff, who are the greatest asset to the school. It has been a pleasure to work alongside all these dedicated individuals.

We also are delighted to welcome four new co-opted Governors to our team – Graham Kay, Mark Westmore, Martin Cox and Dick Shaw. We are looking forward to starting the next academic year with such a rich pool of skills to draw from. Our Governing Board is a collective group of driven individuals with a shared goal. We would also like to thank the parents that have come forward to volunteer for our parent governor roles. We look forward to progressing this opportunity in September.

The list of people I would like to single out to thank seems endless and includes, but is not limited to:

- 🌀 The teachers and staff who have been absolutely amazing in their dedication and commitment to the children and the school.
- 🌀 To the Corvus Learning Trust and our CEO Bob Elsey, for all the outstanding support, guidance and backing.
- 🌀 The keyworker parents who sent their children to school so that they were able to support the country when it was in need.
- 🌀 The keyworker parents who were able to work from home and kept their children home so that school would not be overwhelmed.
- 🌀 To all the parents who have had more time alone with their children since they were babies and have tried to support their education as best they could – and appreciate how hard our teachers and staff work.
- 🌀 To the grandparents and wider families who have had the painful task of not being able to meet and have made do with contact by phone and Zoom when all they have wanted is to hold their dearest tightly.
- 🌀 To the wider community who have come together to set up a local food bank and keep it stocked so that no family need go hungry.
- 🌀 And most of all to our children who have borne the brunt of this cruel time with all their routine taken away from them and their friendship circles distanced through necessity.

I would also like to thank my fellow Governors for their help and support and willingness to adapt to new ways of Governance. Moving into the new school year we will continue to support the school in adapting to the guidance issued by Department for Education (DfE) and ensuring that we fulfil our duties as Governors with an emphasis on supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of the children, families and staff.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible during the coming months and would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and to ensure you that we are committed and very proud of our School and we will continue working with Mrs West and the Corvus Learning Trust, Staff Team, Parents and Pupils as we all together strive to make Oaklands Junior School an Outstanding School.

Once again thank you, it has been truly humbling to see that when faced with a Pandemic the whole Oaklands Junior School team comes together putting the safety of the children and the staff at the forefront of everything they do.

Yours sincerely,

Charlotte Kieran
Chair of Governors

Esther Blake
Vice Chair

Nada Harding
Vice Chair

Finance and Premises Committee Report

An effective learning environment makes a key contribution to helping to inspire, motivate and challenge our children. The headteacher, staff and teaching assistants create this environment, but they cannot do it alone. They need the support of high-quality facilities and sufficient funding to bring out the best in our children. The role of the Finance and Premises Committee is essentially to ensure that we have strong financial management and that we make the best possible uses of our financial and premises resources for the benefit of our children.

We have an annual income of around £1.1m. In common with all schools, around three-quarters of our income is spent on staff costs. The remainder is largely spent on learning resources and on running and maintaining our buildings and grounds. Every year we also plan to run a number of projects to ensure the continual improvement of our school. The Daily Mile Track was installed over last summer, with our thanks to the PTA for providing substantial funding for this. Work on replacing the school roof, which was mainly paid for from a grant from the government's Condition Improvement Fund, was completed early in the school year. Other projects this year have included a new SEND room, upgrades to the Audio/Visual facilities, installation of VOIP for the telephone system and a rolling decorating programme.

Despite the current pandemic situation, the school ends the year in a stable financial position. We have lost some income streams but have been able to reduce certain costs to balance this out. We have managed to deliver a number of significant projects, although some planned from Easter onwards have had to be deferred to the next school year. Our challenge for the year ahead will depend on how the current situation progresses, but we plan to maintain and strengthen our position and, once again, we trust that parents will be able to assist us in achieving this.

Roger Blake
Chair of Finance & Premises Committee