

Governor Newsletter

Spring Term 2021



Introduction

We have almost reached the end of what has been one of the most challenging terms the school community has faced—how different things looked back in January. How bleak. How quickly things were moving and schools suddenly closed for the second time.

But, as we did during the first Lockdown, the school community rallied together – staff, parents, carers, children and governors – and we have worked our way through it for a second time.

In accordance with government guidelines, and with very little notice, school leaders and staff worked extremely hard to update our remote learning offer to ensure children had access to daily learning activities with detailed planning and resources. Teachers, LSAs and Office staff then continued to work throughout the period of school closure, undertaking curriculum planning and preparation of resources for home learning, including marking and feedback as well as being in school to support those children accessing the key worker / vulnerable children provision. Governors were pleased to note the introduction of regular Teams sessions, offered by the school enabling contact between the children and their teachers as well as with each other, which was well received and proved to be a valuable wellbeing resource.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without you – the parents and carers. Your commitment to supporting the home learning of your children and their ongoing education throughout this period must be commended. It has been so difficult for us all, juggling work commitments with home schooling and everyday family life. But, you did it!

We certainly lived out our vision of working together 'For the body is not one member, but many.' 1 Corinthians 12:14.'

We now face a very different start to the summer term and the future already looks so much brighter as we continue to move forward together.



Governor Monitoring

We have all become so adept at using technology to conduct much of our daily lives and work. And, whilst it has been a steep learning curve, the same is true of school governance. Governors have continued to meet remotely, conduct monitoring and work with school leaders and staff throughout this second period of school closure.

We will continue to follow government guidelines and work remotely for as long as necessary but, we very much look forward to the day we are once again able to work with the children and soak up the experience of



FOUNDATION GOVERNOR VACANCY

As a 'Voluntary Aided' Church of England school, seven of our twelve governors are appointed by the church, with two others appointed by you the parents and one each by the Local Authority and the staff. The twelfth governor is, of course, the Headteacher, who is an ex-officio appointment.

We currently have a vacancy for a new Foundation governor and would like to hear from anyone who might be interested in this role.

So, what are the responsibilities of a Foundation governor? Like all school governors, a Foundation governor has a threefold role to ensure that:

- the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined;
- the headteacher performs his/her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school; and
- there is sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources;

However, a Foundation governor has an important additional responsibility and that is to help preserve and develop the Christian character of the school.

Can anyone be a Foundation governor at a Church of England school? Well, you don't have to attend St Martin's Church, or even live in the village. Neither is it essential that you are a communicant Anglican, but we are looking for someone who can demonstrate a Christian faith and would be comfortable giving a commitment to upholding the Christian ethos of the School.

So, if you are a parent, or maybe a grandparent, and feel that this role might be for you, please send an email to Admin@littlewaltham.essex.sch.uk marking this for my attention and I will get back to you.

Jon Tredwell

Chair of Governors

Introducing our new Local Authority Governor

We are very pleased to introduce you to our newest member of the governing body, Andrew Thorpe-Apps, who joined us in the autumn term. Andrew would like to share the following by way of introduction:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to join Little Waltham's Governing Body. I have previously served as a Governor at Great Waltham Primary School, and I hope to bring that experience in making a strong contribution to the oversight of your fantastic school. As the Local Authority Governor, I will provide that linkage between the school and Essex County Council, in addition to the normal responsibilities placed on all Governors. Originally from Brentwood, I moved to the Chelmsford area in 2007. I live with my partner Victoria, and in August 2020 we were blessed with our first child, George. He has naturally brought us great joy, alongside a few sleepless nights!

I have been interested in education for many years. I believe that, in an increasingly competitive world, a good education is key to enhancing a child's opportunities later in life. As Benjamin Franklin wrote, "an investment in knowledge pays the best interest." That is why I want to play my small part in ensuring our children get the education they deserve. I am a trustee of the Chelmsford Educational Foundation, an excellent charity offering grants to those undertaking Further and Higher Education studies, as well as an Executive Board member of the Campaign for Real Education, a national campaign group demanding the best standards in our schools.

I trained as a solicitor with the Chelmsford firm Gepp Solicitors LLP. Having qualified in 2016, I now work as an in-house solicitor at Anglia Ruskin University, with a particular focus on commercial contracts and collaboration agreements. Before coming to law, I spent two years working in Parliament for the former MP for South-East Cambridgeshire, Sir Jim Paice.

Return to school - Wellbeing

Whilst many of our children were undoubtedly excited to return to school, to see their friends and continue their learning in the classroom, for some there will have been some anxiety following the disruption to learning and the impact of a second period of school closure on their emotional wellbeing.

Staff across the school have been mindful of this and sensitive in their approach, going above and beyond, welcoming and settling the children back into school.

Governors are pleased to note that the return to school has gone really well, with the children settling quickly and happily into the well-established routines from the autumn term. There is a real sense of positivity within school and it's wonderful to hear about all the excellent initiatives in place to support the wellbeing of our children at this time. Here are a few examples:

- Monday worship is pre-recorded for the children to share in their own classrooms enabling everyone to consider the question of the week and to reflect on the message 'together'.
- In Willow class they have been reflecting on Lockdown and considering: what's been difficult; feelings of missing out; discovering new skills.
- They have also introduced an anxiety/calm tree to help children recognise their own emotions; what makes them feel worried; strategies they can use when they feel worried; how you feel when you are calm.
- In Sycamore class they've been holding class discussions about worries and have decided to implement a worry box in class.
- In Maple B children have been learning about working together and helping each other in their PSHE lessons with opportunity for mindfulness colouring and art activities.



Across the school, there have been art afternoons and additional time to read and, recognising the importance of physical activity, there's been lots of additional opportunity to get moving, running around the mile track for example. All these things have helped the children settle back into school and support learning overall.



Plus, the excitement of the 'Golden Tickets' along with other Easter fun has gone a long way to supporting wellbeing amongst the children, causing much excitement and discussion—whilst raising funds at the same time—reminding us all what a fun and happy place Little Waltham School is.



Looking to the future

There is no doubt that this has been a challenging year for all, not least because of the impact it has had on our children. But, there does finally seem to be a glimmer of light and we are all hopeful that the coming term, whatever it brings, is at least less disrupted than the last.

Governors remain as committed as ever to working with school leaders and staff as we continue as a school community forward into next term and begin to plan for the coming academic year and beyond.

We wish you all a very SAFE and HAPPY EASTER.