

Word from Whitehill Governors!



Governors' Newsletter Summer 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

This academic year we welcomed three new governors on to the governing body, and said goodbye to three others. We thank Bill Walker, ex-chair, Marina Hodnett and Peter Scranney for all their hard work and dedication to supporting the school in their governing role. Sam Addison has stepped up to the Chair of Governors role, with Anna Pargeter supporting her as Vice-Chair. Steve Partridge, Debbie Thomson and Nick Price all joined the team as parent governors and have got stuck in to the role since — hopefully we haven't put them off as we have met a number of times since and given them lots of work to do!

Such a lot has happened at Whitehill since our last newsletter, it's hard to keep up!

Since our last report we had a visit from Ofsted, who were very impressed by what they saw. We maintained our 'good' status, which is an excellent place to be as a school.

As governors, our role is to support the school in ensuring our standards are continuously improved as we are all responsible for different parts of the school development plan in order to achieve this. This is linked closely to the areas of improvement suggested in the Ofsted report — of which there were thankfully few!

The 2017 academic results for the school were once again fantastic and our results were well above national average, with 79% achieving expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths combined, against a national figure of 61%.

The support our children receive from all of the staff for outside activities is second to none and we are very lucky that such dedicated staff teach our children.

Attendance figures are very good. We appreciate the effort everyone is making to ensure we maintain this. Did you know that children who have an average of 90% attendance miss the equivalent of half a year of schooling over 5 years?

We strongly believe Whitehill is a very special school — there isn't a day that goes by where something exciting isn't going on for the children. The support of the parents is key to this and we thank you for your continued efforts. Together with the staff team, we are a formidable force!

Have a great Summer term and best of luck to the Year 6s who have just taken their SATs tests.

The Governors



Governors of Whitehill:

Sam Addison	Chair
Laura Cole	Co-opted
Gill Cook	Co-opted
Steve Mills	Headteacher
Debbie Nisbet	Parent
Anna Pargeter	Vice Chair
Steve Partridge	Parent
Nick Price	Parent
Wendie Ray	Local Authority
Debbie Thomson	Parent
Suzanne Walton	Staff

Thank you to the Friends of Highbury and Whitehill

The money raised from the events since April last year was an amazing £3350.00.

The PTA have put on some fantastic events, as always well supported by many parents and carers. They volunteer tirelessly to support our school and the money raised has added so much to the school. This year the money raised has been spent on our playground markings, which included tree tidying and new pathways and more Chromebooks — Mr

Denney got his wish! The money was also spent in entertaining the children with the fantastic Anthony Glenn shows—these are very interactive as well as linking closely to English and are well-worth the money.

I'm sure you've all seen the markings on the playground—don't they look good! They are such good quality I'm sure they'll be enjoyed by children going through the school in many years to come.

We are looking forward to the events planned out for the rest of the Summer term—it's a busy time!

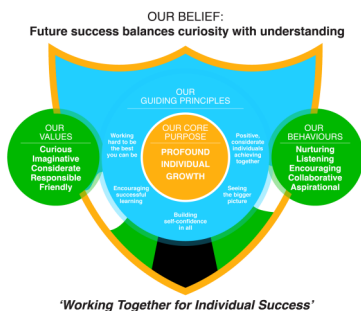


Report from the Inclusion and Pupil Premium Governor

I have visited the school twice this year, with another visit planned this term. With my inclusion hat on, Mrs McConnell-Smith and I did an inclusion learning walk around all the classrooms in the school. We were looking to see how well our children are supported with displays and equipment within the classrooms and how they could use these to access the curriculum. Overall I was very impressed by what I saw. Most notably, each child has their own Maths and English pack, which contain resources to help them in their learning. I also particularly liked the way IT was being used effectively to support children who finding writing more challenging—they were able to speak into a headset and their ideas converted to text—I understand this approach has been very beneficial to those children who need this particular access—and the purchase of more chrome books is only going to be able to support more children.

I share Pupil Premium with Anna Pargeter. We had a recent meeting with Mr Mills where we explored how the school uses the money given— it is clear that this is very well thought out and considered and the money benefits these children to achieve their potential, as well as supporting many other children as well. Mr Mills's passion to ensure progress for every child shines through. If you are interested in the pupil premium spend then you can have a look at this year's report on the school website.

Debbie Nisbet



Report from the Core Purpose and English Link Governor

As a new Governor, I have been immersing myself in new language and terminology and expressed an interest in the core purpose, beliefs and ethos of the school early on. The governors have dedicated areas of focus and I have the Core Purpose and also English as subject matter.

I have conducted one visit so far which was a full day to get a good "feel" of how the core purpose is brought to life within everyday school life and also to get an understanding of how the English curriculum is set. I visited on a Friday and so got to see an Achievers' Assembly as well as 'Hot Chocolate Friday'!

Steve Partridge

Report from the Finance Governor

Since taking over the role of Finance Governor in September I have been working with Mrs Cook to learn more about how the school finances run. Given the well-publicised cuts to school budgets nationally, good financial planning is crucial for any school. I have been very impressed by the well-considered plans in place that make the most of the funding the school does receive.

Spending is linked to support the school development plan, and budgets are very efficiently managed, with strong in-house procurement ensuring we make the most of our money. Good financial management and the continued support from the Friends of Highbury and Whitehill has allowed several projects to take place this year alongside the day to day running of the school:

- Resurfacing of the playgrounds, and new markings and trails
- Significant tree surgery to ensure a continued happy and safe environment around the playgrounds
- Resurfacing of paths into main entrance to make it safe and wheelchair friendly
- Another set of Chromebooks to support digital learning

I'm really enjoying my role as Finance Governor and it's provided me with new insights into the challenges of managing a school on an increasingly tight budget.

Anna Pargeter

Report from a Parent Governor

As a new parent to Whitehill I have enjoyed getting to know the school and all the wonderful experiences it offers our children. As a new Governor I have spent time getting to know how the school works from a system and structure point of view and trying to understand the terminology and the responsibilities the school has to external bodies as well as to the children.

I have conducted a school visit where Mr Mills introduced me to many of the staff and I enjoyed seeing the school at work. I was very impressed with the passion shown by all of the staff. I have also attended training courses to help me understand my role and be able to offer meaningful and constructive support to the school in the future.

Debbie Thomson

Report from the Science link Governor

I am delighted to have had the opportunity to be the Science Link Governor for another year. It is always uplifting to see the way science is taught in the different classes. Science and Computing Week was another great success – whether it be touring the carousel of experiments by class or the madcap science workshop, which included a race involving making a vortex in a giant liquid egg timer as well as making the prerequisite green slime! The highlight however, had to be the Enigma machine brought over from Bletchley Park. Watching the excitement and fascination of the children code and decode was a pleasure.



I was very impressed by the knowledge of WW2 exhibited by the children and their ability to make logical deductions about how the machine worked.

Well done to all the teachers for inspiring such curiosity in the minds of all our Whitehill children, both in that week and throughout the year. Special thanks though, to Mrs Little and Mr Denney for organising it all.

And a shout out to Mrs Little as Science Lead for enabling Whitehill to achieve the Gold Standard Quality Science Mark. The children are very lucky to have access to such a creative and involving way of exploring science.

Wendie Ray



A Final Word from The Chair...

As Chair of Governors, my role includes supporting and leading my colleagues so that they fulfil their duties. I am happy to report that we have a very keen, enthusiastic governing body at Whitehill which helps make my job very enjoyable and rewarding! With a new group recently joining, mixed together with an experienced majority, we have a great blend of skills and experience.

Our team of governors get involved in school life in many ways: school visits by link governors (those with subject priorities), participation in key activities such as Science week, supporting the leadership with school visits, benchmarking our budgets, and asking questions on policies. We're here to support the leadership team by being their 'critical friends', holding the school to account on behalf of parents and the local authority.

Highlights of the year so far include:

- a visit from Sean Harford (OFSTED) who chose Whitehill due to an interest in our success as a Junior School (with a separated Infants) and Mr Mills' unending curiosity and desire to learn and question (living our Core Purpose!).
- the Murder Mystery evening which demonstrated the wider community spirit and dedication of our School.
- witnessing the amazing breadth of extra curriculum activities available to our pupils; the result of great staff commitment and efficient organisation from the leadership team.

Sam Addison