

Governors' Newsletter for Parents and Staff Summer Term 2024

Thank You

On behalf of the Governing Board, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Caroline Hodges for her commitment, drive, enthusiasm, and unerring dedication to the pupils, staff and families of Little Ealing Primary School. Over the past eight years as Headteacher of our school, she has led our fantastic staff to focus on teaching and learning activities that engage and enthuse our pupils to become life- long learners who are living the school values because they are the right things to do. She has been determined to provide a range of opportunities and experiences for pupils and staff to develop their skills and knowledge and become confident citizens in our ever- changing world. She and her husband Chris, who is also a Headteacher have decided to take early retirement and relocate to Cornwall, where we wish them both a very happy, healthy and wonderful new life away from the hustle and bustle of their schools and living in London.

Welcome

We will be welcoming our new headteacher, Ms Emily Caldwell on our return to school in September. Ms Caldwell has been a frequent visitor to school this term, working with Mrs Hodges, Mrs Rooney and Mrs Trigg-Williams to plan for the upcoming year, getting to know the school and our priorities to build on the fantastic achievements to date and to lead our fabulous team to continue to find innovative teaching and learning opportunities that enhance the life skills our pupils need to access the next stage in their education

Governing Board Changes

We are also saying goodbye to two of our most experienced governors this term. Alex Vines who was a parent governor and treasurer of the PTFA whilst his children were at the school and after a brief absence, rejoined the Governing Board as a co-opted Governor in Summer 2020 and has been the Chair of our Resources Committee for the past 3 years. His clarity of thought and purpose has enhanced our decision making and his tenacity in getting value for money is legendary. Alex has contributed in so many ways to our school over the years and will be very sorely missed on the Governing Board.

We also had to say goodbye to Jacqueline Job shortly after Easter for personal reasons. Jacqueline was a co-opted Governor who is a headteacher of an all through primary and secondary independent school in another borough. She has brought wisdom, insight, challenge and a wealth of experience to our decision making and will also be sorely missed.

I would personally like to thank both Alex and Jacqueline for their support and hard work and commitment to Little Ealing.

We will be welcoming 2 new co-opted governors to the Board next term, Tanya Gallagher who will sit on Teaching and Learning Committee and Dev Daas who will join the Resources Committee.

Attendance and Punctuality

Our attendance this year has been disappointing as it has dropped to 95.9%. Only 3% of absence is accounted for by illness. We have 30 children who are persistently absent (i.e. below 90% attendance). The Local Authority have issued numerous fines to parents who have taken family holidays during term time and as of September will be considering taking parents to court. We have also seen an increase in parents bringing their children into school late. This poor punctuality means

classes are disrupted and latecomers miss out on the start of lessons and the information they need to access their learning.

We are asking for your support in bringing your children to school on time and every day when there well enough to be in school. Poor attendance and lateness negatively impact on children's learning.

Congratulations

We would like to congratulate all our pupils on all their achievements, and we were delighted that this was recognised recently by Little Ealing becoming school 138 in the Sunday Times top 500 primary schools. We are very proud of all our pupils and the breadth of their achievements be they academic, social, in sport or musically. The oracy skills that they have been learning this year will help them throughout their education and into their chosen careers.

Thank You

The Governing Board would like to thank our amazing PTFA for raising £44,000 this year to help the school. In addition to supporting activities and resources for our disadvantaged pupils, they are financing the development of the rainbow garden and integration of gardening and cooking into the curriculum with support from Studio Collective. They have equipped the new Food Tech Room which was remodelled using capital funding to enhance the like for like for like insurance claim to make it a flexible learning space.

We wish you all a great summer and look forward to welcoming your children back to school on Tuesday 3rd September and to seeing you at the Year Ahead meeting on Monday 16th September at 6.30pm.

Shirley Kenworthy-Wright, Chair of Governors

Safeguarding update

We have had a busy term regarding safeguarding:

- Alex Vines and I visited the school to meet with pupils, staff, and leaders; the purpose of our visit was to understand the school's approach to maintaining a safe learning environment for its pupils, the robustness of policies and procedures, and how well understood they are by all staff. It was good to meet with children to hear their experiences; they talked about consent, respect, diversity and 'banter' (a focus on November's anti-bullying week) with real sophistication, kindness and thoughtfulness. We saw that Mrs Rooney and the safeguarding leads have embedded strong principles that are well-understood and diligently followed.
- LEPS takes a proactive approach to behaviour and safeguarding
- We also reviewed the school's filtering and monitoring procedures, which allow children to use the internet safely and with a degree of freedom, in school and at home. The system which was put in place at the start of the year is working well
- Online safety, in terms of teaching effective online behaviour and creating a digital environment where children can learn safely, is a core part of LEPS' five-year strategy; it's great to see how this is continuing to grow significantly under Mrs. Mayer's leadership.
- 'The 2 Johns' delivered an online workshop recently, outlining some of the risks and dangers of the online world; it is still available to view online until the end of term, and is an eye-opening and practical education for parents whose children spend any time at all online.

We were encouraged by what we saw - LEPS has a proactive, responsible and comprehensive approach to safeguarding across the board; staff are aware of policies and procedures and follow them diligently. Children feel safe, heard and know that any issues they raise will be taken seriously and managed well. Thank you, Mrs Rooney and the whole school team for continuing to ensure a safe, conducive learning environment.

Andrew Wood, Safeguarding Link Governor

Teaching and Learning update

Each term we discuss the school's attainment and progress data. There is plenty of evidence that Little Ealing's pupils are learning and being taught well across the board. Reading continues to be a strength, and the school's focus on writing and maths is showing positive results.

The art curriculum has been substantially updated this year for all years; a recent peer review indicates that LEPS' approach to art is joined-up and effective.

The growing need for SEN provision is a national challenge for education; from the data, Little Ealing's SEN children appear to be doing well and are well-catered for.

The school's oracy programme, which develops children's ability to express themselves fluently and confidently through their speech, is growing under Mr. Jackson's leadership. During a recent visit, Shirley witnessed first-hand the positive impact it is having on children's ability to discuss, debate and communicate their thoughts in their speaking and writing.

The annual Literature Festival, where published authors visit the school to talk about their books with the children, is always a highlight of the year, and a great demonstration of the creative and engaging learning environment at our school. As always, there was a great buzz around it this year and some brilliant authors visiting the school. Thank you to Katie Stone and Ms Trigg- Williams for making this happen.

Every term the school reviews and updates a selection of its policies relating to learning and behaviour, and Caroline Hodges and her team have updated or created several of these policies this term. These include robust and thoughtful policies regarding mobile phone and devices, relationships education, and playground behaviour, which parents might be interested in reading - they can all be found on the school's website under the 'Information for Parents' section.

Under Caroline's leadership, the school's focus on the quality and breadth of education across all LEPS' pupils, subjects and stages is crystal clear. We witness it in the discussions we have with staff in committees, the presented data relating to pupil performance, and the regular learning visits to the school. She leaves LEPS with a very strong curriculum and learning culture for Mrs. Caldwell to pick up. Thank you, Mrs. Hodges!

Andrew Wood, Chair of Teaching and Learning Committee

Resources update

As the school year draws to a close, we have already completed 3 months of our new financial year. We ended the financial year just within our budget, and as we set a balanced budget every year this means that our expenditure matched our income. Unlike many schools we are fortunate in that we have stayed in-budget for many years and have not needed to eat into our reserves. So far this year we are also running to our budget, so I am hopeful that we can continue this trend for a while to come.

With our new Head Teacher joining at the start of the next academic year, the governors will be working with her to review our school strategy and align our future spending priorities with that strategy. Whilst we do have some money available to spend, we need to balance that against potential risks we face (for instance a rise in teacher pay that isn't matched with increased government funding) so I expect us to continue to run a reserve fund to ensure we are insulated from any future shocks.

One of the risks that we face is that most of our school buildings are showing their age. The Local Authority had already started a set of works to update our roofing and other structures, when a severe storm caused flooding in the IT Suite, a classroom and a corridor, which required us to close all three for safety reasons. Fortunately, our insurance will cover us for these additional repairs, and the IT Suite is already back in action.

In addition to managing our financial resources, the Resources Committee is also responsible for the physical assets in the school, and I am pleased to announce that we are in the process of upgrading our aging school IT server. We debated continuing with the current system for another year, which it was probably capable of doing, but with technology being such a key aspect of learning we felt that we did not want to risk any potential disruption to the impressive set of Macs, Chromebooks, and iPads that the school has acquired. Most of these have been donated by the PTFA over the past few years, and I want to give special thanks to the PTFA for their tireless work in ensuring that the school can afford these "extra" items that our ordinary budget would not cover. As a former Trustee of the PTFA I know just how much effort goes into running all their events.

I want to thank Caroline for her superb tenure as our Head Teacher. It has been a pleasure to work alongside her, and to see the love and care that she has invested in the school. I wish her all the best in her retirement.

Finally, after 2 terms as a governor I am also calling time on my relationship with LEPS. I wish the new Head, staff and the governors all the best, and I am confident that they will continue to ensure that LEPS is a special school that our children will treasure in their memories as much as my children still do even as they approach university age.

Alex Vines, Chair of Resources Committee

Pay Committee update

This month was a particularly poignant annual pay committee meeting, which was brought forward from the usual September slot for obvious reasons. The committee reflected that under Mrs Hodges' leadership we have had a progressive shift in appraisal to one that appears to be far more collaborative, reflective and strategically aligned to the school development plans.

The quality of the appraisals that we reviewed, has notably improved incrementally over the years- the anonymised evidence that was shared with us was exceptionally well-structured and written and demonstrated professional pride, reflection and growth. Teachers in addition to demonstrating commitment and expertise in teaching and learning across the curriculum, have focused in specifically on oracy and each undertaken independent research on a wide range of topics and adapted their practice accordingly. We were given a real sense of a highly motivated, committed staff who often go over and above in order to create this wonderful community. Many of our teachers have done all or much of their training at LEPS with a fantastic historic track record of talent spotting and nurturing amongst our support staff and student-teachers to "grow our own". Mrs Hodges and her team have developed an effective appraisal process reflective of a coaching culture that is becoming increasingly embedded and placing us in the best possible position for the future.

We thank our entire staff for all their efforts this academic year. We hope you can rest, relax and recuperate over the summer break, ready to return with the same commitment, passion and vigour that you have demonstrated this academic year.

Reham Baruah, Vice Chair of Governors and Chair of Pay Committee