

Governors' Newsletter for Parents and Staff Spring Term 2024

Chair's Update

We had a busy start to the term with 2 days of interviews and assessments for the 4 candidates we shortlisted for the post of Headteacher at Little Ealing Primary School. As you are aware we appointed Miss Emily Caldwell to be our new Headteacher from September 2024 and she will be working with Mrs Caroline Hodges during the Summer Term to ensure there is a smooth transition for staff, pupils, and parents for the new academic year.

I would like to thank the whole school community for getting involved in the recruitment process and in particular the recruitment panel of governors and Local Authority Advisors who ensured that the process was very thorough and fair.

We have not had any changes to the Governing Board this term, although we have changed some roles and responsibilities. Andrew Wood has taken over from Katie Stone as Chair of Teaching and Learning Committee, Ben Lever has taken on the Vice Chair of Resources and Sharde Hurd has taken on the role of link Governor for SEND.

At our Governing Board meeting last week, we received the latest attendance statistics and were pleased to see that the number of pupils persistently absent (less than 90% attendance since September 2023) from school had decreased and that we will be close to achieving our attendance target of 97%. Our expectation is that every child from Reception to year 6 will be in school on every day during term time unless they are too unwell to attend or there is an exceptional circumstance (please refer to the attendance policy available on the school website). We noted that there are some families who have taken children out of school during term time for family holidays and these have been referred to the Local Authority for fines to be issued. We were also concerned about the number and frequency of children arriving late for school. Children coming late into class can disrupt other children's learning and they can miss the start of a lesson which is vital to understanding what is being taught, such as the phonics sound for the day. Please support your child in arriving at school at 8.30am and be aware that the gates are locked at 8.38am and our morning lessons start promptly at 8.40am.

We continue to work together with the Senior Leadership Team in delivering the School Development plan priorities and our 5- year strategic plan. We are very grateful to the PTFA who have raised over £50,000 to support the school this year. A fair chunk of this has been spent on purchasing 100 ipads to be used to support learning in class.

Finally, I would like to thank all our staff and the senior leadership team for their commitment to bringing about continuous improvement to all aspects of school and the outcomes for pupils. We really appreciate your dedication to our school community, your willingness to embrace new ways of working and your desire to develop yourselves to ensure our pupils are prepared for the next stage of their education.

Shirley Kenworthy-Wright, Chair of Governors

Safeguarding update

The school had a thorough elective external audit of its safeguarding practices last term, where staff were praised for the school's culture and discipline around providing a safe learning environment for its children.

A lot of focus this term has been on how the school provides safe access to the internet. In September, the requirements for monitoring and filtering traffic across the school's networks were tightened, and Mrs Rooney and her safeguarding team (including Mrs. Trigg, who has joined the safeguarding group this term in her role as a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead) have implemented and updated the school's IT systems to be fully compliant with the new requirements.

As a result, parents, carers and teachers can be comfortable that anything accessed by anyone from the school's network (or from outside if pupils are logged into their Google Classroom account) is suitable for children. Anything that may be suspect (such as a potentially inappropriate Google search) is flagged immediately for review, and details shared with senior members of staff for follow up, meaning that LEPS pupils can use the internet to support their learning without being overly restricted or being exposed to things they shouldn't be.

I spent some time with Mrs Rooney recently in school reviewing the new systems, and I was impressed by how quickly the school has moved to put them in place, how effective and responsive the systems appear to be, and how thoroughly embedded they already are.

Andrew Wood, Safeguarding Link Governor

Teaching and Learning update

Katie Stone's term as governor ended last term, and I have stepped into her (metaphorically) huge shoes as chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee, supporting the school's leadership in its provision of the best possible learning for all pupils.

At my first T&L committee meeting earlier this term, we spent time discussing:

- The school's excellent phonics results, which are in the top 4% of schools nationally and which have been recognised by the Minister for Education, and similarly excellent results in Key Stage 1 reading.
- The school's approach to Oracy (how pupils listen and express themselves through speech), led by Mr. Jackson, which covers every year from nursery up, and which is in its early, promising stages. We're looking forward to seeing how this takes shape and may make it the subject of a learning visit next year.
- The impact of the change in the way the school is teaching writing, which has been designed to give children more opportunity to show their ability to write independently.
- The challenges faced by all schools in sourcing permanent Learning Support Assistants, which are in very limited supply, and how LEPS is assessing and addressing this by continuing to grow its own LSAs; this is an ongoing challenge and will stay on the agenda.
- The broad and deep range of training and development activities in which staff are involved, across a range of subjects including coaching, Therapeutic Thinking, special educational needs, and supervision.

I thoroughly enjoyed going deeper into the way the school's leaders review, innovate and deliver the curriculum, develop their own knowledge and expertise, and put the development of LEPS' children front and centre.

Andrew Wood, Chair of Teaching and Learning Committee

Resources Update

We have had a busy term. The school is going through extensive building work including the refurbishment of the food technology room, work on the gables, and imminent work on the roof.

The recent flood has affected the corridor leading to the ICT room and Dorset class which have had to relocate to the Modern Languages Room temporarily. We hope to get a swift resolution to these repairs. The roof works will recommence in the summer holidays, and we are awaiting confirmation of the extent of the works and the schedule so we can let the community know what will be happening.

The Food Technology Room has been completed and looks great. We took the opportunity to equip the room to enable the space to be used more flexibly to give more opportunities for learning.

We're approaching the end of the financial year, and we've really seen the impact of rising prices, especially for energy, on our finances. Fortunately, the school has built up a contingency over the past few years for just such a situation, which has helped us absorb these extra costs. However, we expect the year ahead to be another challenging period, with extremely tight government funding, although our aim as ever will be to run a balanced budget.

Alex Vines, Chair of Resources Committee