



Lillington Nursery and Primary School Governor Newsletter



December 2015

Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome to the first governor newsletter for 2015/16! The governors are pleased to be able to provide you with some information about our activities on behalf of the school and your children. We are planning to make this newsletter a termly occurrence.

This term saw Mr Paul Gurton re-elected as the **Chair of Governors**. He is also in charge of the Standards Committee (which deals with all the teaching and learning enjoyed by pupils from day to day). Mr Gurton is ideally suited for these roles: an ex-headteacher, he is a senior lecturer at the University of Wolverhampton, training future primary school teachers. Mrs Safiyya Sheik Madar, a parent governor, continues as **Vice-Chair of Governors** and is also the new Chair of the Resources Committee which oversees the school buildings and site, the budget, and the employment of all staff.

Lillington Nursery and Primary School is getting bigger and better! When Mr Fance arrived as Head teacher in 2012 there were just 179 pupils on role in the school. That number has risen to 343 (from Rising Stars to Year 6) and the school has capacity for 530. We are proud of this managed expansion and the success and good reputation that the school now enjoys in the local area which is bringing us new pupils.

As a feature of the school expansion governors have been overseeing the introduction of **two** classes in Years 5, 4 and 2 by early next year. They have ensured that enough extra money is available for new staff and well-equipped classrooms. Parents have been consulted as part of this process.

Another area of focus has been how the staff are bringing in changes to **assessment** (that is, how teachers and pupils can check on individual progress). Last year the "levels" system (which put most Year 6 pupils between levels 4 and 6) was dropped nationally, and schools have had to choose from a variety of new methods. We introduced the **Learning Ladders** scheme – and parents/carers can now see how their children are getting on through their own computers, smartphones and tablets. We believe it to be a good choice, as **Learning Ladders** meets Government and OFSTED standards and was a winner in an innovation contest. This year, we expect it to be fully 'bedded into' the academic life of LNPS – with pupils knowing precisely where they are and then setting targets to achieve. But, like all new developments, it will need to be regularly scrutinised to ensure that it is working effectively for children, staff and parents.

The governors are following closely efforts to raise school attendance even higher – it was 96.8% in the first half-term this year (Mr Fance's target is 98%). In particular, the persistent absence of a few pupils has dropped significantly. We also support the 'leave of absence' policy to keep pupils at school **as much as possible** – which helps them in both their schoolwork and their friendships.

There is firm evidence that most of our youngest children who have been in **Rising Stars** have made better progress in talking and reading by the **Reception** year than those who haven't. Three-quarters of them leave at a good level of development – doing slightly better than the national average.

As well as always making sure that all pupils, whatever their needs, do as well as possible, the governors, in consultation with the leadership team, set particular **priorities** for each school year. In 2015-2016, these are:

- (1) to improve children's writing abilities;
- (2) to speed up the progress of pupils who belong to vulnerable groups or are new to the school;
- (3) to help children and staff to move forward confidently through their life at the school.

The school is already making progress against these objectives and amongst other things staff have held a parent information meeting on the learning ladders, they have also received training on cross-curricular writing, a "buddy system" is in place for new pupils, work is ongoing to support children whose first language is not English and the new teachers coming in January have written to the families of their new pupils to make early contact.

Almost the last topic of discussion at our December Governors' meeting was the work which the School is doing to support pupils who are **Young Carers**, that is, they play a part at home in looking after a parent or other family member who is long-term poorly or disabled in some way. This really sums up the tireless efforts of the School's leaders - and the staff under them - to support each and every child at LNPS.

The governing body is always looking for ways to improve the way it works and for suggestions for improvements to the school and opportunities for your children. Our local MP, Mr Chris White, continues as an Associate Member of the Board – so we have a direct link with Westminster and Whitehall if needed! But we also have vacancies for two parent governors and would like any interested parents to stand for election to these posts early in 2016.

May we take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support for our thriving school and wish you a very Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year!

Mr R Clark and the Board of Governors

