

**GOVERNORS SUMMER NEWSLETTER ~ JULY 2015**

As we reach the end of the academic year, it is time once again for me to share with parents some of the discussions which have taken place on the Governing Body this term.

In June, many Governors attended the Governor Open Day, where we had the privilege of visiting the school during the school day, sitting in on lessons and lunchtime clubs and talking to the children about their work. This was an extremely valuable experience and Governors reported back positively on the children's excellent behaviour, engagement in the lessons, beautiful and interesting displays throughout both schools and pleasant atmospheres in the staffrooms where Governors had a chance to chat to teachers. Both schools provided Governors with a detailed plan of what was going on during the day, enabling us to focus on different aspects of school life.

Last term, parents, pupils and staff filled out school surveys from the School Survey Experts Company. Just over 60% of parents in both schools returned the surveys, which already shows high parental engagement. The children in the Infant School filled out their forms at home, while the Junior School children did them at school. 54% of Infant children returned their forms.

Below is a brief summary for both schools with some main points highlighted. You may remember that there is an option to write 'No Opinion' so the disagreements are not usually the percentage left over. Where there is a more significant disagreement however, it has been noted.

Of the Infant School children who filled out their forms, 95% know the school rules, 95% say their teacher expects them to work hard and do their best, 90% say their teacher explains things clearly and 92% say they feel safe at school. Children do however want more computers as only 34% agreed that there were enough to use. Some children would like to do more at lunchtime and after school with 15% disagreeing with the statement that there were lots of things to do at those times. Some children (14%) don't agree that the school teaches them to eat and drink healthily.

Infant School parents again were overwhelmingly positive. 97% say their child is happy at the school, 95% say the school keeps their child safe, 94% believe the school to be a friendly and welcoming place, 89% agree that their child is taught well, 90% believe that the school ensures that pupils are well behaved, 94% believe that the school is well led and managed and 91% would recommend this school to another parent. Lower percentages were again related to IT where 61% of parents agree that the school has good IT facilities and uses them well. Homework and the level of challenge has also been a point of discussion, with 61% agreeing that the school provides their child with sufficient challenge in their homework but 26% disagreeing with this statement. Although 70% of parents agree that the school provides their children with sufficient challenge, 16% disagree with this statement.

In the Junior School, 90% of the children filled out the form. 98% of the children understand the school rules, 97% say the school helps them to understand the difference between right and wrong, 100% say working hard at school is important, 94% say the school cares about them, 99% say their teacher expects them to work hard and to do their best and 96% say the teacher explains to them how to improve their work. 94% say the teacher explains things clearly and 94% believe they can get help with their work when they need it. The lowest percentage among the children was 77% agreeing that there are enough computers but 22% actively disagreeing. 78% of the children believe that the school is good at stopping bullying with 19% disagreeing.

Junior school parents who filled out their form were also overwhelmingly positive. 87% of Junior parents who completed the survey believe their child is happy at school, 85% think that it is a good school and are proud

that their child attends it, 89% believe that the school's building is clean and fit for purpose, 86% of parents believe that staff expect their child to work hard and to do their best, 79% believe that their child is taught well, 88% think that the school instils morals and positive attitudes in their child and 85% believe that pupils are well behaved. 80% believe the school to be well led and managed and 80% would also recommend this school to another parent. Some parents would like homework to provide more of a challenge with 61% agreeing that it does provide sufficient challenge but 29% disagreeing. 64% believe that their child's school work provides them with sufficient challenge and 24% disagree. 71% believe that they are kept well informed about how their child is progressing although 21% disagree.

The survey has formed a basis for discussion in smaller committees this term and staff from both schools have analysed the data and discussed some aspects in staff meetings.

In the last Governing Body meeting of this term, the Junior School presented the Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) programme to governors. This is a new programme which has been launched this year. Resources have been updated with age appropriate material for all years and parents have been informed of the main changes made. Staff commented that the children were engaged in these lessons and are responding positively. Information on the new SRE programme is up on the school website. Thank you to Miss Conheady who has led on SRE this year.

The Infant School presented on Physical Education and Sports Funding Expenditure. This extra sports funding for schools is a legacy of the 2012 London Olympic Games. Staff explained that research had shown that increased physical activity also expanded pupils' mental capacity in the classroom. Governors noted how the money is being spent. Initiatives include INSET training for staff on supporting physical activity in the playground, the employment of a Sports Specialist to support the more able pupils in Year 2, participation in the Barnet Dance Festival 2015 and visits and talks by professional athletes. The School is in the process of applying for the Bronze Healthy School Award and is aiming to achieve the Gold Award in due course. Thank you to Mrs Menezes and Mrs Alam for leading on this initiative.

Sadly, several staff are leaving this year. They are Miss Ward, Miss Bazzoni and Miss Scott in the Junior school. Assistant Deputy Head, Mr Warren is also moving on after 6 years at Garden Suburb Junior School as well as Mrs Malik, the Junior School Administrator who is retiring after 26 years. Mrs O'Regan in the Infant School is retiring but she will be continuing at the school on a part-time basis in an out of class role. Teaching assistants Mr Ganatra from the Junior School and Mrs Martins and Mrs Birke from the Infant School are also leaving. The Governing Body would like to thank everyone for all they have contributed throughout their time here and wish them well for the future.

The Summer Term is a busy one with the Year 2 end of year assessments, the Year 6 SATs, sports days, PTA events including the circus and the international food fair and the fabulous Year 2 and Year 6 shows. Thank you to all the parents who have helped out on the PTA this year. Your hard work helps to create a real sense of community as well as raise valuable funds for the schools. Thank you too to Head Teachers Mrs Bhavsar and Miss Sands and all the staff for their hard work and dedication this year.

Julia Sannit
Chair of Governors

Francois Siddi
Vice-Chair of Governors