



St Swithun's CE Primary School
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14 July 2017

Dear parents and carers

Governing body report 2016-2017

As we come to the end of another school year, it is my pleasure to reflect on the governing body's work and report to you on our activities since I last wrote to you in December.

A new governing body

In December Jenny Forder and Will Shingler left the governing body after 4.5 and 3.5 years respectively. They both made significant contributions, having chaired committees and been active and committed governors. In the spring, Gordon Buxton was elected by parents to sit on the governing body. He will be well known to many as an energetic figure in FOSS, playgroup and cubs! We currently have just one vacancy for a foundation governor. Foundation governors are appointed by the Diocese, are regular churchgoers of any denomination and not necessarily members of the St Swithun's congregation. If you know of someone who might fit these criteria and be interested in joining us, please contact Reverend Alison Mathew via the school office.

It is a statutory requirement that we publish governor attendance at full governing body meetings, and this data will be available on the school website in September.

School improvement priorities

We have supported and challenged school leaders to make improvements in the identified priority areas this year:

- End of Key Stage 2 attainment
- Standards in maths
- Standards in writing – adapting to the new demands of the national curriculum and assessment frameworks
- Raising the attainment of children who receive pupil premium funding
- Raising standards in Early Years and Key Stage 1
- Raising standards in grammar, punctuation and spelling
- Improving outcomes for vulnerable pupils

We have learned about the school's strategies for achieving these goals and evaluating their impact through meetings with key staff, questioning during governing body meetings, listening to pupils, looking at children's work and the learning environment and scrutinising the school's internal and external (SAT) results. We believe you will be able to see the positive results that the schools has had when they tell you about the children's results in Early Years, Key Stage 1 and at the end of Key Stage 2 before Christmas.

Looking forward

In the autumn we will spend time understanding the attainment and progress of each year group, and particular groups of children, to inform the school improvement plan for 2017-18.

You may have read of national concerns about state school budgets in the press in recent months. The funding that school receives per pupil has been cut by 8% in real terms, and while this remains a topic of concern for governors, we have the greatest confidence in the leadership and financial management of the school, led by Helen Atkinson and Claire Serle. As a result of this highly competent management, we have not had to make redundancies. Because



St Swithun's is a great school, it has been able to recruit experienced and recently qualified staff even though the cost of living is high in the local area. So the budget is tight but we can reassure you that the devastating cost-cutting exercises seen in some schools have been avoided here, and the learning and wellbeing of children are paramount in financial decision making. If you are as concerned as we are about the long-term threats that cuts pose to high quality state education, I do encourage you to write to our new MP Layla Moran, who is a former Physics teacher and the Liberal Democrats' Education spokesperson (Layla.moran.mp@parliament.uk or @laylamoran if you use twitter).

We would like to thank FOSS for their huge fundraising energy; their efforts make a significant contribution to school funds and the totals raised seem to grow every year! Thank you to all parents, carers and friends who give so generously of time and money throughout the year.

Parents' views

If you completed a parent questionnaire this year, thank you. We will analyse and digest the results in September and report to you on the actions we take as a result.

Highlights of the year

Mrs Topliss and Mrs Atkinson attended a ceremony at the leading research Institute of Education at University College London last week, where our headteacher received the Reading Recovery Inspirational Leadership award. Many of you will not be aware of the work that Mrs Topliss does as Reading Recovery teacher in Key Stage 1. She works with individual children to nurture and support their reading development, ensuring that they do not fall behind their peers and giving them the tools they need to unlock their potential and develop a love of reading for pleasure.

Having waited more than five years for an inspection, two came along at once! The outcome of both was very positive and governors were pleased that Ofsted said that this is **'a friendly and happy school where pupils feel valued, enjoy learning and make good progress'**.

We hope that you and your children are happy at St Swithun's; if so, please do spread the word – this is a great school and learning community. Appointments to meet Mrs Atkinson and tour the school can be booked in September for 2018 entry.

We wish you and your families a happy summer.

Yours sincerely

Helen Forey
Chair of governors
(contact via school office)

