

# Governor's Newsletter



Autumn 2020



## Stef Goodwin:

This year has shown unprecedented times for us all. COVID-19 changed the landscape in our schools and communities, it found our school leaders having to steer a course within the constantly changing government guidelines to provide the best educational experience that was possible for all our children. I would firstly like to say a huge thank you to all the staff that have worked so hard this year. I don't think it can be under estimated the amount of hard work that has gone into planning, structuring the school and doing their very best to keep pupils and staff safe in very challenging times.



I have had the opportunity to visit school under somewhat different conditions than visits over the previous years, however it has always been evident to see the care our children have for their learning and the passion for their work. I would also like to say how wonderful it has been to see the smiling happy faces of our children back in school showing wonderful attitudes having been out of a school setting for so long. My visits have primarily focussed on the processes in place to manage and assess the impact of COVID on school and attendance.



Next term the visits I plan to undertake will look towards behaviour and the application and use of funds designed to help our children catch up their in-school learning time missed this year. We welcomed new governors to our board this year and I have been grateful for all their time and work in their roles as local board members. The local governing board has continued to meet remotely throughout the pandemic and many of our governors have undertaken monitoring visits both virtually and in person where safe to do so.

I look forward to my visits to school in the New Year and I would finally like to wish all staff, children and families a peaceful and happy Christmas.

## Liz Rose:



This has been a challenging term but, as always, the Whittle community has worked together to keep children safe, learning and happy. I have been delighted to hear about the wonderful work happening this term - from fantastic progress in phonics in Key Stage 1, to the further development of the Whittle core values across the curriculum and the brilliant work that pupils have been doing both in school and at home when necessary.

Although things have had to be different this term, it is clear that children have shown resilience and adapted really well to the careful changes that Mrs Harris and the team have put in place. As we approach the end of term, I would like to thank all of the staff for their hard work and congratulate the children for their exceptional hard work and care for one another. Finally, I would like to wish everyone at Whittle and in our community a peaceful and safe holiday and a very happy New Year.



### Amy Charles:



I had the pleasure of meeting with our new SEND governor this term - Dave. It was great to have the opportunity to talk him through our SEND policy and procedures. COVID has obviously had a huge impact on how we have run our interventions this term, but it was great to have the opportunity to showcase what we have been able to provide.



KS1 are benefiting from having Catherine, who is a credited Thrive practitioner, in school. She is running Thrive groups to support children's social and emotional health. In years 3 and 4, identified children are accessing our forest school programme run by Nicky. This has proved an invaluable intervention for raising self-esteem and team-building skills.

Luke Harris, our Pastoral Manager, is supporting the children in Years 5 and 6 through 1:1 work and small group work.

We are delighted with how all children are responding to these interventions, adding another layer to our already comprehensive whole-school approach in prioritising children's social and emotional health.

As always, if you have any concerns over your child's needs, please do not hesitate to speak with their class teacher or email the office [admin@whittleacademy.org](mailto:admin@whittleacademy.org)

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

### Dave Barker:

My name is Dave Barker, I am fairly new to the board of governors having started in February just before lockdown. I am the local Baptist pastor.

One of my roles as a governor is to look at the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision of the school. This term I met up with Miss Charles who takes a lead on SEND to find out all the real things that the school are doing to help those who need additional support.



### Ellie Seaton:

This term, I had the pleasure of being invited into school to look at the learning environment. The staff have done an incredible job of creating a vibrant and welcoming place for children to learn, where the use of displays around the school effectively communicates the school's core values, inspires curiosity and showcases the children's high-quality work.

One thing that really stood out during this visit was the school's calm and happy atmosphere, where every single child was engaged with their learning. This is a testament to the hard work of staff to ensure that all children feel safe, settled and valued after a turbulent end to the last school year. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them all, and to wish you a happy and safe Christmas!



### Jo Sharp:



I am delighted to introduce myself as a new Parent Governor. I have been a parent at Whittle Academy for over five years, where all three of my children have attended. My eldest two now attend secondary school but my youngest is currently in Year 4.

Supporting my children's learning has opened my eyes to how unique an educational journey can be. I am passionate about children being provided with opportunities to achieve their individual potential, regardless of how that compares to others. I have recently completed a psychology degree and am currently employed as a Teaching Assistant in a Primary School. I very much look forward to making a positive contribution to this role and would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas!

