

Denby Dale First and Nursery School Governors

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Children achieve well at school when their family and friends take an interest in their school and schoolwork. Getting involved in your child's education, even in the simplest way, shows that you care about their school life.

Welcome to the Governors' Newsletter. I believe that it has been a while since the last one, to be honest so long even I can't remember, so we thought it was time to update you on what we are doing.

Funding

Some of you may be aware that although the government promised to protect education funding overall there have been both winners and losers in the reorganisation. Unfortunately, our school has been one of those losers. Local Authority funding has reduced by more than 15% over the last 5 years and other effects to benefits and behavioural support have had a worsening effect on the school's budget. According to the website www.schoolcuts.org.uk the impact of the new funding formula will mean a real-time cut of a further £55.160 by 2019, or to put it another way, losing the equivalent of a teacher post.

This means the school having to make major adjustments, that I am sure have not gone unnoticed, we have reduced both the teaching and support staff significantly. All without any compulsory redundancies and I would like to take a minute to personally thank those staff who have who have left us over the last 3 years for their fantastic service and support for the school.

This also has an impact on those who are left and I ask you to please give constant support and thanks to every member of staff. They are doing a fantastic job. Recently I had my annual meeting with the school council and spent some time being shown around. I can honestly say that when I asked a child if they were happy, learning and having fun each one had the same positive response. Parents you have super kids, polite and happy, a credit to both you and the school.

So, the challenge is, to misquote JFK, "Ask not what your school can do for you, but what can you do for your school", because it's not just your child's school, it's your school too. If you're a parent, member of staff, volunteer, grand parent, carer or member of the Denby Dale community, we need you; your support, your patience, your skills, your time. If you could spare any of those, please arrange to see Miss Wood or any of the Governors, even if it's just a smile.

Mark Eaton (Chair of Governors)

Parent Consultation Working Group

Over the past 18 months a small number of governors have been meeting on a regular basis to look at the way in which the school works with and communicates with parents. We have explored a number of issues and a number of changes to practice have resulted from our working group.

The first and probably most significant is the Parent Forum which has now been running for approximately 12 months. This is an open forum for any parent from school to come to with each meeting having a specific focus for discussion. We would like to thank any parent who has already attended one of these meetings. We have held several successful evenings and have had some really useful feedback that we have been able to share with Miss Wood and her team. There have been several useful changes that we have been able to implement. Firstly, the introduction of the parent handbook given to all parents at their initial consultation in September. This included generic information about the school that representatives from the parent forum felt it would be useful to share at the start of the term. Huge thanks to Clair Wright for collating and producing this information to which teachers then added class specific information. If for some reason you did not receive this information please contact your class teacher.

In addition to this the parent forum has discussed issues such as homework and the way in which homework is shared with parents. Homework is now regularly being set on the VLE with some teachers often adding extra information about what the class have been doing over the past week. At the last parent forum people were very pleased with this system. We hope that those who have attended these evenings have felt that they have been useful and we look forward to more parents sharing their thoughts and ideas in the coming months.

We have decided to set regular dates for the parent forums so that people can plan in advance. Each parent forum will be held on the 3rd Monday back at the beginning of each term. This makes the next meeting: **Monday the 23rd of January 6.30pm** and the final forum of the year will be **Monday the 8th of May 6.30pm**. As per the previous forums feedback will be shared with Miss Wood and the staff and any responses shared with parents. We also plan on putting this information on the school website.

During our Consultation Working group meetings we have discussed many further issues regarding communication with parents. We are pleased to note that the school website is much improved and is a lovely way of finding out what has been happening in school. It is also pleasing to see that children who have been on 'Special Mentions', are now listed on the website, along with a text message being sent out to all relevant parents of those children. Please remember that you can always ask to read the special mentions book to find out exactly what your child's teacher has said.

In addition to this the group used a questionnaire to gather information relating to how useful parent's found the earlier parent consultation meetings in 2015 and used this to slightly change the way in which these meetings were held this year. It was also pleasing to see parents having the opportunity to have extra consultations with teachers throughout the year as and when the need arose.

Ruth Liu (Parent Consultation Group)

Bungalow

Some of you may have noticed that the caretaker's bungalow has been standing empty a little while now. Kirklees have allowed us to utilise the space for the school. The school, especially the children have many to ideas on how we could use the space for craft, cooking and for an outdoor study area for trips into the wood. None of this will need a great deal of money or effort, but with the school budget as it is even this is beyond us. If anyone wants to take this on as a project, perhaps some of you handy folks out there who have felt your skills are sometimes overlooked or not needed in schools, this is your chance to shine.

Communicating with Your Governing Board

At last we have decided to join the internet age and we can now be contacted via Parents@denbydale.education, please mark you message for the attention of governors.

Can I please gently remind you that for any questions or complaints the first contact should always be the school or Miss Wood directly.

Any queries about the function of the Governing Body can be addressed with any of us directly or through the email address above.

Membership

Mark Eaton – Chair of Governors, (mark.eaton@denbydale.education)

Peter Belsey – Vice Chair of Governors

Ruth Liu – Chair of the Standards Committee

Lisa Taylor – Chair of the Resources Committee

Siobhan Fairbrother – Safeguarding Lead

Jackie Wood – Head Teacher

Joanne Cody – Parent Governor

Axelle Elliott – Parent Governor

Alex Severn – Staff Governor

Karen Howgill – Staff Governor

Gill Hood – Local Authority Governor

Neil Denby – Community Governor