



Ardeley School Governor Focus July 2017



Welcome to the summer edition of Governor Focus, our termly newsletter which aims to keep you up to date on the work and thoughts of the School's Governing Board. In each edition we will include a round-up of initiatives and projects we have been working on. We hope you find this interesting and informative.

Results of the Parent Questionnaire

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the recent questionnaire. Your opinions are very important to us and we always listen carefully to what you say. We can't cover all individual comments in this brief space, but here is a brief summary of the overall results.

- All but one parent said their child is happy and enjoys school, and all children feel safe and well cared for.
- The overwhelming majority of parents were satisfied with the quality and breadth of education that the school offers with the remaining respondents saying they didn't know or didn't reply. Six families commented on homework with some stating that more home learning would be beneficial whereas others believed that too much homework is set. This is an issue that often divides parents, but teachers always try to get the amount and level of homework just right for each class in accordance with the school's homework policy.
- Everybody who replied was happy with the moral, social and spiritual guidance provided, and agreed that the school promotes non-discriminatory behaviour and respect and equality for all.
- 100% of parents agreed that the school ensures good behaviour amongst the pupils. However, one parent commented they have heard children swearing. The staff will always deal fittingly with the use of any inappropriate language by pupils, including swearing, when brought to their attention.
- Nearly half of parents agreed that the school deals effectively with any bullying. The remainder said they had no experience of bullying at school so couldn't comment; one parent stated that the school takes a "Very proactive approach".
- Around ¾ of parents said they felt the school carefully considers any views or suggestions they make, with only one parent disagreeing. One family expressed their appreciation to Governors for addressing issues raised on previous questionnaires.
- Parents overwhelmingly agreed the school is well led and managed by Mrs Dingley and the school Governors. One parent commented that "Mrs Dingley does a fantastic job: Ardeley is going to miss her"
- 88% of parents said they feel involved in their child's education and that the school listens to them. One parent stated they "can talk to any of the staff about any issues I have and feel comfortable doing so." Two parents would like more frequent updates from teachers and a third parent requested more opportunities to view their child's learning journal. Teachers do their best to keep parents informed, but if you have particular questions or concerns you can make an appointment to see the relevant teacher or to look over your child's workbooks.
- Parents feel that communication from school is good, and praised the Parentmail system and newsletter.
- The majority of parents of Yr1 and Yr2 children undertaking the Phonics Screening and national SATS tests felt it was handled perfectly and their children did not feel at all stressed. The use of the "penguin reward system" was praised. Two parents stated they would like some feedback. The school is acutely aware that our children are very young to be tested in this way, and we will continue to do our utmost to ensure that SATS and other obligatory tests do not become an issue for our pupils.
- Parents tell us they like Ardeley because it is a small, well-run, intimate, friendly school where everyone knows and cares for one another including the staff. Parents appreciate the many learning opportunities available, particularly using the outside areas, that enable all children to reach their full potential including those who may need additional support. Parents praised the links with the local community and farm.
- A number of suggestions for improvements included: a smarter PE uniform when visiting other schools; landscaping the area outside the new classroom (see article below); signage in Ardeley village warning vehicles that children cross the road at lunchtimes; a sun shelter in the playground where children could read; children not being sent home too early when they are not feeling well;. All suggestions will be considered seriously by Governors, but we are able to address the last two points now. There are already several shady areas around the playing field, including trees and the outdoor stage which the children are able to access freely. Regarding children who fall ill at school, we appreciate your frustration when you have been asked to pick up a poorly child, only for them to be running around as soon as you get them home. However, staff are aware that children can worsen as quickly as they can recover and will always put the well-being of your child as their priority. There are also occasions (especially with tummy upsets) when it is in the best interests of all the children that bugs are not spread throughout the class.

How is our school doing?

Following a visit from the School's Hertfordshire Improvement Partner (a very experienced Headteacher from another school), the Governors are pleased to share the results from latest Progress Review. As a result of measures such as targeted teaching and working walls, there has been an excellent improvement in phonics, reading and spelling across all classes. We are also seeing a good impact on the progress made in literacy and maths through the introduction of targeted questioning and challenging activities in the Foundation class.



Enhancing our learning environment

A number of initiatives are planned over the summer break to improve the school infrastructure. It's all change as the classrooms move around to take advantage of the extra space made available as result of the new EYFS building. In preparation for the autumn term, the KS1 classroom has been fitted with a new interactive whiteboard, the sink has been moved to make more space for desks and the cupboard space has also been revamped. Blinds will be fitted into the upper windows of the EYFS classroom to provide a more comfortable environment for the children in hot weather. The outside of the whole school will also be painted over the summer in order to maintain the building. This has not been done for nearly 10 years and we are looking forward to a smart new exterior. We are also exploring how the outside space can be improved for KS2.

Good-bye and thank you

The Governors would like to wish all our leavers goodbye and good luck in their new schools. We hope you have enjoyed your time at Ardeley and that you will carry special memories of our school with you throughout your lives. It has been a pleasure travelling with you on this first stage of your education journey.

We would also like to say a sad good-bye and a huge thank you to Mrs Dingley who has provided such excellent leadership over the previous 8 years as Headteacher. When she joined Ardeley in 2009, she quickly demonstrated her passion for education, her tremendous managerial and administrative capabilities and her determination to maintain our Christian ethos, protect our warm, family atmosphere, and preserve the many unique aspects of Ardeley School. She has led the school through a number of very successful Ofsted and Church School Inspections and overseen some bold innovations including the opening of the nursery, splitting of KS2 into two classes and the construction of the Early Years unit. Most importantly, she has done her best for each and every child in the school, to enable them to develop and flourish academically, emotionally and spiritually. She has played a full role in enriching school life- as one parent commented in last year's questionnaire, "Mrs Dingley will have a go at anything above and beyond what you would normally expect!" We wish her a long and happy retirement and hope that she will come back to visit occasionally.

Finally we want to say a big thank you to everyone who has helped make this such an action-packed and enjoyable school year. From staff to volunteers, parents to children, local community to invited visitors, you have all made your own contributions and we are very grateful to you for the part you play.

We wish all of you a very happy summer holiday and we look forward to welcoming you back, refreshed and recharged, for an undoubtedly busy autumn term!



