



Ardeley School Governor Focus December 2017



Welcome to the winter 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 Body.

How is our school doing?

As you know, the school underwent a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools in early November and we were delighted to retain our Outstanding status. Many thanks to all the staff, children and parents for their hard work in preparation for the inspection and for assisting on the day.

However, we won't be resting on our laurels following this successful inspection. Staff and governors will keep a close eye on the children's progress via our internal rounds of monitoring and review throughout the year. Every Autumn, staff and Governors analyse progress and achievement data for the preceding academic year. This is then scrutinised and agreed by our Hertfordshire Improvement Partner (a very experienced Headteacher of another Herts school). Ofsted uses this data in national statistics so we can see how our standards compare nationally. Governors like to share the main findings of this process with you. Remember, this information is for the 2016/2017 (ie **last**) academic year.



- Across almost all year groups, current pupils are making consistently strong progress in English and in mathematics (please see * box below).
- In the Early Years Foundation stage, the percentage of pupils attaining a good level of development was the highest in three years and was above the national and Hertfordshire average. Our aim for the next year is to continue to improve progress in literacy and mathematics, particularly for boys, in their first year of formal schooling.
- A very large majority of pupils (>90%) in Year 1 achieve the expected standard in the national phonics' check. In Year 2, 91.7% of children made good+ progress in reading and mathematics and 81.8% made good+ progress in writing and attainment at the end of KS1 generally improved over 2016. Our priority for 2018 is to improve progress in writing.
- In KS2 (Years 3-5), All percentages relating to standards and progress are affected by low numbers in each year group. In Year 3, progress was strongest in writing where all pupils made good+ progress, and in reading where 90.9% made good+ progress. In mathematics 40% of children made good+ progress. Standards were highest in mathematics and writing in Year 4. Progress was strongest in mathematics; 81.8% made good+ progress, and 45.5% very strong progress. In writing 81.3% made good+ progress, and 27.3% very strong, and in reading 63.6% made good+ progress, and 27.3% very strong. In Year 5, standards and progress were strongest in reading where all made good+ progress; in mathematics 85.7% made good+ progress and in writing 71.4%. Over the next year, our priority is to enable all pupils in KS2 to make good or better progress and achieve the end of year age related expectations wherever possible.

*Ardeley is a very small school and the number of children in a cohort (year group) is always low, often only 10/12 pupils. So, when we average achievement or progress across the cohort each child represents roughly 10% of the total. This means that one or two particularly high or low, achieving pupils can make the overall average swing up or down quite dramatically from year to year.

Definitions: **Achievement** is the actual level that a pupil reaches. **Progress** is the distance they've come from a particular starting point (eg how far they've improved from the start of, say, Yr1 to end of Yr 2). When judging a school, progress is the more important measure as it shows how much the school has moved the children forward, whereas achievement is heavily dependent on the personal abilities of each child.

We are generally very pleased with these results, which reflect the high quality of education we provide for our pupils. As always, there are areas for attention, and plans are already in place and underway for further

improving standards in these instances. Whilst staff and governors understand that academic standards are very important, we also believe they are just one element of a child's education. We will continue to focus on the moral, spiritual and physical development of our pupils as much as ever, aiming to produce well-rounded, thoughtful and considerate children, ideally equipped to achieve their full potential at their next schools.

The School Governors

We are delighted that, unlike many schools, we have a full complement of Governors, which testifies to the affection and interest that parents and the local community have in our school. School Governors play a vital role in the running of the school, and a good relationship between the governing body and the staff is vital for success. The Governors are responsible for setting the budget, appointing staff, monitoring the work of the staff and the success of the pupils, ensuring that the national curriculum is delivered correctly, maintaining the buildings and grounds, and overseeing all the management decisions critical to keeping any organisation running. In addition, the Governors set the vision and ethos for the school and make the long-term strategic decisions to determine how the school will develop and grow for the future.

However, the day-to-day management of the school is the job of the Head Teacher, Mrs Connolly. She deals with the staff, oversees the daily education and care of the children, teaches, works with the local education authority, produces reports, and orders and pays for equipment, books and building work within the limits of delegated powers given to her by the Governors. Put **very** simply, the Headteacher and staff run the school in terms of days and weeks. The Governors' job is to think in terms of months and, more often, years.

Governors are always pleased to hear your views, so if you do have something you wish to talk about, please do get in touch via the school office. We will always do our best to help you.

Open Morning for Prospective Families

In November, the school hosted an open morning for parents of pre-school children who will be applying for a school place for 2018/19. Nineteen families took the opportunity to look around the school and all of them were impressed with the warmth of the welcome they received from Governors, staff and pupils. The Governors will continue to promote the school in order to sustain its viability whilst maintaining the small school family atmosphere that makes Ardeley St Lawrence so special.

Hello and Goodbyes

At the end of this term, Mr Suckling will be leaving to take up a new position in Stevenage and we wish him all the best in his new school. We look forward to welcoming Miss Sheldon who will be taking over as the lower KS2 teacher from January.

We are also saying goodbye to Mr Jones who is retiring as caretaker after 25 years service at the school. We offer him our sincere thanks for all his invaluable work in the upkeep of the school buildings and grounds and send our very best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone from all of the School Governors. We wish you a joyful and peaceful holiday, and look forward to seeing you again in the new school term.

