

Woodcote Primary School

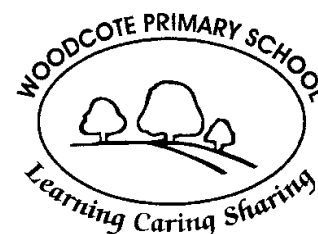
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Headteacher: Mrs Liz Hunt



Governor Newsletter – Autumn 2018

A warm welcome to your latest Governor's newsletter, the first of the 2018/19 academic year, which opens on a very sad note. The governors were very sorry to hear the heartbreaking news about James Hawley and would like to extend their deepest sympathies to Andrew, Charlotte, Benjamin and Emily.

The eagle-eyed amongst you will recognise that we are a little later in producing our second newsletter than previously advertised. Having originally aimed for a summer release, we decided to delay this second version to enable to report fully on our latest SATS results, which as you will see below showcased a terrific performance from both our pupils and staff.

As we are sure many of you are also aware, on September 13th the school received a visit from Ofsted. Following the news that our rating from Ofsted was "Good", as governors we'd like to take the opportunity to thank all the staff for their hard work and professionalism in ensuring that the school was shown in its best possible light during the visit. Page 3 provides more details on the visit.

Finally, as a reminder, you can get in touch with the governing body either by e-mailing or writing to us using the school office addresses. Please mark any correspondence as "FAO Governors".

The newsletter has been prepared by various members of the governing body

2017/2018 SATS Results

We open our newsletter with a reference to the 2017/18 SATS, which were conducted in May.

It is our pleasure to report the verified data which shows, as a school, we have built on the progress made in 2016/2017.

Starting with KS1, nearly 87% of pupils are reading to at least the expected standard, well up on 2017's 65%. In maths 79% are achieving at least the expected standard, with 42% of this number achieving the higher standard of greater depth. We are extremely proud of this outstanding result and congratulate the KS1 pupils and teaching staff for their hard work in this subject. Nearly 90% hit the expected standard in science and in writing we were in line with national average with 63% of pupils achieving this standard.

In KS2, we saw big jumps in our reading performance, with 90% at the expected standard (compared to a national figure of 75% and a level of 70% in 2017). Writing (79%) and maths (76%) were in line with national averages. Most encouraging were our results for greater depth learning in reading (41%), writing (34%) and maths (28%) which were all up on 2017.

As we noted in our first newsletter, being a small primary school, it's important to recognise that our

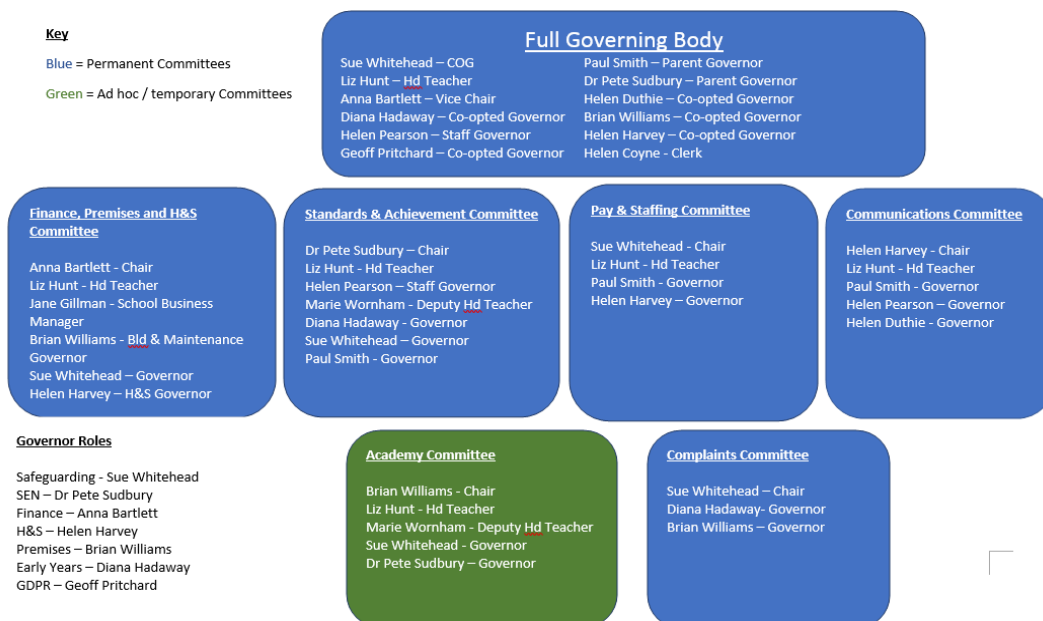
SATS data can be easily influenced by the scores of a small number of pupils. Moreover, results are not necessarily a reflection of individual pupil ability – as with all tests, they are a snapshot of a point in time.

As a governing committee, we subsequently take a rounded view of progress and achievement. For example, we consider the expert judgement of our teaching staff whom we work closely with to understand the processes by which children progress is being measured. This is especially the case in KS1, where the SATS scores are based on both tests *and* teacher judgement. As most of us are aware, tests can be stressful, especially for young children, so we strongly believe that this is the optimum approach for KS1 pupil assessment.

To ensure that the teaching staff, senior leadership team and governors are comfortable we are correctly assessing our KS1 pupils, the grades were externally moderated last year and as expected were verified correct with no alterations requested.

Overall our latest SATS results once again show the positive progress our school is making and are testament to the hard work teaching staff are putting in to maximise our pupil's potential. Congratulations to all for an excellent performance.

Woodcote Primary School Governing Body Structure



In our last newsletter we introduced our governing body, explaining high-level objectives, responsibilities and current members. Here we provide greater insight into the structure of the Governing Body.

We currently have six committees, each of which has certain responsibilities delegated by the Full Governing Body (FGB). The committees are required to provide an update at each FGB meeting.

The above diagram outlines the structure of the FGB and sub committees with more detail found below on the high-level terms of reference

(i) Finance, Premises, Health & Safety

Has a strategic role in the financial management of the school, delegated responsibility for financial planning and detailed budget monitoring. Also responsible for any matter concerning the school premises (buildings and associated maintenance) and for monitoring Health and Safety obligations.

(ii) Standards and Achievements

Responsibility for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the curriculum offered by the school. The committee's major role is to monitor and evaluate pupil progress and achievement. The committee also works with the Senior Leadership Team to set priorities for improvement and monitors their impact. Also responsible for ensuring that requirements for Special Educational Needs (SEN) children are met.

(iii) Pay and Staffing

Responsible for overseeing and reviewing the school's staffing structure. In addition to reviewing any policy relating to pay or staff appraisals, the committee also reviews the well-being of the staff, receiving an annual review from the Head Teacher about the school's strategies for supporting staff well-being and promoting good staff morale.

(iv) Communications

Primarily responsible for supporting the school in developing a plan to promote positive communications to all relevant stakeholders e.g. parents, local schools, voluntary groups, elected representatives and business partners. Also responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the range of media used, ensuring the website is reviewed on an annual basis and supporting the school in developing communication related policies.

(v) Complaints

This committee only meets if the school receives an official complaint that needs to be escalated to the Governing Board.

(vi) Academy

This is a temporary committee that has been established to investigate the possible options available to the school if we move to an Academy structure in the future. Regular updates to teachers and parents are within the remit of this committee. We will cover this further in our next Newsletter.

School Ofsted Inspection

I wrote to you all following the Ofsted Inspection in September, but in case anyone missed it we've included the letter below. Since I wrote this Governors have had a strategy meeting with Mrs Hunt at which the feedback was discussed again. We're confident that Mrs Hunt and the team remain focused on working to become an outstanding school and all areas for improvement are being managed. Monitoring of these areas will now become a routine part of Governor activities going forward.

Dear Parents

As you will be aware we had a visit from an Ofsted inspector on 13th September. Our last inspection was in 2014 so we were due one, however we were a little surprised to receive the call so early into our new term!

The inspector spent a full day in school, spending time with Mrs Hunt, staff leads, governors, pupils and parents. She observed classes across the school (except for year 4) and reviewed pupils work. As we were only in our second week of term, much of the pupil work she reviewed was from last year.

I am now delighted to be able to confirm that we have again been rated a 'Good' school by Ofsted and I attach a copy of the Inspectors letter received by Mrs Hunt. This is also available on the Ofsted website.

I was really pleased to see that the inspector recognised the strength of our senior leadership team especially drawing on the great determination and effort of Mrs Hunt and Mrs Wornham, to develop key areas of the school to ensure that the quality of education the pupils receive is good. The hard work across the school to raise standards in reading and phonics were reflected as was the ongoing improvements across writing and maths. The good level of teaching in reception was also noted by the

inspector.

This hard work, from both staff and pupils is also clear in the fantastic SATS results achieved in July, I particularly wanted to highlight that 90% of pupils reached the expected level in Reading in KS2 and 87% in KS1. Full details of the KS2 SATS are available on the school website and further details of all the results will be set out in the Governor newsletter due out in the next couple of weeks.

The children also did the school proud as their politeness, manners and supportive attitude were all noted. Mrs Hunts drive to embed a 'growth mindset' across the school is clearly starting to take root as the inspector commended her on creating a culture where pupils feel it is acceptable to make mistakes as part of their learning process.

The Inspector did of course highlight some areas for improvement and these are set out in her letter. They did not come as any surprise to Mrs Hunt or Governors, and were already reflected in the school's Self-Evaluation Framework. We will continue the journey to improve these and all areas of the curriculum to be the best we can be, working to become an outstanding school.

Finally, thank you for all your support shown during the inspection, there was some lovely feedback received by parents.

Kind regards

Sue Whitehead

A copy of the Inspectors letter can be found on our school website:

<http://www.woodcote-primary.co.uk/ofsted-and-performance-data/>

Staffing News

We are pleased to welcome Miss McCarthy (year 4 teacher), Mr Langley (year 5 teacher) and Mrs Hood-Cree, our new Teaching Assistant who have joined our fabulous staff team this year. They were thrown in the deep end a little having to experience an Ofsted inspection only 6 days into their new jobs!

We would also like to welcome Miss Mardle who has also joined the Oak Class team as a Teaching Assistant.

Governors are involved in the recruitment of new staff and therefore know the rigours involved. It is a real

team effort. Candidates are often in school all day, undertaking a series of activities which involve lots of people from across the school, including pupils as the School Council get to grill candidates!

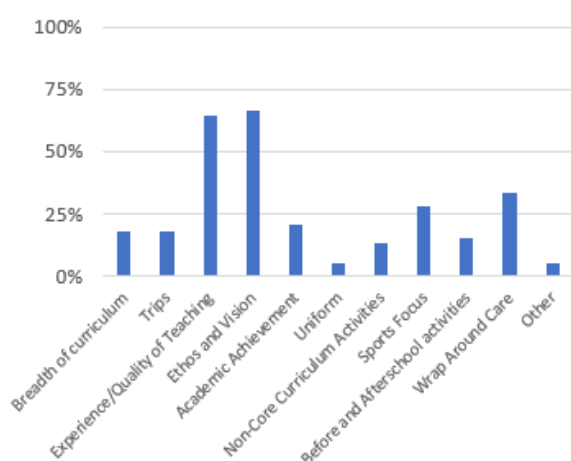
Finally, we'd also like to wish Mrs McDowell good luck in her new venture, she will be missed across the school by staff, parents and especially the pupils.

June 2018 Communications Survey Results

Last term we asked parents to answer a range of questions on school communications.

We had a good response, with 40 individual replies. In general, the results provided us with some reassurance that the school communicates well, with parents buying into the school's ethos and vision, whilst also appreciating the experience and quality of school staff.

Q1: What do you consider to be the top three characteristics of our school?



With most respondents using the weblink to answer the survey, modern technology is unsurprisingly a popular tool for the school to communicate with.

Indeed, exactly 95% of respondents viewed the recently introduced texting service as at least somewhat useful as a way of being alerted to school developments, whilst an even greater proportion cited email or text as their preferred method of communication. Not surprisingly, 97.5% of respondents use email to access the weekly newsletter. There was also clear interest in the potential for online tools being utilised for the booking of times with teachers at parent evenings: 90% of respondents signalled that they were at least somewhat interested.

More broadly, at least half of respondents attended the maths and reading workshops in the 2017/18 academic year, whilst two-fifths found time for phonics. Naturally we would like to see even greater turnouts at future events, especially as these are popular amongst pupils, providing an excellent opportunity to showcase to parents newly acquired skills and knowledge.

That said, we understand the various demands facing parents (and equally school staff) in being able to find

the time to attend such events. With that in mind, as a school, we recognise the importance of providing ample notice to allow parents to plan accordingly around all school events. This is something that, alongside general office communications, the school will aim to work on over the coming months.

Another area identified by parents as needing some improvement was the end of year reporting, with parents indicating a desire to respond more readily to concerns raised within these reports. Ideas on how we can improve this process will be discussed and fed back to parents in due course. However, we would stress that the school seeks to operate an open-door policy, with teachers more than happy to discuss pupil progress and concerns at any time of the year.

Indeed, based on the feedback to our final question on what parents would recommend about our school, most parents would agree that the staff are approachable and committed to pupils maximising their potential.

As illustrated by the wordcloud below, which is based on our open ended final question on what parents recommend about our school, this is helping contribute to a friendly, inclusive, and safe learning environment that is at the heart of the local community.

Q10: What would you recommend about our school?



Finally, many thanks to all those parents that took the time to partake. These surveys are an excellent platform for you to have your say on school matters. Moreover, the results provide governors and school staff an opportunity to reflect and consider the ways we engage and can respond to parental feedback.