



## **Waterbeach Community Primary School Governors' Annual Report to Parents & Carers 2019/2020**

Welcome to the new school year to everyone from the WCPS Governing Body!

As we rapidly approach the end of Autumn Term 1, it has been wonderful to see the children and staff coming back to school with such positive energy and so eager to resume to normality – with the necessary constraints. We are truly impressed with how well our children have adapted to this new, and hopefully temporary, way of life.

What you are about to read is the end-of-year report, usually sent in the summer; given the extraordinary circumstances due to the lockdown, it is in this “new normal” that we share our reflections on the progress and the constraints that marked an unprecedented school year.

What a remarkable year it was too! Whilst the building work was at its final stages, we had an Ofsted inspection with a really positive outcome, the KS2 children moved into their new, colourful classrooms; the school received the Silver Award for mental health; and then the lockdown, with its huge challenges in all spheres of life.

We are impressed by the extraordinary positivity and resilience that pervades the school at these difficult times: a true testament to the Growth Mindset culture and the importance given to everyone's well-being. We hope that everyone who took advantage of the Well-Being Clinics offered this term found them useful, evidence of the dedication that our school reserves for our children and community. Particular thanks go to Jane Green whose energetic and positive leadership has made it possible to continue maintaining the school a safe, stimulating and caring environment despite the extraordinary challenges that COVID keeps throwing at us.

### **Building Project**

The new classrooms were finished ahead of schedule just before the Easter break. The staff and pupils moved into their new classrooms and made the most of the new environment. The two mobile classrooms were removed and further landscaping took place for the KS1 area. Over the summer break further works were completed. The Front reception was finished along with the

new hatch for the servery area in the main hall. The tarmac area between the library and the school has been resurfaced. The old brick bike shelters to the side of the school have been removed and additional new bike and scooter shelters were installed along the path to the rear gate. All being well the main field will be able to be used later on in the school year. With the new spaces and refurbished classrooms the school is in great shape providing a fantastic environment for the pupils to learn. The additional places and the extra classes will benefit the whole community.

## **Teaching, Learning & Academic Performance**

At the start of an academic year the Children's Committee of the Governors establishes its priorities for scrutinising progress being made. Three areas within the School Development Plan, developed by Miss Green and the Senior Leadership Team for 2019-20 were identified as ones that the Committee particularly wished to focus upon over the course of the year. These were:

- The establishment of a detailed and unique curriculum, supported by a robust assessment system
- An improvement in the teaching and learning of Reading
- A school-wide improvement in Spelling

An encouraging start was made in these areas. The Ofsted inspection in November, which was reported on in January, confirmed this. The arrival of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown inevitably curtailed the extent of hoped-for progress, latterly.

However, an outline of the new Curriculum had been put in place and teachers, already engaged in the process of "curriculum capture" to determine what precise knowledge and skills were to be learnt in different subject areas, were able to continue this alongside their in-school and remote work during lockdown.

To further improve the teaching and learning of reading, training had been undertaken by staff on the VIPERS system which aims to develop comprehension skills. Governors devoted part of their January meeting to a presentation on this topic by the staff Subject Lead and the Senior Leadership Team members, but were not able to make the subsequent classroom visits that would have allowed them to see the scheme in action.

Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS) assessment returns and Comparative Judgement work made it evident that spelling remained a weaker performance area for children. There was a need for the school to adopt a robust programme which would focus learning and enable children to retain spellings in the long term. Governors had intended to monitor this work through scheduled "book looks" to better understand what the initiatives looked like in practice, through ongoing analysis of GPS results – and by discussion with subject leaders and the Senior Leadership Team throughout the year – but much of this was prevented by the Covid-19 crisis.

Prior to the Lockdown, throughout it and in the subsequent return-to-school period for some year groups, the Committee was kept closely in touch with planning and arrangements being made by the Head teacher and the Senior Leadership Team for children's continued education. We would like to commend the hard work and professionalism shown by all staff over this unprecedented and very difficult period.

## **Finance and Resourcing**

As with everything else, this has been a year of 2-parts for Resources. With our OFSTED inspection imminent at the start of the 2019/20 school year we committed a significant amount of energy and funds to provide additional cover for the teaching team to ensure they were fully prepared. A very wise investment!

As you will remember the heating system showed its age over the winter and when it broke down, asbestos in the building was revealed. The local authority and our wonderful caretaker handled it swiftly and professionally ensuring the health and safety of our children and staff was our number one priority.

The 2020/21 budget was set to support the growth of the school. Our funding increased in line with our growing pupil numbers but to provide a better learning environment for our children with 16 classes vs 14 in 2019/20 it will mean eating into some of our carry forward from the previous year.

One silver-lining of lockdown is that school expenditure has reduced over the last few months. We have been spending more on cleaning products, and our lettings income has ceased but we haven't required any supply staff, so we start the Autumn term in a very strong position.

Our thanks once again go to our wonderful PTA who continue to support us admirably. Whilst some events have been cancelled during the lockdown we have enjoyed a significant contribution from their activities.

## **Ofsted**

On 27 – 28 November 2019 our school was inspected by Ofsted with the outcome that it continues to be good. This conclusion is very satisfactory, and we congratulate the school's leaders, staff, pupils, and the supporting community!

We have been once again ensured that WCPS is “a caring and friendly place”, where pupils and staff enjoy coming; where children feel safe, are well supported, given opportunities to thrive and not afraid to raise any concerns. Pupils can undertake many activities that interest them, like music and sports, and enjoy school trips. Many children support the school by e.g. serving on a school council or organising environmental campaigns, which in turn teaches them democratic and civil skills. We hope it will be all possible again soon.

The Inspector has done deep-dives into three subjects: reading, mathematics, and history and concluded that pupils are keen to do well and can confidently explain what they are learning. The work done on the school's curriculum development has been appreciated, especially its order and links among the material learnt. A well-stocked school library, which helps children to practise their reading, has been also noticed in the report.

The only area for improvement observed at the time of inspection was that some pupils with SEND and some who struggled to learn to read during key stage 1-, are still not reading as well as they

should in key stage 2. Since then this area has been looked at thoroughly, a strategic plan led by Mrs Tregging put in place and become one of the priorities for the school, monitored closely by governors.

At this occasion we would like to thank all parents and staff who responded to Ofsted questionnaire. If you have anything to say about the school, please visit <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>. The survey can be completed at any time; you don't have to wait until the school is being inspected.

## **Lockdown**

As the lockdown paused life as we knew it in March, the buzz at the school never stopped: with a rapid and careful shift in operations the school stayed open for the children of key workers and vulnerable children throughout, concurrently providing learning resources for the children at home. It was, and hasn't yet ceased to be, a phenomenally challenging time, where, as Governors, our focus was not only on monitoring and reviewing risk assessments and plans, that would ensure that our children's needs are met at all times; but also, more than ever, to protect the well-being of our Headteacher and, in turn, of the teachers and staff of the school.

Our meeting schedule intensified during the lockdown, on a virtual platform, where we were involved in the decision-making, review and approval of our policies and their amendments relating to the changes that COVID imposed. During this time we couldn't perform all of our school visits as normal, currently being resumed in line with the "new normal".

The homeschooling provision improved rapidly: whilst the decision had been made from the start that the school would not provide live online lessons to the children, lots of teachers and teaching assistants recorded an array of videos that you can still access from our website. Miss Green's virtual assemblies were heartwarming, and what fun to see everyone dance with rolls of toilet paper! It was clear that, at each stage, and as time went on, there were more opportunities to refine the provision and improve it. As we now embark on a different stage of the pandemic, the school has drawn up a homeschooling policy in preparation of future remote learning going forward.

As a Governing body, it is our job to support the school in developing effective strategies, including during these testing times. We are lucky to have a strong Governing Body, ready, at all times, to support and constructively challenge the Senior Leadership Team. On the other hand, Miss Green has consistently made our work easier by presenting us with coherent and organised plans and risk assessments for each phase of the opening during lockdown and the re-opening in September. This was always done with a clarity of vision, calm and positivity which has given us great confidence throughout. We were inspired by the school's team's ability to deal with challenges, and most recently, their resilience has been remarkable.

Particularly impressive, however, are our children: the way in which they have adapted to these difficult and strange times is truly inspiring – it is a real pleasure to see them back and so happy in school.

At the time of writing there have not been any confirmed cases of COVID-19 at WCPS, a situation that, clearly, can change very quickly, as the infection rates soar in our area. We wish to thank all the parents and carers who follow the school's guidelines and encourage everyone to continue to maintain social distancing and avoid lingering at drop-off and pick-up times.

### **Traffic and Travel**

As many parents will be aware, there have been concerns about traffic levels and road safety at the start and end of the school day. Pre-Covid we had some initiatives underway seeking to address this where we can. Obviously the school has no direct powers outside the school premises so we need to work both with parents and the local councils to address issues. A Traffic and Travel Action Group was formed, though during Covid this has been put on hold. We are regularly liaising with the Parish Council and Cambridgeshire County Council as the highway authority. We expect new designs for a crossing on Way Lane to be completed shortly, and we're asking for further measures where we can.

*If any parents have concerns about traffic or parking and would like to get involved, please email the school office on [office@waterbeach.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@waterbeach.cambs.sch.uk), marking your email 'FAO Tim Gent'*

### **NEW Governors**

We are delighted to introduce two new members of the Full Governing Body at Waterbeach Community Primary School – Rebecca Pharo, appointed as a co-opted governor, and Penelope Grewcock Clay – as a Local Authority governor. They are both excellent additions to the team with their wide-ranging skills and knowledge. We welcome them warmly and wish them all the best with the new duties!

### **Farewell and Welcome**

We send a hearty goodbye to all leavers from our Year 6 cohort. It wasn't an easy last year, but you can be proud of what you have achieved. We wish you all the best for your future!

A big welcome to all new Reception kids and their parents and carers. We hope you will enjoy the time your child attends Waterbeach Community Primary School. There are many ways to be involved – as a governor, PTA member or volunteer e.g. helping with swimming lessons, reading and events, which we hope will be possible to take place again as soon as the current restrictions are lifted.

Finally, we would like to congratulate Miss Green, the whole Senior Leadership Team and the wonderful staff on their great efforts this year - from a good Ofsted inspection, through the move to the new building and the refurbishment of the Reception area, to the hard work during the Coronavirus pandemic. This year has been far from normal, but their true devotion, passion and great team spirit through the whole time benefited all pupils. We also thank the PTA for their creative ways of raising money for the school. We appreciate how much effort and preparation it all takes. Your service to the school is invaluable! Last but not least, we thank all parents, for your support, as well as your patience and understanding in complying with the new rules imposed by these unprecedented times.

We wish you all a good and safe year,

### The Governing Body

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## School Strategic Vision

### Our Vision:

**Our school will encourage each child to grow into a happy, confident individual, thriving in a supportive community where each is inspired to learn and discover through a kaleidoscope of opportunities, with space to imagine and to create.**

### Delivering our vision:

Each child will:

- Be inspired to learn, explore and discover
- Be encouraged to develop a growth mindset
- Develop the skills needed for their life ahead, “standing tall” in the world around them\*
- Be happy, healthy, resilient, and a confident communicator
- Belong to and contribute to our caring school community

We will achieve this through:

1. **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**
  - Effective delivery of elements of the curriculum – e.g. – PSHE and RE
  - Provision supporting wellbeing, physical and mental health
  - The encouragement of positive and responsible behaviour

## 2. LEARNING AND TEACHING

- Develop a broad and balanced curriculum which excites pupils and enables them to gain knowledge and skills throughout their journey through school
- Enable all children to progress to the best of their abilities
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## 3. STAFF

- Highly motivated, skilled and resourceful staff
- Providing for staff development and well-being through timely and relevant CPD

## 4. LEADERSHIP

- Aspirational senior leaders who champion the school's vision and are prepared to challenge all to achieve it
- Governance that ensures clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

## 5. RESOURCES

- Providing vibrant, welcoming, well maintained facilities that support each child's education
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organization and ensuring that money is well spent

## 6. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Positive Parental engagement through a variety of initiatives
- Enhance the school's role within the community by developing partnerships with local groups and businesses

**“Learning, Laughter and Friendship”**

These three values are at the heart of everything that happens at our school.