

# Swavesey Primary School



Dear Parents, Guardians, Carers and staff at Swavesey Primary School

I hope this update reaches you after a good and restful summer break. As we look forward to the start of the new school year, I'm proud to reflect on the achievements made across the school last year. Whilst the whole education sector is facing greater financial challenges than ever, as demonstrated in the following two reports from our committee chairs, we continue to thrive as a school and have many successes and achievements worthy of celebrating.

We say goodbye to the year 6 children who left us at the end of term to continue their school journey at other schools - we wish you all the very best. We welcome parents and children who are starting their journey with Swavesey Primary School this year.

As governors, we are so grateful for the hard work and dedication demonstrated by school staff over the past year. I'd like to make a special mention to Mrs Crossman who is retiring from the school after many years of dedicated service, and has made such a significant positive contribution to the school's SEND provision in recent years.

As a school, we pride ourselves on a wide range of teaching and broad experiences for our children, and you will see from the CLA report Rachel has prepared below that as governors, we ensure that we take an interest and monitor so much more than just core subjects.

Catherine outlines the financial situation that the school is facing in the Resources Committee report. Whilst through excellent leadership and financial management the school continues to thrive, as governors we have had to support some difficult financial decisions over the past year. As parents, there are a number of ways you can support the school including volunteering and supporting the PTA's excellent fundraising efforts.

This has been my last year as Chair of Governors. Whilst I'll remain as a governor, I am passing the role of Chair over to another Governor who will be elected at our first meeting this year. I want to take this opportunity to say a few words of thanks myself. Firstly, thank you to you; our parents and carers who have supported the school in so many different ways – through the encouragement of your children, attendance at school events and the support you provide to staff. Thank you to the PTA for continuing to find innovative and creative ways to fundraise and support the school. Thank you to all of the governors across the both Committees - your support and hard work as governors really does help to make such a positive impact for the school.

Finally, the most important thank you I would like to make is to each and every member of staff in the school. Every person who works in the school makes a real contribution to the school experience and journey for our children – you all come together as one team and I am extremely proud to be part of such an amazing school.

**Lynsey Fulcher**

Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Full Governing Body

## Resources Committee Annual Report 2023

Last year seemed to fly by in a flash and as we come to the start of a new term we now have time to reflect and celebrate the year just gone.

COVID for many now seems a distant memory, and for this we are grateful, however this year has posed different challenges for us all with the forever increasing cost of living. The monetary impact has hit all households and we are all feeling the pressures of financial constraints on our budgets. Schools are no exceptions. This year has proved to be extremely challenging on our budget to ensure that we manage the school's finances, whilst continuing to provide a safe, stimulating and healthy environment in which the children of our community can become confident, resilient, resourceful and ready independent learners.

Our Resources Committee meetings this year have been a mixture of face to face meetings and those via zoom. The meetings themselves have continued to follow the familiar pattern of meeting at least twice a term to consider the financial, premises, health and safety, safeguarding and personnel aspects of the school's operations and development. A summary of our current objectives as a committee are:

**Finance:** Provide support and challenge to the Head teacher and Schools Business Manager in all areas relating to financial governance during the year.

**Personnel:** Work with the Head teacher to ensure that the schools people resources are best utilised. In the short-term ensuring these are aligned to the Schools Development Plan, and longer-term considering options such as the potential sharing of resource or academisation.

**Premises:** To provide overview and guidance on all technical and hard services.

**Health and Safety:** To provide overview and checks to ensure all H&S matters conform to legislation, guidance, and safe practices.

Governor attendance at Resource committee meetings remains high and our enthusiastic committee has continued to develop, and subscribing to many different training courses throughout the year to gain more in-depth knowledge of the educational system and how best to impact and assist the Head Teacher and staff in delivering the school development plan.

Knowledge gained allows the Committee to continually review, challenge and support the school in the decisions that are made now, and in the years to come. We always welcome feedback and questions from parents so please do contact any of us if you have any questions or issues relating to our objectives that you would like us to consider.

The state of the financial economy is forever in our daily news with the cost of living reflected in everybody's purse. This year we have seen unprecedented sections of society forced to go on strike to seek fair pay rewards, and as a result education has been disrupted across the UK. Teachers have not only been striking for fair pay but also for better funding for our schools so that any award does not impact on schools' funding or overall budgets.

As yet the school has not been impacted by any closures on any of the teacher strike days. As Governors, we have continued to see the effort and hard work that each and every staff member has given to keep the school operational as they continue to put the education of our children first.

Swavesey Primary School is extremely fortunate to have a very experienced and talented Business Manager, Wendy Whistler. Resources Committee receive an up to date and in depth account of the school's financial situation at every meeting. And as a direct result of Mrs Whistler and her team's prudent budget management our schools accounts started and ended the year in a positive position, which is fantastic news considering the current climate - however achievements can come at a cost which we will endeavour to minimise wherever possible.

Education has some difficult times ahead with potentially difficult decisions to be made that will impact the day to day running of the school. We have already seen a direct impact of this crisis with the need to reduce the number of hours that are provided by our Teaching Assistants – which are essential to the school, teachers and development of our pupils. This decision was not taken lightly.

A plea - We are looking to build up our bank of Volunteers who are able to give us some of their free time – to help in the classroom and listen to children read which is invaluable to the children and the school. Please contact the school if you would be in a position to help.

Increasing financial pressures, means there is a greater need to raise additional funding for the school. A particular thanks to the PTA who continue year in year out to raise money throughout the year. Events such as bonfire night, the Compass Café, cake sales and the Summer Fete, as well as the well-attended School discos could not go ahead and raise funds without the PTA and parental support – so thank you to everybody who gives up their time to support each event that takes place. Last year the raised funds enabled the classrooms to receive up to date interactive teaching boards to assist staff in developing our children's learning for many years to come leaving this resource free from budget impact.

Over the past year the Committee have continued to support the school with the reviewing and updating of many policies and risk assessments – this has been streamlined with each document being reviewed by specialists and reporting back to the Committee – this has ensured that our meetings are more productive and focused. Policies remain extremely important to the running, transparency and fairness of the school. As always we are looking to make improvements to the school and welcome any feedback and ideas that our parents or community may have.

I seem to be saying this every year but it has been another challenging year and as a school we should be proud of this year's achievements and the financial resilience that we continue to demonstrate. Mrs. Norden continues to demonstrate exceptional leadership and along with the senior management team they have been at the forefront of the continuous challenges that have occurred this year and will continue to do in the years to come.

I will reiterate my statement of last year, and I can speak on behalf of the whole Governing body, our admiration, confidence and appreciation for Mrs Norden and our school's leadership team is paramount and we will endeavour to work with them towards a clear vision that ensures our school continues to develop and provide a safe, stimulating and healthy environment that develops our children to be happy, healthy, confident and independent lifelong learners.

I know for many teachers and pupils alike the Summer holiday couldn't have come soon enough – we hope that all staff enjoyed a well-deserved break and we look forward to seeing everyone back as we head into the new term.

***Catherine Cannon***

Chair of the Resources Committee. On behalf of the Resources Committee

## **The Curriculum, Learning and Achievement Committee Annual Report 2023**

The Curriculum, Learning and Achievement (CLA) committee have been continuing to focus over the past year on subject leadership relationships, and evaluating the curriculum. As a committee we aim to have awareness of all Foundation subjects on a two year cycle, in addition to remaining in touch with the core areas of English, Maths and Science curriculum provision each year.

The committee have been able to keep in touch with the school staff throughout the academic year through our committee meetings and through establishing a range of staff-governor links for subject areas.

We have really appreciated hearing from subject leads in our meetings and seeing their summaries of practice in the classroom and sharing examples of activities and children's work. In November we heard about English, Design and Technology and Science. In March, we received an update on Computing, Art, Music and Maths, and, most recently in July, about Phonics, Early Years and Modern Foreign Languages. Each subject lead was able to demonstrate the impact of provision, be it through pupil voice, staff feedback, lesson observations or book reviews. This helps to review and evaluate provision, which they will use to feed into plans for next year.

The passion and experience of staff subject leads was in abundance and we are fortunate to have leads who support each other to ensure the range of subjects are engaging and relevant for children to support them in developing skills and knowledge relevant for the world.

A thank you to all of our staff.

The committee were also able to re-introduce in person meetings this year and each term we have undertaken learning walks through the school. Seeing the classrooms, wonderful work of students through display boards and reviewing pupil work in books. Governors identified clear cohesion evidence through and across phases.

Summary of core subjects:

- In English both reading and writing continue to be focuses for the children. Additional interventions have been woven into classes to ensure children had support to work on the skills needed for their level. Aspects of writing have been identified as particularly needing support post lockdown and staff are working with whole classes, small groups and 1 to 1 to provide opportunities for and advice about how to develop the full range of age-appropriate writing skills.

A committee representative has been into classes to hear children read and the school are trying to find volunteers to get back to pre-COVID levels of support for listening to reading and discussing books on a 1:1 basis in school time. Please consider if you or someone you know would be able to offer this support next year.

- In Maths the focus has been to improve confidence and accuracy of mental maths and arithmetic across the school. Activities have taken place across the year which were specifically aimed at prompting these skills and to demonstrate their importance.
- In Science there has been a focus on capturing evidence to support accurate assessment.

Congratulations to the Rights Respecting Committee and Mrs Namur who achieved the bronze award as part of the UNICEF UK Rights Respecting Journey. This supports our commitment to preparing children for life in a diverse modern-day Britain.

In our support of Special Educational Needs we sadly said goodbye to Mrs Crossman at the end of last year, we thank her for all of her hard work and expertise she has given. We are particularly grateful for the time she has given this year to ensure a smooth transition of the role to Mrs McAuley, who has worked hard this year towards her national SENCO Award and brings large amounts of enthusiasm to the role.

Finally, a huge congratulations to all the children who have taken internally and externally assessed tests over the past year and taken these in their stride. Thank you to staff and parents for their support in preparing and keeping the children calm for the tests.

Looking forward to 2023-2024 we look forward to being able to continue discussions with subject leads about how children have been progressing in their subject areas and will look to see more evidence of monitoring this using the BROMCOM assessment platform as more data emerges.

The committee will also continue to monitor attendance and review the impact of school finances on the curriculum.

With best wishes,

**Rachel Hallam**

Chair of the CLA committee

*For those parents who are new into the school, or may be unaware of the governing body structure, the Full Governing Body (FGB) is organised into two committees - the Curriculum, Learning and Achievements (CLA) and Resources Committee. The reports provided by Catherine Cannon, Chair of the Resources Committee and Rachel Hallam, Chair of CLA Committee provide a detailed overview of how our committee system supports and guides the school, through the achievement of our objectives as governors and in line with the schools own development plan. We always welcome interest from anyone who would like to become a school governor in the future. Alternately we are available should you have any feedback or interest in any of the items mentioned in these reports. More information can be found on the school website at: [Governors - Swavesey Primary School](#)*