

News from Edmondsley Governors

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Hello and Welcome to Issue 4 of our Governor Newsletter. Can you believe we are at the Easter break already - where has the time gone? I hope you have a great holiday and your children come back refreshed and ready to go.

Stuart Hogarth, Chair of Governors

Edmondsley Primary and Nursery Governing Body

The governing body is a team of volunteers from a variety of different backgrounds who are all working hard to help the school provide the best education possible for our children.

We play an increasingly important role in the leadership and management of the school but we realise that much of our work is behind the scenes and that our meetings all happen in the evenings so many of you don't know what we do.

We have been producing this newsletter for over a year now because of a parent questionnaire where many of you said you did not know who the governors were or what they do so this termly newsletter is one way of responding to some of your feedback.

New Governor Appointments

Governors are delighted to welcome and introduce **Dr Nadia Siddiqui** who joins Edmondsley Governors as a co-opted member. Nadia is employed at Durham University and brings expertise in education research, in particular in relation to educational interventions to help all children make good progress.

Due to Mrs Nicola Hawkins leaving the governing body, I am pleased to confirm that our new Safeguarding Governor is Mrs Philippa Bell.

Our relationship with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers play a crucial role in helping our children succeed in their education and we are keen to work in partnership with you, along with our children and staff to make the school the best it can be.

An important part of this is getting regular feedback from parents, so we can better understand the needs of you and your children and take these into account when making decisions about the school.

There are various ways in which you can give us your feedback, comments and general views about all areas of school life:

1. Respond to our parent surveys: As governors we do conduct surveys, at least annually, to gather parent/carer views on all aspects of the school and we would urge you to respond to these as we do use the responses to inform what we do.
2. Contact the Chair of governors directly: Obviously, we don't work in the school, so it's not as easy to pop in and speak with us, but you can leave a message for us at the school office.
3. We also love to chat to parents in person so if you see us around school please feel free to come and speak to us.
4. The official ofsted website is also available to record parental feedback <http://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>
5. As a result of improving communication further, last year we created a facebook page, comments are hugely appreciated using this medium too.

Our commitment to the school

As governors, we are all aware of the important role we must play and have each signed a reviewed and updated code of conduct which sets out the expectations and commitment required from school governors in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community. This can be viewed on the school's website.

Want to find out more?

We think it is important for the work of the governing body to be transparent. We therefore keep our school/governor web pages up to date and share information about the monitoring we have carried out and the impact it has had. You can also view governor training records which shows recent training and development courses undertaken and profiles of all current serving governors. Visit the school webpage and click on 'Governors' to access more information. Also use this link: <https://goo.gl/mG5oiP>

Governor Monitoring and Sub-Committees

Governors have been very busy carrying out monitoring visits linked to this year's School Improvement Plan. Link Governors have met with subject leaders in English, Maths, Early Years and Special Educational Needs provision, ensuring progress for ALL children. This year, Governors have also 'adopted' a class/cohort, ensuring good outcomes for ALL pupils. In addition, the following sub-committees, which manage the detail work so that the full governing body, when it meets as a whole can concentrate on strategy.

Curriculum Standards and Wellbeing Committee

The Curriculum Standards and Wellbeing committee continues to play a key role in helping the school deliver its aspirational educational vision for the pupils at Edmondsley.

30 hours nursery provision is now available at Edmondsley Nursery. Eligible families should contact the school office for further details. Improvements to the early years environment (indoors and out) are being investigated to engage children further, support their communication and language skills and further promote Edmondsley Nursery.

All Edmondsley Primary and Nursery school children benefit from learning tailored to their individual needs which enriches the children's skillset and deepens their subject knowledge. Our children work incredibly hard and we are proud of how they continue to meet the high expectations set by their teachers. What remains key and at the heart of Edmondsley is the innovative ways of teaching that helps engage children in active learning and encourages each and every one of them to reach their full potential. **Tracy Cummings (Committee Chair)**

Finance Committee

The committee is currently working with new budgets that will be based on the government's new funding formula. We have worked closely with the staff and are now using much more detailed budget forecasting and monitoring

information. This should ensure that we are able to see any future financial changes early enough to make prudent decisions about spending.

After exit interviewing governors who have stood down recently, it was highlighted that travel expenses had been a barrier to governor training and development. As all governors are unpaid volunteers, covering the cost of travel to and from training courses around the county was deemed a reasonable cost to cover from school budget. The decision was voted on by the full governing body and a new governor allowance policy was adopted. In order to be as transparent as possible we will report once per year on the total cost of governor allowance to the school. **Stuart Hogarth (Committee Chair)**

Premises, Health and safety Committee

The committee reviewed the report on the work completed on the hall/office roof from last summer, which is a cost that has been borne by DCC and not the school.

We are continuing to monitor and explore accessibility solutions around the school. Along with the finance committee it was decided that as a priority all classrooms would have a hot water supply.

Governors' Mark Working Party

Governors at Edmondsley have been working hard in leadership and management of the school, as well as reviewing, updating and introducing policies and procedure to ensure effective governance. To recognise this work, we are in the process of submitting an application to achieve the Governance, Leadership and Management (GLM) Quality Mark. This Governor Mark is a national award. It is a kite mark which provides external evaluation of the quality of governance in a school.

This is a challenging award. Not only does a governing body need to show that it follows good procedures and fulfils statutory duties, but there is a high value placed on evidence of impact – the difference the governing body makes to a school.

A working party of governors has been established and we are progressing our application in preparation for submission. We are optimistic that the work we have done will be successful. **Tracy Cummings (Committee Member)**

Our School Vision

With a new leadership team established and teaching staff, our school is entering a new phase of its development and this year governors and staff are working to articulate the vision and values that underpin our school community.

The views of staff, governors, children and parents have been collected and we are presently working to create an updated School Vision.

Please refer to the school website for further details and watch this space for the school's updated Strategic Vision Statement.

Snow Closures

The staff at Edmondsley Primary and Nursery School work hard to ensure the school is open every day. However we do have to prepare for the possibility of snow disruption during the winter months. Indeed, we experienced this at the end of February when, due to adverse weather conditions and hazardous road conditions, the school and nursery had to close for three days.

Our key objective during the worst weather conditions is to open school on a site that is safe and adequately staffed. When we experience ice or snow our first priority is to assess whether we can make the site safe enough for adults and children.

When there is a possibility that school may not be able to open we will assess the following criteria:

- Can the site be made safe and accessible?
- Can staff, and families travel to and from school safely.
- Will we have sufficient staff to meet appropriate adult : child ratios?
- Can we provide meals at lunchtime?

PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT CLOSING A SCHOOL IS NEVER A DECISION THAT IS TAKEN LIGHTLY; STAFF WILL DO EVERYTHING THEY CAN TO STAY OPEN.

I trust you continue to find the Governor Newsletter interesting and informative. If you have any queries relating to the content of this edition, then please contact the Chair through the school office.