



# News from Edmondsley Governors

Dear Parents and Carers

The summer holidays are almost here, again, it can't have been a year already! It's been a little while since our last newsletter, this has reflected a very busy year for Governors.

Once again, we'd like to thank all the staff at Edmondsley Primary and Nursery School for their ongoing commitment and hard work this year. Each year that we don't have to jump through OFSTED hoops, we musn't be complacent in thinking the staff have it easy. Our staff show continued dedication to their own development and to the care and education of the children here. There is so much hard work constantly going on behind the scenes I'm always amazed they have the energy to provide fun and exciting activities at this time of year. They are all a credit to our school.

We would also like to thank parents and carers who support the school to ensure the best outcomes for children. Whether, you're a volunteer, customer at events, read with your children at home or simply make sure you can help your child arrive on time, it all helps to make sure we're on track to meet our vision for Edmondsley.

Naturally, this school wouldn't be what it is without our wonderful children. During many visits this year, they never fail to impress with their kindness, intelligence or friendly chat. Have a lovely and restful summer you've earned it!

**Stuart Hogarth, Chair of Governors**

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## Year 6

Well done to all of year 6 leavers! We hope you've enjoyed your time here and wish you every success next year. Please remember you're invited to our alumni garden party next July!

## Congratulations Mrs Rees!

I'm sure you're all aware now that our Head Teacher, Mrs Rees, is expecting a baby later in the year. Everyone in school is thrilled with the news and we wish her husband and her the very best with everything for the exciting journey ahead.

## Governors deciding the best route forward

As part of our role as a governing body we are responsible for the appointment of our Head Teacher. After receiving Mrs Rees' good news, we needed to ensure smooth and seamless operation of the school during her maternity leave. During our full governing body meeting there was much to discuss about this process as there were several options on how to proceed. The diversity, passion and knowledge of the governing body was a real strength in this decision making process. Governors determined that the best route for the school would be to appoint a suitable external candidate as acting Head Teacher. This would ensure that the existing successful senior leadership team could continue with minimum disruption and that children could receive the best teaching we could offer.

Then we just had to appoint. The advertising, shortlisting, interviewing and selection procedure for an appointment like this is involved as you may imagine. The interviewing and selection after shortlisting was particularly rigorous. Again, because of the governing bodies knowledge of the school there was some very challenging tasks and questions for the candidates. We'd like to think we did our very best in selecting your child's Head Teacher. We were able to appoint on the day and our chosen candidate accepted.

### Welcome Mrs Wilkinson!

From September (and jointly during many visits so far and probably over the summer too), Mrs Wilkinson will be leading our school as Head Teacher. We know you will find her to be friendly, caring and open during this next year and I hope you would all join us in welcoming her to our school family. Although she will be taking care of the school, she will be much more than just a care taker for the next year. The governing body will be looking to have her ideas and enthusiasm to continue to drive the school to greater things. While Mrs Wilkinson may be new to the school please ensure you continue to get in touch as you may have done with Mrs Rees. Please continue to speak with your child's class teacher in the first instance of any concerns or issues.

### Thank you, Mr Glenton!

Mr Glenton, our Deputy Head, will continue to provide invaluable stability and familiarity for both children and parents during this coming year. His knowledge and expertise will support the school and acting Head Teacher, particularly with any issues overlapping from this year into next.

### Successful staff

As a school that understands the value of developing staff to their full potential, we also have to understand that usually means we will lose staff as they continue to grow and develop their own careers. This year two very valuable members of our school family have aimed high and will be moving on to pursue their own goals. Firstly, Mrs Bravey will leave to work with SEND children at Trinity school Durham. Her contribution to the school over many years has been significant and we all wish her the very best with her new challenge. Secondly, Mr Mander is leaving to be closer to his family and starting a new life as a married man. At Edmondsley, during only a short time, he has developed as a middle leader and we know he will go on to great things. He has shown creativity

and excellence in teaching that we know will be loved by his new school and children as it has been by ours.

## A new Governor on GDPR

As one of your newer Governors I have attended a few courses so far to increase my knowledge. Recently, I went on a General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) course, which I found very interesting. It gave me an insight into many different areas of GDPR and also Cyber Security. I was able to check procedures against what is already in place within our school. Also, any areas that we can work on if the updates require it.

The school takes this subject very seriously as with all our policies. Data for you/your child and school employees is handled in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

I look forward to increasing my knowledge further on other training courses in the future, this is important for all Governors as it helps us to deliver the best for the school and give your child a quality education.

**Tracey Elliott, Governor**

## After school care

Following our questionnaire to parents, among other issues, after school care was raised. We are passionate about supporting our pupils and their families and adding value to our local communities. Wrap-around provision is something we have given great consideration to over many years. As you would expect, Edmondsley Primary School receives numerous requests for support of this type and we are certainly giving due consideration to every available option as we work to provide a solution that best meets our local community needs but is also sustainable over the long term. The issue has been discussed again at our Curriculum Standards and Wellbeing Committee, Finance committee and Full governing body committee. There are multiple issues surrounding this type of offering. Our discussions in committee covered:

- Staffing levels required to support such a provision. We have a relatively small employee base to request additional time from. There would also be the cost to resource this and ensure it was financially sustainable over the long term. We don't want to put anything in place that would not be sustainable and then have to remove the provision at a later date.
- Available space – the hall is currently used for after school clubs and the nursery is not suitable for our older children / would require additional staffing for cleaning purposes on a morning prior to reopening for nursery children.
- Demand – the demand for breakfast club was high following a parent survey but once the provision was put in place, the actual demand was a lot lower than expected. It has taken a long time to make the Breakfast Club provision financially sustainable.
- The possibility of partnering with nearby schools to transport children to existing wrap around provisions at neighbouring schools.

- Using an external provider in school would require us to manage the staff, policy and procedures of the provider in order to ensure the safety of our children.

There are many factors to us supplying the kind of quality offering you would expect of Edmondsley Primary and Nursery school, at this time we are continuing to explore options which would not impact what we currently do so well.

### **Year groups and class organisation, what does it all mean?**

As you know we are a small village school and we have many wonderful aspects. The one aspect of the school that catches parents out year after year, is the class and year group organisation in KS2. We have three classrooms available to KS2 and 4 year groups to fill them. I know our early years children can show that four doesn't go into three! Like many schools, we have mixed year groups, in those classrooms. Just as each of our professional teaching staff meet children's unique needs within a single year group, they are also successfully teaching more than one year group in a single class. Every child is different and our teachers ensure that they are each set the appropriate level and pace of work for their particular stage of education. That's all a bit of a mouthful, put simply, teachers can set work for the most able child in a subject and for those that require more help. If that stretches across from one year group to the next, so be it.

This can be a very emotive time, when children move between classes, differently to their friends. There are many factors considered when the classes are set. Let us reassure you that the decisions made are to ensure the very best outcomes for your child, whether academically, socially or emotionally.

Please reassure your children that they will still be able to play with their friends! The governing body would like to thank you for your support and cooperation with the decisions made surrounding class organisation in KS2. The school and governors understand the concerns of parents and only have the child's best interests at heart.

### **What's next?**

As governors, during the coming year, we will be focusing on one of the most pressing issues facing all schools, finance. The way schools are funded is changing and there will be an impact at our school. The role of Governors is to ensure the long term success of the school and as such we will be looking at ways in which we can best manage limited finances along with increasing demand to our budget. In order to achieve this, we may try out new strategies over the coming years. We will keep parents informed as much as possible.

I trust you continue to find the Governor Newsletter interesting and informative. If you wish to get in touch about anything included here, then please do so via the School Office.

Enjoy the summer break!