



News from Edmondsley Governors

Hello, and Welcome, to Issue 2 of our Governor Newsletter. Following on from our recent Parent Survey, you told us that you wanted to understand more about who we are and what we do. We want to use the newsletter as a regular forum to highlight the work which Governors do and to provide you with an overview of our continued role and the support we provide to the pupils, staff and school as a whole, throughout the school year.

Stuart Hogarth, Chair of Governors

Parent Survey

Thank you to all the parents who returned the Governor's Parent Survey which was handed out earlier in the year. We were very pleased to see that the overwhelming majority of the responses were very positive. Thank you all for your support of the school and of your children.

Two key areas for further improvement became apparent whilst reviewing the survey responses:

Continued improvements in communication between school and parents/carers.

Further opportunities for after school activities, clubs and sports.

A parent survey has been carried out for school years 2013/14, 2015/16 and now 2016/17. It has been very encouraging to see that the changes being implemented by the school are having a positive impact. The nature of the school year means that some changes can take a while to embed and then longer to be able to measure the effect. Governors will continue to use parent survey information in the future to track how changes are having an impact on the school. This longer term monitoring is a key part of what the governors **strategic** role is.

We will continue to work hard to improve communication and investigate future after school opportunities for the whole school. The parent/carer's survey provided some very useful feedback which has been taken into account whilst considering priorities for 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan (SIP). Progress on the current SIP features on page 2.

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What Governors Have Been Doing

As well as attending scheduled governor meetings, here are some of the other fantastic things governors have been involved with during this half term: -

- To improve the effectiveness of the Governing Body, we have re-structured the governing body's Terms of Reference and membership for our sub-committees based on training and knowledge.
- Met with senior/lead staff as part of monitoring Assessment, Maths, English, Special Educational Needs and Disability provision, Safeguarding, Pupil Premium, Early Years provision and Science provision.
- After supporting the Headteacher throughout a very rigorous selection and interview process, with very high calibre candidates, we have appointed three new members of teaching staff. Two will join us in September and of course, Miss Skidmore who joined us mid-way through the year.
- Attended school celebration assemblies.
- Contributed towards school self-evaluation for 2016/17 where we rated the school overall 'Good' with some 'Outstanding' features (based on current Ofsted guidelines).
- Attended training and briefings.
- Undertook whole school leadership/strategic learning walk.

Standards at Edmondsley

We are proud to acknowledge that end of year outcomes for children are well on track for the current academic year based on the current School Development Plan.

Year 2 and Year 6 children have recently taken SATs and coped wonderfully. Staff and governors are expecting positive outcomes. We would like to thank staff, children and their families for all their hard work leading up to these tests.

It is fantastic to see our children continue to achieve such high standards!

School Self Evaluation and Improvement

Like all schools, we have a Development Plan every year, in which staff and governors identify areas of work we are currently focusing on (see Issue 1- Governor's Newsletter). We now have a strong team approach to School Development with all staff and governors sharing the highest expectations for all pupils and contributing well to school improvement.

In line with identified areas for development and after a recent self-evaluation, we are pleased to advise that for 2016/2017 the school has achieved its priorities.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a term which is broader than 'child protection' and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Governors work in partnership with staff to support the school in safeguarding pupils.

The job of the Safeguarding Governor is to confirm that there are policies in place to help keep pupils safe and that there are robust record-keeping systems. Parents and carers can access safeguarding policies via the school website or from the school office.

The school curriculum teaches pupils about safeguarding issues including personal safety, e-safety and sex and relationship education. The school's Anti-bullying policy can be accessed on our website and as part of our School Development Plan for 2017-18 we will be looking at 'friendship' as a whole school focus.

Safeguarding includes pupils feeling that the school is an environment where they are valued, listened to and taken seriously. It is important as governors that we hear children's views about their school. Our Safeguarding Governor is Mrs Nicola Hawkins who recently undertook a recent school survey where children across the whole school overwhelmingly felt that their school was a safe place to learn. Our Local Authority Governor, Mrs Helen Johnson looks forward to joining some of the school council meetings to engage further with children, listening to their opinions and ideas.

Attendance

Governors and staff at Edmondsley are committed to maximising the potential of every child in school. We know that you too want the very best for your child. Good, consistent attendance at school **is crucial** to give your child the best chance of success. We need your support in ensuring that holidays are not taken in school time so that your child has the very best opportunity to succeed.

We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks, and that is why some parents may ask for term-time leave for their child. However, it is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term-time.

Did you know?

(Source: Roman Hill Primary School and DfE report 'Improving attendance at school')

- There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement
- Research has shown that if a pupil takes **two weeks holiday** per year, every year, then by the time they sit their GCSE exams in Year 11 they will drop the **equivalent of one GCSE grade** (From a C to a D)!
- 73% of pupils who have over 95% attendance achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C.
- If a pupil takes **two weeks holiday** per year (starting from reception) for their entire school life then they will effectively miss 20 weeks of learning – **like missing nearly a whole school year**.
- If a pupil takes two weeks holiday per year then the maximum attendance they can gain for that academic year is 94.7%
- A pupil with 95% attendance who takes 2 weeks holiday will see their attendance fall to 89.7% and a pupil with 92% attendance will see their attendance drop to 86.8% if two weeks holiday is taken.

We have an overall improving attendance record at Edmondsley and would like to thank you for your continued support. **Every school day does counts!** For further details on attendance, please visit our website and refer to: goo.gl/6AN9mi

OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning)

Edmondsley Primary and Nursery School children are loving playtimes. The response from their recent survey was a resounding 'Big Smiley Face' and 'Thumbs up' to OPAL, which has provided so much more to do. Everyone wants to be out there whatever the weather! Edmondsley is fortunate to have wonderful, extensive grounds for the children to play in. To the 'untrained' eye, our grounds may sometimes appear to be messy but to our children, whose imagination is endless the play resources on offer provide boundless opportunities for them to express themselves. There are lots of photographs of our children on the school



Facebook page, [goo.gl/hjkwEX](https://www.google.com/search?q=goo.gl/hjkwEX), enjoying themselves during OPAL times. There is no time to be bored and as a result of the freedom children have to play where they want with whoever they want, playtime creates new and positive friendships. Children are having fun in the fresh air. Not only are the new play opportunities promoting health and well-being but also children are developing life skills such as co-operation, team work and problem solving. They are becoming enthusiastic and motivated scientists, engineers, builders and explorers!

We are proud to have been awarded the Platinum Award for OPAL which exceeded all our expectations.



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

It may be a while since you first visited Edmondsley and decided to apply for a place for your child. At that point in time, parents are looking at early years and reception classes and wondering whether their small person will be happy at the school. Beyond that, the overall effectiveness of the school or the OFSTED rating may be considered. It's easy at that time to not consider too closely about the Key Stage 2 (KS2), years 3-6, provision we provide at Edmondsley.

We are a small village school and we have many wonderful aspects as I'm sure you're fully aware. The 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 our professional 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.

This can be a very emotive time, when children move between classes, differently to their friends. There are many factors taken into account when the classes are set, further explanation will be forthcoming from the school in the coming days. Let us reassure you that the decisions made are to ensure the very best outcomes for your child, whether academically, socially or emotionally.

The governing body has at least three members who are parents of children that have attended Edmondsley and successfully gone through this process. Personally, my children have experienced both routes, staying with one class in their final two years or staying with the same class lower down the school. The decisions made by Edmondsley staff for all three of my children, I would consider to be the correct ones.

Please read all the information the school will be supplying on KS2 organisation, and 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.

Final Message

I trust you find this issue of the Governor Newsletter interesting and informative. Staff and Governors are very excited about the next chapter in the story of our wonderful village school.

For more Governor information, please visit the Governors' Page on the school website at www.edmondsley.durham.sch.uk

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