

Governor update – Spring 2022

Introduction

Whilst Covid has not yet gone, it's been great that the school has been able to get back to what we would deem a more 'normal' approach this year, with no year-group bubbles, standard start and end times for all children and an increase in trips and clubs on offer. We would like to thank parents again for all their understanding and support during what has been an extremely challenging time for all staff at the school.

Welcome Mrs Robins!

As you will know, Mrs Robins started at the school in February and has been quickly getting to know the staff and children. We are really pleased with how she has settled into the school and the leadership and new ideas she has already been able to bring the school. We look forward to continuing to work with her and the school leadership team to continue to build on the excellent school community that already exists at Lawn.



Governor changes

There have been a few changes to the Governing Board since the last newsletter. Mark Tinson recently stepped down from his role as Parent Governor and we would like to take this opportunity to thank Mark for his contribution over the years, and we are sorry to see him leave. We are pleased to announce though, that Aaron Smith recently joined the Governing Board and we are happy to welcome him to the team. Aaron has two children who both attend Lawn, and he has taken on the role of Shadow SEND governor.

Luisa Stokes has also recently stepped down as Clerk to the Governing Board. We were sorry to see Luisa go as she was a great asset to the Board, but Rachel Piper has now joined us as our new Clerk, and we look forward to working with her. Fortunately for us, Luisa has secured a new role working in the school office as School Business Manager. So, not only do we still get to work with Luisa, this means that she and Rachel can work together to ensure a smooth handover.

With all these changes happening, we still have vacancies on the Governing Board that we are keen to fill. Would you like to make a difference to the outcome of our children in the school and have time to commit to this valuable role? Or do you know anyone in the local community that may be interested? If so, we would love to hear from you. You can contact the Chair of Governors either through the school office, or via email at nread@lawn-pri.swindon.gov.uk.

Ofsted Preparations

It is now 5 years since our last Ofsted inspection and we anticipate another review in the coming months. Consequently governors have set up a small working party to double check we are ready. One of the key new areas of focus will be the curriculum and in 2019 governors implemented a new process to check the learning intent, implementation and impact for each subject area. Despite setbacks due to Covid, this process is now in full swing, with governors and staff collaborating regularly to ensure we maintain a broad interleaved curriculum. Together with our established processes to review areas such as attainment, safeguarding, finance, strategy, staffing, behaviour, attendance and premises, we believe we will be ready for inspection when the time comes.



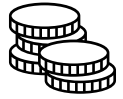
IT

By the end of March 2022 the school broadband will have been switched over from an existing 80mbps line over two telephone wires to a modern fibre optic link. Initially this will run at 200mbps, but we have the capability to increase speeds as needed up to 1Gbps over the same fibre optic link as demand for digital services in school grows. By the end of April this extra bandwidth will enable us to move our phone system to Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) providing 17 lines in and out of the school (vs current 2) while maintaining our existing phone numbers. This will be a significant improvement and should help school communications. Looking ahead we plan to review and update the IT strategy with school representatives to determine the most important areas to invest and support education over the next 3-5 years.



Finance and Premises

The financial situation for schools has been one of significant strain over the last few years and the costs associated with Covid (through increased staff absence and additional requirements such as enhanced cleaning) adding yet more of a challenge. We are really pleased to say that we are forecast to end this financial year (which ends this week) on budget. There remains some funding from the 'PE Grant' (a ringfenced pool of funds) that we are planning to use to continue to develop the forest school area.



We are also pleased to announce that Swindon Borough Council has agreed to fund a replacement of all of the flat roof areas of the school. This is an investment that is certainly needed and we are pleased that there will be no cost to the school for the work. Given the scale and complexity of the work, it is estimated it will take around a year to complete, but the school is already working with the council and its contractors to ensure that there is minimal disruption from the work.

Parent Questionnaire

We would like to thank all parents that completed the parent questionnaire at the end of the last summer term – the feedback we receive is really valuable and the large number of responses helps the leadership team to understand where the school's strengths are as well as areas for improvement. We are really pleased that the overwhelming feedback continues to be very positive. It was particularly good to see that the highest scores were that parents would recommend the school and that their children feel both safe and happy when at school. There were also lots of comments praising the staff. Whilst all questions had a net positive response, the key area that the school is focusing on is improving communication with parents.

Safeguarding

As governors, we are responsible for knowing and having evidence that the pupils at Lawn are being kept safe. This is a fundamental and very important responsibility for every governor. There are a number of ways in which we meet this responsibility and a few examples of these include:

- (i) the approval and monitoring of all safeguarding policies including behaviour, attendance, anti-bullying, health & safety etc, and the review and assessment of the impact of the policies,
- (ii) meeting with the school's external safeguarding adviser to review her annual audit of the effectiveness of safeguarding at the school,
- (iii) regular visits to the school by the lead safeguarding governors which will include for example, periodic safeguarding walks to ensure that the physical environment is safe, checks to ensure that all required staff and governor training has been completed, a review of the school's safeguarding action plan.
- (iv) receiving reports and updates on all aspects of safeguarding from the Headteacher at every full governing board meeting

We are fortunate at Lawn to have strong and committed safeguarding staff who, together with the nurture team, deliver a holistic provision and continuously strive to improve the health and wellbeing of pupils at the school.

Progress and Attainment

As experienced across the country over the last two years, many of our children fell behind or had gaps in their education due to Covid. At Lawn we have been working hard to close these gaps using catch up funds from the government to primarily purchase additional teaching and TA hours to give extra support to identified pupils and classes, with particular emphasis on disadvantaged groups. As a result we are seeing good progress in many areas, especially Maths and our greater depth pupils are continuing to flourish. Writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar remain key focus areas in KS2, while KS1 are focusing on reading to enable better access to the curriculum in future. Progress is monitored by staff and governors on a regular basis and we remain committed to ensuring that children leave school with all the skills they need for the next stage of their education. Despite all the challenges it is encouraging to see that staff are continuing to deliver a broad curriculum, many after school clubs have reopened and residential trips are going ahead this year.

