

Dear Parents/Carers....

This year has seen a number of changes within school, with new additions to the senior leadership team (SLT), an inspection from HMI, and further changes to national education policy. In September we will also complete the expansion of the school to three-forms across all years. In addition to continued improvements to teaching and learning, one of the key priorities for next year is to further develop the outdoor areas. The resources committee has approved the next phase of playground development for early years, which has now started. More news will follow in September.

I wish you all an enjoyable summer break and look forward to another exciting year at Oswald Road.

Richard Price- Chair of Governors

National Education Policy

Many of you will be aware of the announcements in the recent government whitepaper on 'educational excellence everywhere'. Within the whitepaper the government initially set out a timetable for 'forced academisation' of all state schools by 2022, which was subsequently withdrawn. As a school and governing body we need to plan for various scenarios in a rapidly changing education system. Although we expect a reduction in funding during the next few years, we are fortunate that the school finances are in a healthy state and this is not a factor in our discussions.

We have continued to investigate different models adopted by other schools to determine whether any of these would bring benefits to Oswald Road. We have worked with the SLT and other staff representatives to articulate our key requirements and non-negotiable points, with a clear consensus that the school's identity and autonomy are sacrosanct in any prospective partnership with other schools. To increase our general awareness, we have commissioned background research from an education consultant (Forum Education). This report is available in the governor area of the school website. A number of schools within our community have converted to academies, and we will also look to learn more about their experiences over the coming year. As I mentioned at the start of the year, there is no fixed timescale or pressure for the school to make any changes, and the default position is for the school to remain under local authority control.

Governance Review/ Report

The school continues to work hard to improve communication. The parents and carers' survey provided some very useful feedback which has helped to shape the school improvement plan. We plan to run this survey every two years. Since the last governor newsletter we have welcomed a number of new governors who bring a wide-range of skills and expertise. We have also completed our governor action plan following the review last July. A copy of the final report is available in the governor area of the school website.

Following a number of incidents during this year we will be revising our policy on handling concerns and complaints. Our aim is to ensure there is a clear and supportive process that allows parents and carers to raise concerns with school, but also allows staff to work without inappropriate scrutiny or pressure that has happened in a small number of cases this year.



What Does a Governor Do?

As well as attending governing body meetings, governors take part in a wide range of activities across the school. Here are some of the fantastic things governors have been involved with during this half term:

- School visits and observations, including Forest Crew and Commando Joe's sessions
- Interviewing new members of staff
- Observations of interventions such as Commando Joe's and Forest Crew
- We attended a fantastic presentation by our Rights Respecting Ambassadors in the lead up to the school's Level 1 certification
- We also try our best to attend as many events as possible, such as the school concert and sports day.

For all governors this is the most interesting and rewarding part of our role. From a personal perspective I was privileged to meet with the school's Rights & Respecting Ambassadors. It was humbling to see how they care passionately about each other's feelings and understand their rights, even though some of them are only in Year 1! A credit to themselves, Ms Whalley and our school. The governors are keen to see this ethos embedded even further across school.

SATs Results

SATs format and assessment have undergone a radical change this year. Nationally results appear to show a sharp drop in standards, which has led to considerable debate amongst the teaching profession and politicians. SATs results at Oswald Road also present a mixed picture. Writing continues to be strong, but results in Maths and Reading are lower than expected. SATs are one of many ways that the impact of schools are measured. Our school greatly values every pupil's uniqueness, which creates indelible memories not only from academic achievement but through music, art, drama and their many other talents! Based on the inspection in January 2016, school's internal assessments and quality assurance visits by external advisors, standards of teaching and learning are clearly still good, but we acknowledge that further improvements are needed. The school and governing body will analyse the SATs in more detail and, where appropriate, adjust school improvement priorities for next year.



Governor Profile- Jo Dennis

I've been a governor here for one year. I live in the local area and I wanted to be an active part of my community.

What is your background in education? I was a secondary school teacher in London for 10 years. I taught English and Drama.

What makes our school unique? Oswald Road is a kind, caring and diverse community. The teaching staff show a very obvious care and compassion, and the staff in general make what is a very big school feel like a small, welcoming school. The children have great opinions and show themselves to be really good citizens.

What do you do when you're not working as a governor? I am doing a PhD in Education at Manchester Metropolitan University, focussing on school reform policy. I am in my final year and hope to finish soon. I also work as a research assistant at the university.

What made you want to become a governor? My PhD has increased my awareness of government reforms to school governance. Schools are becoming more detached from the local authority and from traditional democratic processes, meanwhile governing bodies have increased powers. In this context, I felt a moral obligation to become a governor as I have a real care for the education sector.

What do you like to do in your spare time? I like to read novels, go to gigs and cook. I recently read *Mothering Sunday* by Graham Swift, which is great. My favourite novel is *Bleak House* by Charles Dickens.