



ARDLEY HILL ACADEMY

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Learning for Life

Jonathan Smith, Headteacher

Dear Parents,

9th July 2018

It has been some time since we last wrote to you all to advise on the work of the Governing Board. After the recent Ofsted report and, before that, the parent questionnaires, we thought it would be a good time to update you.

Firstly, for those who aren't already aware, it would be useful for us to quickly summarise the role of the Governing Board.

There are 3 key functions of the Board. These are to ensure clarity in vision, ethos and strategic direction, hold the Headteacher to account for educational performance of the school and to oversee the financial performance of the school.

Following the Ofsted visit in April 2016, we undertook a huge amount of work to ensure our key functions could be met. The most recent Ofsted visit raised, in particular, that Governors need to hold leaders to account for performance in Upper Key Stage 2. Whilst we feel a lot of work has gone into this already and results in other areas clearly reflect this, we will now be placing more specific attention to Upper KS2 and fully expect this to be reflected in results, going forwards. We undertook a Governance review in 2015 and a re-review in 2017. However, at the suggestion of Ofsted, a further review will now be arranged.

We were pleased to note the positives of the recent Ofsted report with some areas of the school significantly having improved over the last 2 years. These comments and the 'Good' rating received are testament to how hard all staff have worked and effort that has been put into making the school better. It is clearly disappointing that, overall, the school rating remains at 'Requires Improvement'. However, we are confident this will not be for long. The staff have our full support to make the changes necessary to continue to improve and, as results continue to get better, we plan to get a 'Good' or better rating next time.

Your views are particularly important to us. In October we asked you to complete a questionnaire. The results of this help us to understand what our Stakeholders think we do well but, more importantly, what we could do better at. We would like to thank all the parents who took time to complete the survey. We are sorry that the feedback on the survey has been somewhat delayed. For all parents who missed it, or are new to the school, we will run another survey during the next academic year.

We have reviewed your comments and can advise that the things you would like the school to improve are:

- Feedback to parents for their child's progress and attitudes



- Range and frequency of communication
- Feedback opportunities for parents
- Communication between leaders and parents

You would like more information on;

- Use of technology in the setting
- Teaching styles and approaches in the setting
- Behaviour strategies and outcomes

Jonathan and his team have already communicated and implemented changes in respect to feedback and we will continue to work with him to review other areas highlighted for improvement. It was disappointing that only 17 families were represented at the recent Ofsted feedback meeting, a vital meeting for leaders to communicate to parents. Parental engagement is also something that Governors will be supporting the school with to improve going forwards and any suggestions you have in this respect would be most welcome.

It is also important to highlight the strengths of the school which came through in the questionnaire results. You told us that your children enjoy being at Ardley Hill and that you consider the teaching is engaging and innovative and that the use of technology is good, which is great to hear!

It is always important to us to know your views and so the Governor suggestion box remains in the school reception. The box is seldom used but again, we would like to invite you to leave a note of any thoughts or suggestions you may have that you think could assist our work, remembering that we cannot intervene in the day to day operational aspects of the school.

We are always keen to recruit new governors. This aids us to introduce fresh perspective on the role, ensures that we have the best mix of skills to fulfil our role and also assists with succession planning. With this in mind, if anyone would be interested to stand as a parent Governor or, if anyone knows someone who may be interested to join us as a community Governor, please get in touch with Sue Green, Clerk to the Governors, via the school office, and she can set up an informal meeting with no obligation for you to commit

When recruiting, we aim to ensure a good mix of skills, but experience of Education is not mandatory. Therefore, if you think you have useful skills and, very importantly, time to offer (including during school hours), then please contact us.

Finally, at the end of this letter, there is a list of all of the names of the current governors and details of the posts we hold. We have added a few personal lines below to give you some idea about who we are and where we come from. We hope you find this information of use.

We look forward to meeting more parents over the next school year and hearing your feedback on the work being undertaken in all areas to improve the whole school.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Vicky Deller

Mr Neil Williams

Co-Chairs of Governing Board



The Governing board has the following members;

Mrs Vicky Deller – Co-Chair of Governors, member of HR & Performance Review and Strategic Committees. I am a parent of children in years 2 and 4. I have been a Governor for 5.5 years and Chair since May 2016. I work in Insurance and have expertise in Project Management and Strategic and Budget planning.

Mr Neil Williams - Co-Chair of Governors since June 2018. Chair of HR & Performance review and Strategic committees. I am a community Governor living in the local area. I have a background in IT, Data Analysis, and people management. I have a young family, my son is already at the preschool, and I'm hoping my daughter will start in the next few years.

Mrs Elaine Clinton – I am currently Vice Chair of Governors and the Safeguarding & Pupil Premium Governor and I am also a member of HR & Performance Review Committee. I have 2 daughters, Amy who is currently a yr 5 pupil and Rosy who is an ex AHA pupil, now in yr 8 at Queensbury Academy. I work as an Emergency Nurse Practitioner/Senior Sister in the Emergency Department at L & D hospital, based as part of the management team in the Children's Emergency Department. My passion is Martial Arts, teaching Karate to adults and children, whilst learning Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. I love chocolate!

Mr Jonathan Smith – Headteacher. I have been Deputy Head for five years and then Headteacher at Ardley Hill for 8 years. I was previously the Deputy Head of Goldington Green School in Bedford. I have a Bachelor in Education with 2:1 honours degree and qualified successfully with my National Professional Qualification in Headship. I am a 'late starter' in education as I began my degree at 30 years of age after a career in sales and finance. Between careers I was a single father for many years, bringing up my two children.

Mrs Natalie Read - Deputy Headteacher. My journey at Ardley Hill started as a pupil. Years on, after completing my Bachelor in Education degree (2:1) and Masters in education, I began my teaching career at Ardley Hill in 2009. I was successful in becoming Key Stage One leader in 2011 and then was promoted to Deputy Head in 2014. I remain classroom based as my passion lies in Teaching & learning. Currently on maternity leave.

Mr Ian Sawyer – I have been a community Governor at Ardley Hill Academy (AHA) for nearly 4 years and I am Chair of Finance & Audit Committee. I am local to AHA and have taken an interest in the school as both of my children were pupils here. I have a background in computers and currently work for one of the major European consultancies as a Project Manager.

Mr Andrew Jones – I am a Community Governor and I sit on the Finance & Audit and Strategic committees. I was born and raised in Dunstable, studied History and Politics at the University of East Anglia and I live locally. I joined AHA Governing board in May 2017. I have worked for a vending company for 9 years after joining their Graduate scheme and I am currently Head of a Department. Outside of work, I have a passion for sport and I am the Chairman of Studham Tennis Club and I am heavily involved in growing the club and game at grassroots level in the local area.



Mr Andrew Bedwell - I am a community Governor and I sit on the Pay, Performance and HR Committee. I am a Regional Manager and trainer for a care charity. I have four children, two under 5. My interests are guitars, DIY and continuing learning.

Mr Michael Wilby - Staff Governor. I am a Teaching Assistant at the Academy in my fourth year of employment. Whilst working at the Academy I am also studying to get a degree so that I can begin teacher training. I run the year 2 and 6 football teams and a drama club

Mrs Liz Shipp – I am a parent Governor. I am Director of Performing Arts at Lealands High School, Luton where I am also part of the Teaching and Learning team in the school with a focussed responsibility for More Able and Stretch and Challenge across the school. I am Facilitator of the Olevi Outstanding Teachers Programme and Improving Teacher Programme.

Mrs Emma Browne – I am a Parent Governor with a daughter in Reception class and another in the Pre-School. I also work in education, having been a secondary school English teacher for 6 years. I have lived in and around Dunstable for most of my life and I am keen to start getting involved in things within the local community. Other than being a mother, a wife, a teacher and a Governor, I am also a keen reader, shopper, football fan (West Ham United) and globe trotter.

Mr Jeff Abraham – I am a Parent Governor and I sit on the Finance & Audit Committee.

Mr James Bacon – I am a Community Governor and I sit on the Finance & Audit Committee. I work at the University of Bedfordshire as a Finance Officer. I am also pursuing an MSc in Public Policy and Management. I spent 3 years in China teaching English as a foreign language to children of Primary school age. I am passionate about education and hope to make a positive contribution to AHA Governing Board.

