

Earl Sterndale C of E Primary School Chairs Report (July 2024)

As the end of the 2023/24 academic year approaches it is a good time to look back on what has been, yet again, a changing, challenging and rewarding year for the school.

Ongoing world current affairs and particularly the recent election will continue to provide uncertainty which is, and will continue, to put pressure on our finances and therefore resources/opportunities available to us. Behind the scenes the Governing Body and all the school staff are working hard to ensure that the children maintain a well-balanced curriculum as a minimum.

After absorbing the 'cost of living crisis' and the increased demands of the education system to provide new policies/procedures, school finances have maintained a positive budget going forward but the margins are much tighter and as a whole we must 'tighten our belts' until we see a financial upturn. I would note that does not mean that we are standing still, we are channeling what we have into a continued program to improve learning resources, recreational equipment and exciting learning experiences for the children. I must add a very big thank you to all teaching, office and support staff for all their hard work, commitment and in being so flexible and accommodating throughout the year.

The school fund raising committee continues to work their 'socks off' to organise & deliver a diverse range of events across the year that are enjoyed by all who attend as well as bring in essential additional funds. I would note that these funds go directly to the children in the form of resources and great experiences, so please continue to support them/us where you are able.

There have been a lot of changes to the governing body, and it remains a well-balanced group of volunteers. All new starters and those with new roles are settling in well and I would like to take this opportunity to thank past governors for all their hard work & dedication during their terms of office. Thank you also to our Clerk of Governors for providing support and advice to meet all Local Authority guidelines.

The children continue to be our best asset and from recent feedback and results gained, are making very good progress and more importantly are happy & secure in our small school family. All our Year 6 pupils who will be leaving us soon are ready for their ongoing journey to secondary school and we wish them every success in their future. As with every group that leaves us, they will be missed and will always be welcomed as part of the school community.

Positive work over the last year has included:

- ✓ Managing all additional 'cost of living' increases whilst not diminishing our school's performance.
- ✓ Continuing to invest in our people with ongoing staff and governor training.
- ✓ Acknowledging staff for going above and beyond expectations in their commitment to the school & its pupils.
- ✓ Providing first aid & mental health first aid trained staff onsite to always ensure children & staff wellbeing.
- ✓ Implementing Cyber Ready & GDPR procedures in accordance with changing Governmental policies and procedures.
- ✓ Additional Safeguarding training for all staff with targeted implementation to keep the school community safe. Plus, IVengers workshops with pupils and parents.

- ✓ New SENCO Lead appointment to ensure maximum funding potential and support for individuals and the school.
- ✓ Providing training and implementation of a new IT curriculum.
- ✓ Maintaining work on early reading including Monster Phonics
- ✓ Investment in our buildings & facilities, and particularly in the early year's outdoor areas.
- ✓ Continuing to improve and focus on our school's Visions & Values through our 'Making Good Decisions Together' principle which links to community, safety, learning, behavior, resilience and respect.
- ✓ Providing personal development opportunities and experiences above and beyond curriculum requirements such as our Gulliver's Valley residential, Whitehall sessions (including climbing and watersports), musical and dramatic productions as well as dance performances.
- ✓ Plus, the continuation of funding for school exchange days, music and dance workshops and other unique activities to provide a fun learning experience for our children and make our school stand out.

At the close of the school year, we have the school play to look forward to, followed by the leavers' service & party. I am sure that I am not alone in thinking, when attending these events, watching these young people develop each year and being able demonstrate their learning ability with such confidence provides a great sense of pride & joy at what it means to be part of a school community and family.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to all parents for your continued support of the school, including providing valued constructive or critical feedback, it does not go unnoticed and is greatly appreciated as it helps the school develop and grow stronger. Have a great summer holiday with your families. Take care and see you in September.

Yours Sincerely,

Paul Swindell
Chair of Governors