



Woodgrange Infant School

Governor Newsletter summer 2017

Who are we?

The governing body has ten volunteers, the head teacher and a member of staff. We are involved in decisions about all aspects of managing the school – budgets, buildings, promoting good behaviour and setting standards – and in making big decisions about the school's long-term goals. The volunteer governors try to be *critical friends* by providing support and challenge to the headteacher.

The full governing body and two committees (finance and learning) meet at least once a term. Governors visit the school to speak to staff and the children. We have training about our work and we each look in more detail at a particular aspect of the school in our link role.

Your voice

Governors attend as many school events as possible and we want you to talk to us. Before the end of term we will be at the sports days, the leavers' events and the school fete. If you cannot find us, please ask a member of staff to point us out.

Each Summer, the school sends out a parent survey and governors look at the results and your comments carefully.

Parent/governor focus groups (PFG) - Come along to the next PFG next term.

We hold a parent/governor focus group (PFG) at least twice a year, usually in November and March. There is a morning and an evening session to enable more parents to come. Each time we choose one or two key topics according to recent feedback. The head teacher, Sarah, sets out resulting plans in the school newsletter. This year PFG topics have included playtime and information for parents and discussions led to direct improvements.

New governors

We are very pleased Faiza Durrani, Sarah Raine and Mr Beattie have joined us as governors this year. Did you know we have a journalist, lawyer, scientist, IT specialists, parents and more amongst the volunteers on the governing body? However, the most important skills we try to bring are those for listening, getting organised, asking searching questions, and creating solutions. If you are interested in becoming a governor, speak to Sarah or one of us anytime.

Complaints

If you have a complaint, Woodgrange school wants to hear from you. Please have a look at *the complaints procedure* on the school website but, in brief, always speak to the class teacher or Sarah first, then write to Sarah if you need to follow up. Don't wait – the earlier you speak out, the more opportunity there is to solve any problem and painful emotions are less likely to mount up. Sarah keeps governors informed of any complaints she receives (anonymously) and we look for patterns to try to improve.

If your concerns are not resolved, write to the chair of governors and give the letter in at reception. Envelopes addressed to the chair of governors will only be opened by the chair.

Message from Anne Asfaw, the Chair of Governors

The parent focus groups have been brilliant for the governor's understanding of school and we depend on your input. I have loved seeing the children's playtime recently. Every day I see children relaxed or chatting on the new grass and playing in the shady woodland, the coolest local place I know in the heat. Football with a supervisor is really popular and there is lots of movement, ball games, play and sometimes

even rest, wherever you look. Every child can benefit from the space and renewed energy the breaks provide so please get in touch with school if you think they are not working for your child.

The school has the buzz about it that I cherish, the Christmas plays were enchanting, book week hummed with excitement, the party for Eid was a shared feast and I have seen how class outings gave children a different opportunity for encounters and finding their voice. Behind the scenes I see deep commitment, thoughtful efforts to enrich topics and careful work to give an extra push to children who could make more progress. The staff are good at reducing unhelpful pressure on children and stimulating enthusiasm. Many plans are flowering this year, for example, expertise in maths mastery teaching and the power of reading. Sarah's annual school development plan is bright and full of purpose for next year.

The governors have been thinking about how we know that all children feel equal. We know that Sarah and her team work rigorously to equip every child with tools and love for learning and provide materials like books and toys that reflect them. But how do children see themselves and their place in the world? How can they be supported to write their own story and determine their place in relation to others? You can see an article we looked at here: <https://mediadiversified.org/2013/12/07/you-cant-do-that-stories-have-to-be-about-white-people/>. We liked it because the article and the links (especially https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story) made us ask more questions and gave hope and ideas about addressing the issues. If you have comments or ideas, or other articles that you would like us to think about, talk to us or send them to info@woodgrange.newham.sch.uk and write "For governors" at the top. You can send things in *any* language and if we need your help we will ask.

Please carry on telling your stories (books and YOUR story) to your children and come in and speak to their classes. Your stories and talents help make the tapestry of our school and avoid the danger of a single story. That is why Sarah often asks parents to come to read and talk, help with art activities... and to have a voice in how the school is run.

We have a new inclusion manager for special needs, Nicola de la Salle, and many of you will already have met her. One of the focuses for next year is strengthening provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities. We always want to hear from you with any feedback or ideas. You can write to Nicola, Sarah or the governors at info@woodgrange.newham.sch.uk with "for governors" at the top.

Excitement is mounting for our year 2 leavers embarking on a new chapter at Godwin Junior School. We wish all these families well and hope to hear how you are doing.

The PTA, you arrange many special occasions in the school, foster the sense of fun and co-operation in our community and raise valuable funds for much-loved equipment and more. Thank you! Parent volunteers shape the PTA so get involved to make your mark.

I cannot leave you without a heartfelt thanks to ... our inspiring head teacher, Sarah ... the flowering leadership team ... our talented and hardworking teachers and Teaching assistants ... our dedicated site supervisor ... our delicious caterers... the welcoming office staff... each generous volunteer who reads, gardens, and more with our pupils...

...the children who drive us...

...and each parent and carer for the countless ways you support your child's learning.

We as a school would not be so successful or so FUN without each and every one of you reading this, thank you.

Learning and growing together...