



Woodgrange Infant School

Woodgrange aspires to be an outstanding, nurturing school at the heart of the community. We will provide child-centred, high quality learning through play and exploration that fosters curiosity, confidence and a love of learning.

Governors Newsletter Summer 2018

Who are the governors? There are ten volunteer governors plus the head teacher (Sarah Soyler) and a member of staff (Mr Beattie) on the governing board. We are Sarah Raine, Rachel Williams, Rebecca Oku, Thom Sanders, Tim Ovenden, Anne Asfaw, Faiza Gul Durrani, Brad Emerson, Kam Hudson and Louisa Tock. We are involved in decisions about all aspects of managing the school – budgets, buildings, behaviour and standards – and in making big decisions about the school's long-term goals. The governors' job is 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.

Your voice

Governors attend most school events and we want to hear from you. If you cannot find us, please ask a member of staff to point us out. We also look at the results of an annual parent's survey, usually taken at the Spring term parent's evening.

Parent/governor focus groups (PGFG) are really important. Each time we choose one or two key topics to give information about and ask your views. The head teacher, Sarah, sets out resulting plans in the school newsletter.

Our request to you is put the dates in your diary and come to listen and be heard. Are you nervous? Is English difficult? You are not alone. Take inspiration from the bravery of your child in school and please give it a try. Bring a friend or relative. Speak to Dana or Shama. Whatever it takes, come and we promise you won't regret it. There are toys in the room if you need to bring your children too.

Thursday 1st November 6-7pm or Friday 2nd November 9-10am

Thursday 14th March 6-7pm or Friday 15th March 9-10am

Message from the Chair of Governors

"If we see further it is because we stand on the shoulders of the giants who came before us."

Have you noticed the energy at school this year? The school community seem to stand taller and see further, creating teaching and learning experiences that are deeper, more individualised and more spontaneous.

All schools work on school improvement. This year I have seen how inspired improvements, even to things that seemed good already, can generate an energy and a team approach that provides fantastic progress, happy experiences and a lightness of touch that makes everything feel, well, just easier. The children are spurred on, they challenge themselves, they are resilient learners – they don't give up.

There is a thirst for improvement across the school... to becoming an extraordinary environment for children with special needs to thrive ... where every child has things to write about and to paint ... and each one knows they are becoming a mathematician and a scientist.

As part of North Newham Learning Partnership (NNLP), a collaboration between eight local schools and nurseries, staff at all levels of the schools have been joining forces to develop a working culture of confidence to share ideas, test each other, reflect on their teaching and use coaching, all in order to drive up children's progress. Have you noticed the confidence shining through?

Einstein said "Play is the highest form of research". Next year you will notice key stage one (years 1 and 2) take Woodgrange's commitment to play and exploration to a new level. Year 1 will offer a choice of playful learning experiences and use the outdoor space under the new canopies. Year 2 will have exploration and curiosity at the heart of their learning skills and embrace exciting projects in arts and science.

You remember I said that all schools work on school improvement? Every school has a school development plan, and governors' main job is to approve and monitor that plan. Last year's plan had a goal about developing leadership more widely in the school team. Well, cometh the hour, commeth the teacher. This is what they did.

The six members of the senior leadership team have maximised their impact, taking greater responsibility for their area. This month they made time for a whole day away from school, each adding vital input to next year's plan, based on their own, independent research. In a short time since forming, the team show confidence to challenge and support each other and are creating a senior leadership team with greater strength and flexibility.

Subject leaders are taking on innovation, training and leadership in maths, science, oracy and Early Years. For example, Becky Dokmanovic is now recognised as a specialist maths teacher by NcETM (National Centre for excellent teaching in mathematics), creating a maths hub at Woodgrange from which she will support other schools as well as our own teachers. You will also notice an increasing emphasis on oracy in all lessons to prepare our children to be accomplished speakers and listeners, a key foundation for their future success.

Our special educational needs team has been innovating too, learning to do speech and language assessments and group work so more children can get the help they need more quickly. In recent years, we have welcomed many more children with special educational needs and disabilities. We now offer expertise in group work to stimulate social skills and learning in small steps. Woodgrange's expertise, support and ambition for these children is

only increasing and the rewards of an inclusive culture and collaborative learning are evident in improvements across the school.

This has all been accomplished whilst managing deep funding cuts and reducing support from local education authorities.

Each of you shares an eagerness to learn, curiosity, resilience and compassion. You are a voice for your child when you are concerned. You make things happen. You avoid making others wrong. Maybe not every time! But all this contributes to your child's readiness for learning, to the quality of the conversation between school and home and to developing a shared understanding.

This year we want to have a special conversation with families and carers from nursery to year 2 about two important topics:

- 1) What support do you want from school to be the best coach for your kids, to help them inherit safe streets and to open opportunities?
- 2) What help do boys and girls need? No, wait, forget that! We are throwing out the gender stereotypes. We have looked at evidence that where schools try to change the curriculum to suit boys or girls it can reinforce blunt stereotypes that none of us believe will empower our children. So, the question is, how do you and your families want to help us create possibility for all our children with respect for the traditions and values of the giants who came before us.

Meanwhile, we promise to raise the quality of teaching and learning ever higher, which is what the evidence says will help every child learn more.

At the close of the school year I acknowledge every one of you for your presence and contribution to school. Thanks to ... our inspirational teachers who take a stand for each and every child, ... our creative teaching assistants who find the words at the right moment to bring comfort and overcome barriers, ... parents and carers who read, garden, bake and attend performances, parent governor focus groups and celebrations, ... the catering staff and lunchtime supervisors, cleaners, office team, caretaker, the therapists and coaches, the PTA, my fellow governors, and ... our tireless leadership team and inclusion manager.

There is always room for improvement. The governors and senior leadership team want to hear ALL your feedback so we can work to make every child's experience positive and keep on improving. You can send things in *any* language and if we need your help we will ask. Write to "the head teacher and governors" or email info@woodgrange.newham.sch.uk.

If you have a complaint, please have a look at *the complaints procedure* on the school website. In brief, always speak to the class teacher or the head teacher, Sarah, first, then write to Sarah if there is a need to follow up. If your concerns are not resolved, write to the chair of governors at the school address.

We see a little further than the giants before us, if we are curious to explore.

Anne Asfaw, Chair of governors