

Governor Newsletter

SIR JOHN BARROW SCHOOL

April 2016

Parent Governor Election Results

We would like to take this opportunity to thank outgoing Parent Governor **Jen Cox** for her long and committed service on the school's governing body. Jen contributed to our monitoring of children's wellbeing through her participation on the Inclusion Committee. With only a single candidate for the vacancy we are delighted to welcome **Amy Bleasdale** to the governing body.

School structure

This month Cumbria County Council (CCC) will announce allocations to Reception places for September 2016. We are looking forward to welcoming our newest pupils to the school.

As a school we have also been required to consider our long term admissions arrangements. Following changes at Church Walk, SJB has seen changes in its own structure and in September 2016 we will have single forms in all year groups for the first time. Through these changes we have been able to adapt and use the space available to better support our children through:

- Introduction of on-site wrap-around care with breakfast club and popular after-school club
- All day nursery in response to local need
- Improved facilities for our pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, with investment in a SEND room, new disabled toilet and space around the school for mobility equipment
- Creating sufficient break-out space to enable individual and small group teaching to ensure all pupils make progress

Our school admissions numbers have remained a steady 30 pupils for a number of years now

allowing all of these improvements above to take place and benefit our pupils, although our official admissions number is 45.

Following a detailed space survey and consultation with admissions officers from CCC, we would like to change our official admissions number to reflect our actual admissions. This needs to be agreed locally and through CCC.

We have grave concerns that if our Reception numbers (and consequently year groups throughout the school) increase to 45, we would run out of the space that we need to deliver the high quality and nurturing school environment that we believe to be so important for the future of our children and the community which the school serves.

We are currently part of a dialogue about admissions across Ulverston. We anticipate a consultation on the reduction of our official Published Admission Number to match our current actual admission numbers. This consultation is scheduled to take place in the autumn term this year. We will update you with further information as this is available to us



SJB web site

We have recently added a **Governance** section to the school website. This is in response to changes in government requirements; but we also feel that this is a positive move offering more information about what we do and how we go about our duties to the school. Visit the site to find out more!

www.sjbarrow.cumbria.sch.uk/governors.html

Compulsory Academisation

Recent budget announcements and government Schools White Paper has stated that every school in England will have to either have become an academy by 2020, or to have an academy order in place by 2020 so that they will be committed to converting by 2022.

Academisation is not something that has been on the table at SJB, but since the announcement we will have to address this requirement. It is early days, but there are already local networks in place which support schools to share good practice

www.cumbriaalliance.org.uk

This will be a key item for our agenda at the next meeting of the Full Governing Body in June.



Governor spotlight: Reading at SJB

We continue our series of reports on Governor "Learning Walks" where we come in to school to gather information on a particular aspect of school life. This year, the school has seen a particular focus on Reading. We have invested heavily in new books and other reading resources which are already making a difference in the classroom. Following the visible success and popularity of Big Maths as it is used across the school, we have also decided to adopt the Big Read approach which we believe will give the same structure and support to our pupils as they learn to read. Our latest Learning Walk was intended to find out how this looks on the ground!

Sarah Branton and Carol Whiteley report their findings

This term the Evaluation & Curriculum Committee wanted to find out more about how the staff and children feel about reading at SJB and to monitor how progress on this focus area is moving forward. We requested information from teachers, support staff and children, and collated information from questionnaires representing all of these groups. The areas covered included the reading materials and text types used in class, the opportunities provided for reading, how children feel staff could support them with reading and which authors may be covered in school.

The findings from the 'learning walk' provided a very positive picture of reading at SJB with an enthusiasm for the subject from all parties. It is evident that a lot of hard work and determination from children and staff alike contributes to the success of reading at SJB. There was enthusiasm for the new resources available through Big Read. Teachers felt that this scheme will help to ensure that teaching of reading is individualised so that every pupil is working at the right level and is well supported to ensure they reach their potential. Many thanks to everyone who took time to answer our questions.

Both the staff and governors at SJB value the contribution you as parents and carers make in supporting our children with reading. The governors are interested in hearing your views with regards to this and this term we will be gathering your thoughts on the topic. Please comment when invited to do so as your opinions are important to us.

Governor Mark Outcome



As part of a constant drive to be a self-improving school, the governing body decided to apply for the **Governor Mark** standard.

Preparation involved our careful scrutiny of the requirements of a governing body, checking that we are fulfilling all of our statutory and key requirements, and collating evidence of the impact that we as governors have on the operation of the school.

We received a visit from the Governor Mark inspector on 16th March, and have been successful in gaining this recognition of our work.

More information on the award and what it means for the school can be found at:

glmpartnership.org