

Governor Newsletter

SIR JOHN BARROW SCHOOL

July 2016

End of Summer Term

We are fast approaching the end of a very exciting summer term and indeed year at SJB. We have seen lots of hard work from students and school staff alike and are very proud of everyone's accomplishments. We can now look forward to well-earned school holidays with a strong feeling of achievement.



Subject Leader Meeting

Governors met with the school's Subject Leaders this term, to talk about how progression in different subject areas is ensured as the children move up through the school. Subjects such as History, Geography, Art, Music, ICT and Design Technology are all such important aspects of our children's time at SJB, so we want to ensure that these are being well managed. The core English and Maths progression were discussed too, as well as Science, PSHE and SEND, Modern Foreign Languages, PE, Forest Schools, SMSC, RE and British Values.

We were very impressed by the enthusiasm and preparation of the teachers! It is crucial as governors that we monitor SJB's successful delivery and progression in all subject areas, for all the school's unique learners and this was very much the impression we got from our discussions. The information we gained this year will guide priorities for the next academic year.

Our sincere thanks go to staff for their dedication and willingness to share their plans with us. It really was a privilege to work with them. Keep up the good work everyone and keep on enjoying all those varied subjects!

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

Sports Premium - Opportunities

Mrs Siona Hartley, PE Primary Liaison Teacher, from UVHS has been working with staff and pupils for some time now. As a result we are seeing a great range of sports on offer – and fit, healthy children (and staff) taking up new sporting challenges.

A very special word of thanks to Mrs Hartley, together with Mrs Parker and Mrs Dearden who have completely reviewed the swimming programme at SJB and found ways to adapt and improve it. They have put in a huge amount of time to ensure that every child has the very best chance of becoming confident, competent swimmers before they leave SJB.



New Parent Governor View

Amy Bleasdale, our most recent recruit shares her experiences so far on the Governing Body...

I have recently joined the governing body and have found it interesting. I really didn't realise just how much the governors do, to keep the school working efficiently. I am looking forward to making a positive contribution to SJB.

Academisation of Schools – Update

We reported in our last newsletter that *Educational Excellence Everywhere*, the government's education white paper published in March, stated that all schools should become academies with the expectation that most should join or form multi academy trusts. Since then, the government has climbed down on some aspects of the paper, but it remains committed to the principle that all schools should academise. This was one of the main topics for discussion at the final full meeting of SJB's Governing Body this year at the end of June.

The Governing Body is keen to make sure that any decisions that we make are driven solely by what will benefit our children and the community which we serve. We have been gathering and will continue to gather information from all available sources - locally through conversations with other schools, and further afield through the National Governors Association and other similar impartial advisory bodies.

We have also sought informal legal advice from those with experience of the process of academisation and what it means for the legal standing of the school and how it is run.

One message that has been clear from all quarters is that there is no rush for any move towards academisation, but that it is expected to happen eventually. So our priorities just now are to find out all the options available to us, and to make sure that we remain in the driving seat so that any decisions are made by the school on its own terms and according to our own timetable.

We expect to have this at the top of our agenda for the foreseeable future, and will make sure that we both inform and listen to parents and carers, about any changes which will affect the school and its pupils, staff and community.



Governor Spotlight: Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Values

This term the Inclusion Committee has been looking at how Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) values are taught by our staff and displayed by our children. This is a large topic which has involved numerous visits to the school by several governors over the course of the term.

In summary this area encompasses all aspects of school life and looks at how our children learn and behave towards others. It also examines how they are developing and what they know of other people, races, religions and lifestyles. What values our children hold and display is another important feature of this area. We have carried out observations in all areas of the school, including classrooms, the dining hall and the playground at playtime. We have also spoken to children and staff about this area. We have also looked at the involvement of our children both in the wider community and in extracurricular activities.

Although the full report has not yet been compiled I think it is safe to say that we can all be proud that the school motto of 'Succeeding, Enjoying and Belonging' is reflected by our children's attitudes and behaviour. I would urge parents to take a few moments to look at the marvellous wall displays throughout the school, showing what excellent work our children have done this year. On behalf of the Inclusion Committee I congratulate all our children and staff for all their hard work done throughout this year.

Finally I hope that everyone has a pleasant summer holiday and that we all get to see enough sunshine wherever we may be!

Ramsey Barker, Governor and Chair of the Inclusion Committee