



Governor Newsletter

SIR JOHN BARROW SCHOOL

January 2020

Welcome to new Parent Governors

Last term we were faced with the challenge of filling four vacancies for parent governors on the Governing Body - we are delighted to have done this and to welcome our new governors to their positions. **Andy Allan**, **Rosie Brown** and **Kirsty Rayson** join us as new faces on the board and **Helen O'Neill** will continue in post, having already served a full four term of office.

We are very grateful to all of our new governors for stepping up to this job - it is a serious undertaking and a real commitment to the school and its community. As a governing body, we are very keen to involve our parents and carers in determining the direction of the school, so it is great to see parents and carers offering their time to fill the total of five parent governor positions on the board.

Governor VLOG

We regularly ask our pupils for feedback on school issues via our school council, but last term the council turned the tables on us and asked us about the governing body - the results can be seen on the school blog, where pupils grill us on important issues such as "how do you keep pupils happy?" and "do you have any pets?" Thank you to everyone involved in making this video, we had great fun!



Current School Improvement Priorities

What are we focusing on in school just now? We are always trying to improve how we do things at SJB, and this year we are working on the following priorities:



- Subject Leadership: developing all subjects across the wider curriculum (not just reading, writing and maths) to make sure these are taught consistently and thoroughly across the school
- Improving speaking, listening and communication skills: increasing vocabulary and developing public speaking
- Reading: this is such an important life skill and is key to being successful in all subjects
- Increase resilience and independence in learners: learning through play, and increasing opportunities for children to be creative and make their own decisions

If you are interested in how we are doing any of these, come along to our next coffee and chat this term!

Close working with the PTA

As we highlight regularly in these newsletters, schools face a very tight financial situation. The governing body is working closely with the PTA to raise money for school activities - we have recently taken on a school fundraiser to target grant applications for specific school needs.



Last year the total the amount given through the PTA to the school was £25,637.53, of which about £4,300 was raised through direct fundraising and PTA events such as the fairs, discos, non-uniform days and quiz nights. There are a number of ideas for future events including another quiz night, offering the practical DIY services of the PTA to a school work morning one Saturday, and also, for around Easter, a family sponsored walk starting from and ending at school.

We would like to thank the PTA for their ceaseless fund-raising efforts and financial support for the school, and also to encourage parents and carers to get involved - either by joining the PTA, by helping out at an event, or if your time is short then just by supporting school events by simply coming along!

Swimming Update



We are continuing to try to keep costs to families down for school swimming sessions and will be subsidising the swimming schedule this year. Our aim is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to participate in high quality school swimming and to encourage children to take part in swimming.

This is for the following reasons: to exercise the body and mind and for safety but also for social and recreational reasons. It enables children to develop greater confidence in the water, develop competitive skills and finally because it is fun! We hope that our pupils enjoy their swimming - all pupils from Year 1 - 6 receive a ten week course, and Years 3 and 4 have 20 weeks. We have seen huge improvements in swimming abilities of our pupils over recent years, so thank you to parents for supporting this important part of the curriculum. School performance on swimming can be found under sports premium on the school webpage.

Parents' Views from Christmas Fayre

Parent and carer views are very important to the governors and staff at SJB. Many thanks to those of you who took a few minutes out from the Christmas Fayre to chat about the strengths of SJB, what your children enjoy at school and how you think we can inspire your children to learn.

We were delighted with the overwhelmingly positive responses with good community spirit, inclusive curriculum and the range of opportunities on offer being amongst the many strengths you identified.

There was a suggestion that preparing our children for a hi-tech future through the increased use of electronics in school was important to you. The arrival this month of new iPads, sees a clear move towards implementing this idea.

If you would like to share your opinions on the above topics, but did not have the opportunity at the fayre then we are always interested. You are welcome to attend one of our termly coffee and chat sessions or put your thoughts in writing, address it to The Governors and hand it in at the office.

Thank you and goodbye... We are sorry to announce that Alan Gerrard, who has been a co-opted governor on the SJB governing body for almost four years has just stepped down from this role. We have benefitted enormously from the time and expertise that Alan gave to the school, and would like to thank him for his contributions and to wish him well in his other pursuits.