



Governor Newsletter

SIR JOHN BARROW SCHOOL

Spring 2022

Spring updates

The last term has seen some significant planning for change for both school staffing and school governors. Here is a summary of the current and planned situation:

Staffing changes for September 2022

Helen Pearson

OUR STAFF

As you are aware we are losing Mr Connell at the end of the summer. We will be sad to see him go but wish him every success in his new post as a Deputy Headteacher. Mrs Dobson is also reducing her hours and will be working 3 days a week.

As a school we are excited to be involved in school improvement opportunities beyond SJB. As well as supporting school improvement in other schools, we recognise the positive impact this has on SJB. Mrs Pearson is leading the FPC (Furness Primary Collaborative) Reading project funded by Orcina for one day a week and the school is also funded to allow her to work as a LA AGA (Local Authority Associate General Advisor) for 6 days across each term. For this reason Mrs Fletcher will have increased management time to support the leadership and day to day management of the school from September. Mr Connell's departure has allowed the opportunity for some of our more experienced staff to step up into new responsibilities. We have appointed 3 new teachers, from September 2022. We welcome Miss Wall, Miss Lee and Miss Belisle to the team. This change in the staffing structure in school will allow us, this year, to:

- provide management time for the Deputy Headteacher to be released to allow the Headteacher to carry out the funded outreach work and lead the FPC Reading Project
- enable quality Continued Professional Development (CPD) for all staff
- enable mentoring for new teachers in school
- enable mentoring for middle leaders and support curriculum development

We look forward to welcoming our new appointments to the SJB team and are very excited about the year ahead!

Changes on the Governing Body

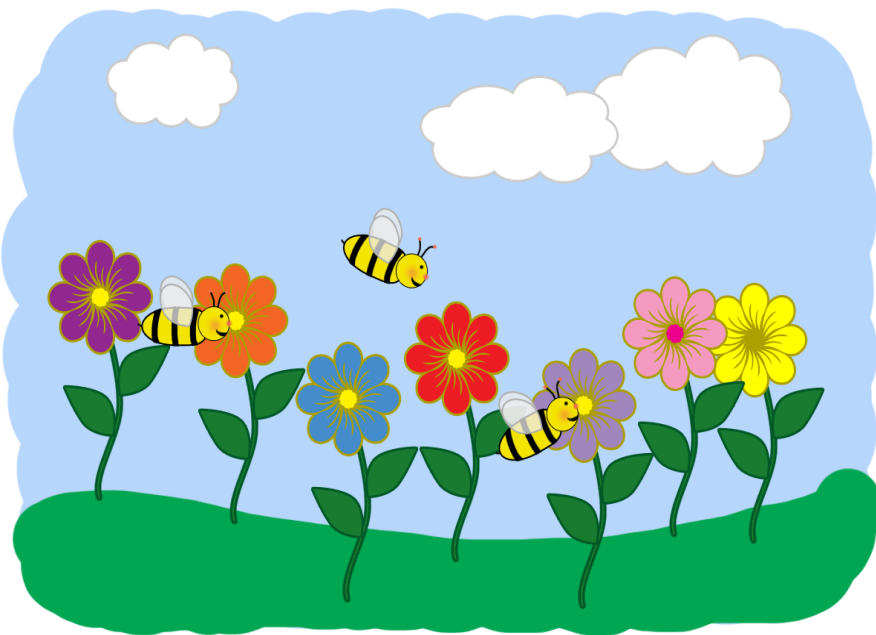
We have seen the departure of co-opted governors **Bina Mistry, Chloe James** and **Andy Paterson**. We would like to thank them for their hard work and contributions

to the governing body - Andy joined just as the pandemic started and endured countless online governing body meetings before meeting any of us face to face! We wish them all well in their next endeavours.



We are delighted to announce the appointment of new co-opted governor **Liz Bolt**, Retired Consultant Clinical Psychologist, and Clinical Director for Adult Community Mental Health Services. Liz will be helping the school to address pupil and staff mental health and wellbeing and we are excited to be working with her.

The **Parent Governor elections** last term had one candidate for the two vacancies, so we are very pleased to welcome **Becky Williamson** to the board of governors, and **Hannah Clarke** has also agreed to stay on to help with succession planning until the end of the current academic year. These changes mean that we currently have **one vacancy for a parent governor** (there will be two at the end of the summer term) so please consider whether you would like to find out more about this vital and rewarding role for the school. For more information, please speak to any of the [current governors](#), or ask in the school office, and read on to find the [article](#) on Hannah's experience of being a governor!



Finally, our Chair of Governors **Janet Heffernan** has announced her intention to step down as chair of the governing body at the end of the summer term, after serving as chair of governors for over ten years. We are currently in the process of succession planning for next year and beyond!

Little Wandle Phonics system

Every Child A Reader - Priority 1 School Improvement Plan

Phonics skills are an essential part of the mechanics of reading and pave the way to reading for pleasure and all other learning. In September SJB introduced the **Little Wandle Phonics** system through school, all staff have received training and are enthusiastic about the systematic approach to teaching phonics. The Little Wandle programme

"draws on the latest research into how children learn best; how to ensure learning stays in children's long-term memory and how best to enable children to apply their learning to become highly competent readers."



Governors have observed phonics lessons which are very structured, fast paced and the children are highly engaged. The Reading Lead Miss Gardiner is pleased to see encouraging progress being made. Parents may have noticed new books being sent home for regular home reading which are matched to the system and will replace the previous colour banding system. The books have lots of useful info at the front such as the sounds, vocabulary and tricky words that will be included in the story and a review section at the end.

The Little Wandle website has a Parents & Carers area to explain how phonics is taught along with resource pages and videos to help you support your child's learning. Have a look:

<https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>

Who can be a Parent Governor? It could be you!

Hannah Clarke

If you are thinking about this role with SJB but not sure if it's for you, I'd like to tell you a bit more about it. I have been a Parent Governor for a full 4 year term and as I step down this term, I wanted to share what a valuable experience and opportunity it has been for me.

The demands of the role shouldn't be underestimated and there is much you can expect to give: info can be found [here](#) ... but what about what you can expect to get from the role?



Training – SJB is signed up to The National College, training is often via a webinar or online course and can fit in with your timetable, sometimes we have virtual get togethers or visits to other schools. There is a move away from travelling to training centres at set times. Although there is some mandatory training, you can choose from a huge range of options that are of interest to you.

Experience - A great way to boost your CV to get back into the world of work or to gain experience and skills outside of your current job. Monitoring and reporting, contributing to meetings, chairing meetings, questioning, evaluation, finance and strategy skills are all areas you will develop.

Support -the governor team is very friendly and knowledgeable! New governors are assigned a 'buddy' and much work is done in pairs or small groups of governors. We have the benefit of both an excellent chair and clerk to the Governing body to provide guidance on compliance and support with timetabling of meetings and reports. You will know what needs doing and when.

Satisfaction - it's a very rewarding role! You will be talking to pupils and teachers, looking at pupil's work, seeing the progress being made and making a positive contribution to improving children's education and supporting the local community. Your unique perspective as a parent is vital in this.

The school is working hard at **Equality Diversity and Inclusion**, and we feel strongly that the governing body needs to reflect - not merely represent - the community that the school serves, to help it make better decisions in the interest of all pupils. We encourage applicants from all backgrounds to consider how they might contribute to supporting the school's role in the wider community by volunteering as a governor.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion at SJB

SJB has always prided itself on being an inclusive school. This is even written into our school motto:



This year we have been looking hard at how we can keep this vision relevant for the changing world that we live in. This is a long term project and we are starting off by:

- looking at the curriculum design to make sure that all pupils feel represented;
- assessing our ability to offer all pupils the opportunity to learn about their role in the global community,
- training staff and governors in equality and diversity so that school leaders understand the importance of and impact of genuine social and cultural inclusion;
- talking with pupils to find out how they feel about their place in the school and wider community;
- recognising the importance of inclusion on pupil mental health and working hard to create an emotionally secure environment, and prioritising staffing capacity so that warm, emotionally available adults are there to support pupils who need this;
- developing a long term Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan with tangible and realistic targets to make sure we stay focused on this area of activity;
- looking again at our school values - *respectful, ambitious, positive, generous, healthy, fun, honest, kind, curious and reliable*, to see how these can shape our approach to inclusion. The plan is liable to evolve as we become curious and honest about what EDI means for each of us individually and also as a school community and wider.



We will be consulting further with parents and carers and the wider community - we look forward to receiving your input about what we are doing well already, and how we can improve in the future!