



Governor Newsletter

SIR JOHN BARROW SCHOOL

Summer 2023

Succeed enJoy Belong

Yo, what a year!

Congratulations and a really big 'thank you' to everyone for another very successful academic year. Governors are delighted to use this newsletter to ask you to 'give it up' (*drum roll, lots of applause*) for:

1. Year 6 pupils – goodbye, good luck!

Thank you Year 6 for your hard work this year, and your many contributions to the school over all the years you have been at SJB. We wish you the very best of luck for your future.

2. Our sporting champions

Well done all you amazing sports champions – we're so proud of everyone for taking part and all our talented winners. These are some of the events SJB pupils came home victorious from: *National cross-country finals; School Games Athletics; Orienteering County Finalists; Mixed Cricket County Finalists*. Special 'thank-yous' to those who took part and for giving their very best. Governors are also very impressed with the number of pupils who regularly participate in different sport options. Thank you to Mr Maher, for your encouragement and support so pupils can try out new sporting activities – great coach! We much appreciate the value of sports in helping pupils to develop physically and to learn new practical skills (e.g. team working, resilience). We regularly track the school blog: <https://sjbprimaryblog.com/> for details of SJB pupils' sporting achievements. Go Team SJB!

Thank you also to Mrs Sainsbury for introducing the [Outdoor play and learning](#) (OPAL) primary programme in school. Recognising that pupils' wellbeing (and social skills, creativity, and enjoyment) can be greatly improved through outdoor physical activity and play, governors have approved the plans to install new exciting adventure playground and OPAL resources to begin during the summer holidays. Parents will be provided with more details of the OPAL programme next term. Roll on September!

3. Our performing superstars – not 'Hoodwinked', it was absolutely brilliant!

So proud of all contributions and performances from across the school, everyone stand-up and take a bow! What a grand finale for the year – governors really appreciate that both staff and pupils have pulled all the stops out, working as hard at the end of a busy year as everyone did throughout the year. Totally enjoyed the show, thank you for all your efforts and repeat performances.

4. All staff - teachers, teaching support team, admin team, midday team, cleaning team & site manager

Thank you, thank you, thank you everyone for all your valuable contributions to the school's **OUTSTANDING** status! Read again the Team SJB Ofsted report: (1&2 March 2023) <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50216103>! Here's raising a glass to you all; have a well-earned rest over the summer. Governors are looking forward to another successful year working with staff - 'onwards and upwards'!

5. The whole school community – for your untold and unfailing generosity

There have been many high moments, but also real pain as national issues impact on life in Ulverston. With insufficient government funding, governors have faced tough financial decisions to enable the quality of education that SJB commits to (defined by the [school vision statement](#)) to continue. At all Committee and Governing Body meetings, governors respect and acknowledge the generosity of the local community. Without donations or grants from individual pupils, families and small/large companies, the school couldn't operate as successfully as we do now. We know the cost-of-living increase is having an adverse impact locally, everyone is affected, so this is a 'from the heart' hug to thank you all for digging as deep as you can. Whether it's loose change at cake sales or large credit bank transfers, **governors are very, very grateful** for all your support, and ongoing support in many cases, to really make a difference and help the future life chances for all SJB pupils. Particular thanks are well deserved by the PTA for their enduring efforts to successfully co-ordinate fun and prosperous fund-raising activities.

6. Governors, [click here to see who we are](#)

Yes, our Governing Body reduced in size at the beginning of the year, but we are still very strong and totally committed to steering ongoing school improvement. This is a big 'pat on the back' to all governors for their time, expertise and wisdom so generously given (as volunteers) to the strategic management of the school – specifically to enhancing pupils learning opportunities and to the development of new staff skills and competencies. Good work you all!

We continue to have some vacant governor posts and would love to hear from local parents or community members who would like to join us and contribute to Team SJB's 'onwards and upwards' journey. If this is you, and/or you would like more details on the governor role please email **John Barrett, Chair of Governors**, jbarrett@sjbarrow.cumbria.sch.uk. On that note – it would be fitting to complete this newsletter with some examples of the governor role and activities during this year.

Spotlight on governors' activities during this year....

7. Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND)

One of the areas in the Ofsted report we were particularly pleased with was the acknowledgement that whatever a child's needs and abilities, SJB ensured they achieved at a high level. As governors we have always been determined to support the school to enable all children to access the full curriculum and additional learning/recreational activities regardless of any personal disadvantages.

There are several ways in which we do this. Firstly we ask and talk about children with SEND when we are discussing the School Improvement Plan and priorities for the future. Secondly, we work hard to make sure that there is the right level of funding to ensure we can deliver for our SEND children, for example by supporting the school to have Ms Robinson in post as our full time SEND Co-ordinator (SENDCo)/Family Support Worker and Designated Safeguarding Lead. We also check the school's website to make sure it has the right information available to help parents of children with SEND.

As the SEND Governor I regularly visit school to meet staff and talk about SEND provision, making sure that planned actions are taking place, staff training has been completed and that children with SEND are making progress. The details of these visits are reported to the Governing Body. However, the reality is that no matter what the governors do, without the dedicated and highly skilled staff team at SJB, our SEND children would not do as well as we would like. Our Teaching Assistants (TAs) are constantly developing their knowledge and skills through training and a willingness to take on new challenges. They are a highly skilled group of staff who have an in-depth knowledge of the children they work with and their needs. We are also very grateful for the excellent standard of teaching that children receive. All children benefit from the Quality First Teaching on offer at SJB, and like our TAs, our teachers are always looking to update their knowledge and skills.

If you have any concerns about how your child is learning and progressing, please don't hesitate to talk to the staff at the school. They will be able to reassure you and to get the help that your child may need.

JOHN BARRETT, Chair of Governors, SEND Lead and Year 5 governor

8. Your child's curriculum at SJB

We are very proud to offer a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils at SJB; details are published for each year group on our website: <https://sjbarrow.cumbria.sch.uk/curriculum/our-curriculum/>. As governors we take a keen interest in the development and delivery of the curriculum and how this enables all pupils to **Succeed, enjoy, Belong**. We monitor this in several ways - this activity is overseen by the Provisions Committee.

Firstly, we choose a different subject to focus on each term. We either visit our class during their lesson on that subject or we have conversation with small groups of pupils about the subject. This allows us to get an overview of how the subject is taught across each year group, the learning impact it has for pupils and the parts they enjoy. Our reports contribute to the subject lead's plans for ongoing improvement. This year we focused on Design & Technology and Art.

Secondly, we have 'deep-dive' conversations with subject leaders. We do this to understand the intent of the curriculum and the rationale for all subject leadership decisions, as well as to celebrate the successes and discuss the areas for development within this subject. For example, if a subject requires other resources to enhance learning, or staff require further specialist training, this would be brought to the next Governing Body meeting to consider how to resolve any barriers preventing access to the identified requirements.

Lastly, we monitor the achievement of pupils across subjects and particularly in English and Maths. The Provisions Committee review and pose challenging questions to the Headteacher and subject leads to ensure everything possible is being done to enable all pupils to succeed.

Class visits are the best part of our role as SJB governors - we love spending time with the pupils. We are proud that Ofsted recognised the quality of the curriculum and how it provides many opportunities and learning styles for pupils. Parents may find it interesting to ask your child if they have met a governor in school or had a governor visit their class!

CHARLOTTE WRAITH, Provision Committee Chair and Year 1 governor.

9. Monitoring school finances

School finances are very tight. As governors, we have a responsibility to ensure that any grants and funding received by school, are spent effectively and have a positive impact on all pupils. This includes areas of spending such as Pupil Premium funding, Sports Premium funding and grants from the Orcina project. Each term, the activities funded by the specific spend are reviewed to ensure related plans are on track or adjusted, if required. This enables governors to achieve a greater understanding of how investment is actually benefiting pupils and question school leaders about their choices or alternatives, if applicable.

10. Every child a reader

Encouraging and ensuring every child can access reading is a key priority for the school and the Governing Body. Reading has a profound impact on children, not only developing cognitive skills but also supporting longer-term mental health benefits such as reducing stress (National Literacy Trust, 2018). We are very proud of the Little Wandle phonics scheme and the positive impact it is having on the quality of reading for all children at SJB. We would like to thank Mrs Fletcher and Miss Gardiner for leading this scheme and for all class teachers and teaching assistants in supporting the continued development of reading! We are also very proud to have such a well-stocked library. We would encourage parents to speak with your child about what they are reading in class and if you can, spend a little time each day reading with them.

Governors apologise for the lack of our newsletters this year; our intention is to continue termly newsletters starting at the end of the autumn term 2023, to update you on the successes and challenges of each term. Please feel very welcome to get in touch at any time - feedback from families and the community is valued and much appreciated. We wish everyone a safe and relaxing summer - have fun!

The SJB Governing Body