



Governors' Newsletter - Spring 2023

On behalf of the Governing Body of Crigglestone St James', a warm welcome to all of our families and community friends



School in Spring term is always a hive of activity; a time to reflect on the opportunity for new beginnings, dream big with our goals for the year ahead and take comfort in the lighter days and green shoots of springtime appearing all around us.

In Autumn, we celebrated the harvest, and thought of ways in which we can share what we have in order to help one another through these challenging times.

Continuing in our school's value of koinonia (or 'togetherness'), the new year has seen the launch of our Share Shed, just one example of the spirit of care and teamwork we see demonstrated throughout our school community daily.

Behaviour & Wellbeing

Since our last newsletter, we have updated our Behaviour Policy. We encourage you to be familiar with this document as it's central to the high expectations we have of **all** pupils to conduct themselves in ways which are respectful of themselves and of others.



We understand that some children are having to re-learn some of the social skills that they had fewer opportunities to develop during periods of lockdown.

Please praise your children at home when you see examples of positive behaviour choices, e.g. sharing toys, turn-taking, good table manners, thoughtful actions etc. or for talking to you when they feel angry, frustrated or anxious. Recognising these emotions and learning strategies to manage them is vital to positive mental health and wellbeing.

If you are concerned about your child's behaviour, please don't hesitate to speak to staff in school. There are lots of resources available that we use to support pupils with their emotional wellbeing.

Even if you don't have any particular concerns, it's still great to promote positive mental health day-to-day, as we do for our physical health.

The wellbeing page on our website provides lots of links to resources which you may find useful.

Governor Open Days

In November and again in March, all of our governors spent a full day in school, observing lessons, speaking with the children and staff and seeing the school day in action. It was our pleasure to participate in whole school collective worships and even enjoy a delicious school lunch!

We have been delighted to see evidence of the learning journeys that our children have been on since we first visited school in September and they were eager to teach us about the 'sticky knowledge' they've learned and how they are using classroom displays and resources to have confidence that their work is the very best it can be.

We can see that teachers are providing support to enable all children to work towards the same objectives within their own capabilities; it's amazing how independent our littlest learners are becoming and what fantastic role models our junior children provide for them.

Children have talked to us about their love of reading, maths strategies and their writing 'Must Haves' (checklists in all classrooms that remind children of the writing basics they must always use, e.g. full stops, capital letters and so on).

In the playground we have seen the most fantastic connections between children of all ages, and strong play provision in our Reception class helping children to make the most of their outdoor learning. It's a privilege to see our curriculum and values supporting our children to flourish.



Congratulations to the St James' Playcare Team!

We are very lucky that lots of our children benefit from the fantastic wrap around care provision at St James' Playcare and the governors would like to extend their congratulations to the St. James Playcare team in successfully meeting all Ofsted requirements at their recent inspection.



Governor Focus: Spring Term Open Day

Rosenshine's 10 Principles of Instruction underpin our academy's approach to teaching and learning. It's widely acknowledged that these principles support children in building their knowledge and skills through an understanding of how our working memory aids the learning of new concepts, deepening our understanding of the world. At our Spring Open Day in March, we were able to see many of these principles in action and talk to the children about how they are helping them to learn.



Emotional Wellbeing - SATs Preparation

We are aware that some of our Year 6 pupils may become anxious in the lead up to their statutory tests. We want children to feel calm and confident about these assessments and our Y6 teachers and support staff continue to work hard on building their resilience so that results reflect pupils' true capabilities. Please encourage your children not to worry and to simply try their best, knowing that their best effort is **always** good enough!



Springtime: A prayer to give thanks for the new day
As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever.
Amen

What do governors do and how do they actively support and challenge our school?

Governors support school by:

- Ensuring close links are maintained with St James' Church, understanding and promoting the distinctive Christian character of our Church school;
- Holding regular discussions, meetings and reviews with subject/area leaders to understand their intentions for the academic year and beyond and how these link with the academy's agreed priorities, review progress against these objectives and evaluate their impact to inform future planning. Meetings are held termly, half termly or more regularly, as appropriate to a governor's area(s) of responsibility and outcomes of such meetings are reported back to the full governing body through written and verbal reports;
- Conducting regular learning walks to assess the school environment and triangulate observations with information provided by the Senior Leadership Team and external advisors who work with our school - *Can we see in practice what we are told is happening across school? Do the wider team reflect the vision set by school leaders? Do pupils have our school vision at the heart of their conduct?*
- Valuing pupil voice and taking all opportunities to speak with pupils / gather evidence of pupil experience across all phases of school;
- Supporting staff wellbeing and professional development, within formal structures but also through encouragement, empathy and kindness;
- Communicating effectively with parents and carers, as appropriate, understanding the vital role of family within our school community;
- Supporting partnerships, such as the All Saints Partnership and others, recognising the value that partners bring to our own school development and our ethos of sharing best practice;
- Ensuring that committee members have relevant skills and experience in their areas of focus and that they can effectively communicate strengths or areas for development with other governors;
- Working with the findings of external inspections such as SIAMS and OFSTED reports to continue to drive positive change and development in the best interests of our school and its stakeholders;
- Developing governor practice around the six features of effective governance set out in the Governance Handbook: strategic leadership, accountability, people, structures, compliance and evaluation;
- Furthering their own knowledge and understanding through regular training opportunities so that their challenge of leadership and school development is effective, timely and relevant;
- Being ambassadors for our school, recognising the important role it plays both in our local community and global community as we prepare our pupils to be 'Ready for The Future'. The School Vision is at the heart of all governor activity.