

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are extremely fortunate at Leighswood School to have a large dedicated board of Governors. Governors are volunteers who work together to ensure high standards of achievement for all children in the school by:

- Setting the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Parent Governor elections were held in November and we were delighted that so many people were interested. Corrie Halford was re-elected along with two new Governors; Lucy Burbanks and Christina Harrison.

Secondary Schools

Leighswood has excellent links with Aldridge School and Shire Oak Academy. We are lucky to have a senior teacher from each school on our governing body. Year 5 and 6 pupils visit them regularly and get involved in lots of different activities. This helps them to make a smooth transition to secondary school. We are also delighted to have their teachers share expertise with some of our KS2 pupils.

Children's University

Many of our key stage 2 pupils have signed up to the Children's University. They are encouraged to take part in extracurricular activities and collect stamps in their own 'passport' to record their activities. We attended a wonderful ceremony at Wolverhampton University, where pupils were awarded certificates for their achievements. Well done to all pupils and their families. To find out more please look at the website www.childrensuniversity.co.uk or ask at the school office.

Governor activity

It has been another busy year for governors. We have attended regular meetings and training courses as well as visiting the school on a regular basis. We help out on trips and enrichment days as well as looking at financial academic and staffing arrangements. We are currently dealing with the growing school population as our numbers have swelled to 615. We have created a new classroom in Key stage two to accommodate the rise in pupil numbers and we continue to plan for the future.

PTA

The PTA have again worked very hard this year and raised a wonderful amount of money with the summer fayre, school discos and the sale of tea towels and Christmas Cards. Two members of the PTA will be retiring at the end of the year as their children will be leaving Year 6. We are delighted that parents of younger children have joined the PTA and that new members are stepping forward to take carry on with this sterling work. Please do attend their meetings and support them with their fundraising activities.

Parking

Parking has long been a major issue along Broadmeadow and the surrounding streets. It is very disappointing to see many parents ignoring the single yellow lines and blocking the places where buses and other traffic may pass. Buses are not allowed to reverse for safety reasons so they need a clear path and space to pass. Despite new signs to encourage considerate parking the situation does appear to be getting worse. Please do think about where you park, park legally and do not block drives or yellow lines.

The Dot

This term, children will be taking part in a special project, "Take one book". The book we have chosen is called "the Dot" by Peter Reynolds. A little girl called Vashti says she can't draw. Her teacher thinks she can. She knows that there's a creative spirit in everyone and where there's a dot, there's a way... It is a wonderful tale of determination and using a growth mindset! We will explore creativity using dots and the messages of this book with year groups collaborating together and with a special homework project.

Buddy System

We have a very successful 'buddy system' in our school. Year 6 pupil volunteers are trained to work with some of our younger groups of pupils at lunchtimes to help them to play new games and to get along. Thanks to all of our buddies.

Reading Challenge

Reading is such an important skill and the reading habits children form when they are at school are important for later life. At Leighswood, we are always looking for different ways to encourage children to read. This term, we have invited Ann Derry, a former English adviser to Walsall Local Authority and her dog, Woody, to challenge the children to get Reading in some new and exciting ways.

Child Care

Lots of changes have taken place at Leighswood childcare and a recent visit by the authority showed that we are providing a great facility.

Increase in Sports

Governors are very pleased with the increase in participation in sport. Last year nearly 70% of pupils took part in an after school sporting activity and many pupils regularly take up opportunities at lunchtimes and during the holidays. Our annual sports day is well organised, well attended by parents and enjoyed by everyone.

Choir

We are very proud of our Choirs at Leighswood. The Key stage one choir entertained residents at Richmond Hall nursing home and sang at the Christmas Tree Festival at Aldridge Methodist Church in December and the Key Stage two Choir sang at a wonderful Young Voices concert at the Genting arena in January of this year, along with 6500 children! Well done to you all!

Growth Mindset

The whole school has been working on Growth Mindsets. Dr. Carol Dweck coined the terms fixed mindset and growth mindset to describe the underlying beliefs people have about learning and intelligence. When students believe they can get smarter, they understand that effort makes them stronger. Therefore they put in extra time and effort, and that leads to higher achievement.' All of our pupils are taught that they have the ability to learn and improve. They understand that they 'might not know the answer yet but they will if they continue to work at it'. We have seen a great response to this way of thinking and we know it is a useful 'life tool' for everyone.

SATS

As you will be aware, the department for education had removed levels from assessment. They have also changed the national curriculum and made it harder for children to achieve the 'expected'. Despite all of these changes we were very pleased with our SATs results last year and it is a great testament to the pupils and staff that we continued to maintain our good results.

New Staff Members

New staff joined us in September. Mr Trivasse in Year 2, Mr Barley in Year 3, Miss Beere in year 5, Mr Bailey In Year 1 and Miss Teece will be joining us shortly in year 3.

Contact us

Parent governors are happy to hear about your positive experiences at Leighswood School but if you have concerns, they must be addressed to the school.

Governors can be contacted in writing. Envelopes marked for the attention of governors can be handed in at reception or received by mail. If you have any comments then we would be happy to hear from you.