



Hello Everybody

This newsletter is intended to keep members of the school community up to date with activities at school from the perspective of the Governing Board. We intend to issue Newsletters regularly so that you are kept aware of what is happening at school now, and what is planned for the future.

Academic Progress !

Significant progress in key subjects was reported in our recent TAS (Team Around the School) meeting with Bucks and ODBST. Of particular note this time were the improvements in Phonics and in English generally.

A big thank you to Miss Webb, our English lead teacher. She has led our full adoption of ReadWriteInc into what is now a really well-established and systematic programme at school. Thank you also to other staff for taking on ReadWriteInc training and adopting this new approach to such good effect. And many thanks to our families for the support you give at home to your children's learning. Like any new skill, reading benefits from regular practise in a variety of settings. You can make a really positive difference for your child by reading at home.

Inevitably it takes time for new initiatives to make a difference to pupils' test results. We are now seeing major and consistent improvements in literacy resulting from a strong focus in this area. Significant deficiencies were identified at school back in January '22, leading to really hard improvement work. Efforts redoubled following the Ofsted inspection result. Dramatic improvements are now apparent. They are acknowledged not just by our staff, but also our expert colleagues at Bucks Council and ODBST.

Academisation

We had hoped to academise later this term. However, the **estimated** academisation date has moved to September. The academisation process is a complex one, which needs to be prepared thoroughly. We lease the land behind the school buildings, and Bucks / ODBST are clarifying with the owners how that lease will run in the long term. At this stage school leaders and governors are not able to hasten the process. Academisation to ODBST is firmly on the plan, and when we have a more definite date we will pass it on.

During academisation, for legal purposes a school closes, only to instantly reopen under a new funding and management authority (ODBST in our case). The Department for Education website recently showed a closure date for Westcott later this term, albeit with immediate reopening. Unfortunately, the academisation was not readily apparent on the DfE website, just the closing date. Very alarming! Please be aware that misleading and unhelpful information can appear in apparently sound sources. **If you have concerns, please do ask school leaders or governors, rather than falling prey to misinformation or rumour.**

Mrs Ort's 30 Years

What a delight it was to attend the special service and tea party to honour **Mrs Ort's Thirty Years of Service to the school**. She seemed genuinely surprised by the event, which was full of happiness and celebration. As TA in Early Years, Mrs Ort has played a major part in getting countless pupils off to a good start at school. It was heart-warming to hear direct from our pupils the many ways in which Mrs Ort has helped them. She seems to be a much loved and respected all-round problem solver and voice of wisdom.

Thank you very much, Mrs Ort, for all that you have done and continue to do for our pupils.

Governor Visits to School

Governors continue to visit the school, to see it in action and to hold Headteachers to account for leadership of the school's work. Recent visits have included:

Safeguarding - to ensure that there is good understanding of safeguarding among staff, and that effective systems for reporting concerns are in place and being used.

Collective Worship - to ensure that the school's Christian values are being honoured in appropriate collective worship.

Book Scrutiny - English, Maths and Science - to check that progress is evidenced by pupils' work, and that it is supported by differentiation of tasks and effective marking.

English - meeting with subject lead teacher. Ensuring that work is in place to continue the improvements in this subject that have been apparent recently.

Are you familiar with book keeping, accounting or finance?

In a recent skills audit, finance was identified as an area in which the governing board needs to become more confident and skillful. Can you add your abilities to the mix as a Parent Governor?

Please contact the interim headteachers or Jonathan Lewin - email below - if you would like to know more about being a Parent Governor. We really would like the parents to be represented on the Governing Board, regardless of your level of finance skills. **If ever there was a time to feel you were influencing the strategy of the school, surely it is now, as we rebuild from last Summer's Ofsted inspection and prepare for academisation.**

Governing Board Membership

Rev Caroline Wainman - Vicar of Waddesdon and Westcott. Rev Caroline leads services at our church and collective worship for our school

Jenath Khan - Local Authority Governor.

Jonathan Lewin - Foundation Governor, Chair. Jonathan is part of the congregation at St Marys.

Kim Nettleton - Staff Governor. Most of us will know Kim from her role in school administration.

Kirsty Eales - Foundation Governor.

Lorna Piper - Foundation Governor.

Toby Long - Foundation Governor,

In addition, the **Interim Heads** report to Governor meetings.

Thank you for reading this newsletter.

Jonathan Lewin

Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Governing Board, Westcott CofE School

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