

July 2024

Governor Newsletter

Dear Parents, Staff and Friends of Uplands

The weather may feel more like March but we are at the end of the summer term and another academic year.

It has been a busy year and I would like to take the opportunity to thank all staff, parents, carers, professionals and the wider community for all the support and commitment they continue to offer Uplands Junior School. We are extremely fortunate to have a very committed team here at Uplands plus a supportive community. This enables us to offer a variety of learning experiences and learning opportunities to our pupils both in and out of the classroom. Thank you all.

This week we say 'goodbye' to our year 6 and their families. We hope they have enjoyed their final term at Uplands, the trips, assemblies, various activities and celebrations. Thank you to all the staff who have put together a memorable few weeks for the year group.

On behalf of Uplands Governors, I wish you all a healthy and relaxing summer.

Kindest regards,

Debbie Anslow

Chair of Governors

Staff Changes

We have a number of staff changes taking place at the end of this term and new appointments starting in September.

Mr Dyall and **Mrs Ali** who have both worked as teaching support staff this year, finish their temporary contracts with Uplands. **Miss Mustafa** who has been a class teacher for year 4 over the past two years also leaves this term. We have two long serving members of staff retiring from Uplands. **Mrs Helen Bull**, Office Manager retires after 22 years and **Mrs Vicky Wakelam**, Teaching Assistant, after 18 years at Uplands. Both have played a valuable role at Uplands and seen the school through many changes and inspections. Our heartfelt thanks to both of them for the dedication, enthusiasm and support that they have shown for Uplands and its pupils.

Our best wishes and thanks to all the staff leaving us this term.

Joining us in September are **Ms Vanita Kumari** as our new Office Manager, **Ms Abigale Costigan** as a Teaching Assistant in Year 4 and **Mrs Jackie Murrin** as a Lunchtime supervisor. **Mr Joe Lyones** returns to Uplands as a class teacher in Year 5 following his teaching post in Dubai. We are pleased to welcome them all to Uplands Junior School.

School Development

The Governing Board set targets and monitors school development throughout the year. This academic year our targets focused on the Quality of Education and further development of the curriculum, pupil attendance and punctuality and personal development. Based on the progress made in these areas, the latest SAT results and new education challenges and initiatives, the board and leadership team have agreed the key areas for further development for 2024-25. Some of the main areas of focus for the next academic year are:

Quality of Education & Curriculum Development

Work has continued throughout the year on teaching plans for foundation and core subjects. In the next academic year assessment of foundation subjects and a review of the knowledge organisers will be part of the development plans for the curriculum. Uplands teaching staff will also be looking at foundation teaching plans for children with SEND to ensure that all pupils can access the full curriculum. We will continue the focus on Writing which suffered nationally from lockdown. A question by question analysis of the SAT papers and internal assessment will help to identify areas of need for all core subjects in the coming year.

Pupil Attendance and Punctuality

We are pleased to see that attendance data has improved at Uplands over the past academic year.

- Whole school attendance Sept 2022- July 2023 92.9%
- Whole school attendance Sept 2023 – 28th Jun 2024 95.3%

Post pandemic the national statistics showed a rise in poor attendance and punctuality in pupils of all ages. Government reports show that persistent absence impacts on achievement, wellbeing and wider development. In addition, lateness at Uplands can mean that pupils miss valuable small group teaching time some of which takes place immediately as school starts in preparation for whole class sessions. The school office, leadership team and Educational Welfare Officer will continue to work with pupils and families who struggle with punctuality and attendance as part of the national drive.

Personal Development and Behaviour

The Leadership Team are reviewing the school's approach to behaviour management with a new school policy based on restorative practice. As part of this Governors are reviewing their behaviour principles. Both will be published in the Autumn term. Restorative approaches help pupils to learn how their behaviour affects other pupils and staff. It also helps them to take responsibility and build the skills to make better choices. Staff have already undertaken some training based on the revised principles with more to come in the Autumn Term.

Pupil & Staff Wellbeing

Uplands has always held the wellbeing of staff and pupils as a top priority even prior to the pandemic. This year Mrs Webster-Smith has been working with the Wolverhampton Education Psychologist Team to audit wellbeing at Uplands as part of the Sandwell Wellbeing Charter. The outcome of the audit was very positive with a clear action plan for the next academic year.

Provisional SATS Results 2024

We were very pleased to received positive SATs results again this year. With the exception of writing, our SATs results in all subjects are higher than the provisional local and national average.

% OF PUPILS ACHIEVING EXPECTED STANDARD OR ABOVE (Greater Depth in brackets)

	UPLANDS	W-TON AVERAGE	NATIONAL AVERAGE
Reading	81% (28%)	74.7% (26.1%)	74%
Writing	68% (9%)	72.1% (13.1%)	72%
Maths	80% (30%)	72.9% (23.5%)	73%
Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	81% (49%)	74.3% (35.0%)	72%
Combined (RWM)	62% (6%)	61.2% (7.2%)	61%

School Bungalow

We are extremely pleased to have had the old caretakers bungalow and garden totally refurbished this term. After lying empty for some years we were finally offered financial support from the local authority. This has enabled us to convert the bungalow in to a multi-functional space which will further enhance our learning environment. Primarily this will be used for the Toast and After-school clubs with an independent access gate at the front of the school. During the school day it offers an extra break out space for teaching and learning and a meeting space for parents, governors or staff. The garden has also been landscaped and will provide a calmer space at lunch and break times for pupils and staff. It will also provide an area for more outdoor learning. The majority of work is now complete and once furnished we hope to have the building open for use early in the new term.

Parent View

A link to Ofsted's parent questionnaire 'Parent View' can be found on 'Parent' section of the school's website.

www.uplandsjuniorschool.org.uk

Governor Changes

We have had a few changes to the Governing Board this year. Dr Raakhee Ramesh and Ms Laura Burka stepped down from their role on the board due to work commitments. Following a parent ballot we were pleased to welcome two new parent Governors, Gemma Mahiques and Amandeep Sanghera. Already they have undertaken some training and carried out Governor duties. Mrs Shakesheave finished her term of office as a staff Governor and we will be looking to appoint a new staff Governor in the Autumn. Rebecca Pick, Co-opted Governor finishes this term after over 8 years on the Uplands Board most recently as Vice Chair. Rebecca also sat as a Governor at Westacre Infants School and joined Uplands Governing Board to focus on transition between the two schools. More recently she has worked closely with our SENDCo championing SEND education at Uplands. Thank you all.

Uplands School Governors

- Mrs Debbie Anslow (Chair)

Parent Governors

- Mrs Serina Balu
- Mrs Meena Chuhan
- Ms Gemma Mahiques
- Mrs Amandeep Sanghera

Co-opted Governors

- Mr Nigel Cox
- Mr Ramesh Kumar QPM

Local Authority Governor

- Councillor Wendy Dalton

Staff Governors

- Mrs Diamond (Non -teaching staff)
- Mrs Webster-Smith (Headteacher)

Associate Governors

- Mrs Walker

Vacancies:

Two Co-opted Governors

One staff governor

If you would like to know more about these vacancies please contact Debbie Anslow, Chair of Governors via the school Office or Governors@uplandsjuniorschool.co.uk

Thank you to all the governors who have volunteered their time, experience and skills so freely to improve the education of Uplands' pupils.

You are welcome to contact governors through the school office

**Wishing you all a safe and healthy
summer break.**