

Governor Newsletter

July 2022

Dear Parents, Staff and Friends of Uplands

Once again, we are at the end of another challenging year at Uplands. Although the temperatures are anything but normal there is at least finally a sense of 'normality' in school. It has been a hectic term for pupils and staff with the reintroduction of many events which were restricted over the past couple of years. How lovely it is to see activities taking place in school, offsite visits and parents, visitors and governors welcomed back on to the school site. We know that learning isn't limited to the classroom. The variety of enrichment opportunities offered to pupils at Uplands is essential to their education and we are very grateful to all the teaching and office staff who organise so many memorable experiences for the children.

Governors would also like to thank all the parents and families who continue to offer their support to the school. Looking at the comments on Facebook, feedback from parent surveys and the attendance at events, we know you are also pleased to have the opportunity to be back in school. We will build on this further next year and extend the opportunities for parents to be part of Uplands.

We were extremely pleased to received excellent SATs results this year as well as very promising internal assessment data for all year groups. Our SATs results in all subjects were higher than the local and national average and in the case of Maths and Reading were the highest Uplands has ever attained. (Full details are on the school website.) This is incredible considering the disruption our year 6 pupils have had to endure through the pandemic. The results are testament to the resilience of our pupils, the quality and adaptability of Uplands' approach to teaching both during and since lockdown and the ongoing support for learning provided by our parents. Congratulations and thank you to you all.

Having completed their SATs, Year 6 have been busy celebrating their last few weeks at Uplands. Thankfully, all the end-of-school events have been able to take place. Many Year 6 pupils attended the traditional residential visit to The Pioneer Centre and, from all accounts, it was as exciting and exhausting as ever. Thank you to all the staff who give up their free time to enable this event to take place and to those who work hard to ensure that the year 6 have such a memorable end to their time at Uplands.

We wish you all a healthy and relaxing summer.

Kindest regards,

Debbie Anslow
Chair of Governors

Staff Changes

After many years at Uplands we say goodbye to Mrs Hudson and Mrs Beasley this week. Both are moving to other local Wolverhampton schools as part of their career development. Congratulations to them both. Ms Cartwright and Miss Arfan who have been with us on a temporary basis also leave at the end of this term. We wish them every success in their next venture.

Earlier this year Mr Loynes joined our teaching team initially to cover Miss Richards maternity Leave. Mrs Webster-Smith has also appointed Miss Mustafa to join year 4 in readiness for next term. Mr Squires joins as a part time intervention teacher supporting years 4 and 5 and Mr Flannigan as a Teaching Assistant in year 5. We look forward to working with the new team.

School Development

Every year Governors and the leadership team review the priorities for school development against our wider school vision and aims. Governors monitor progress of these improvement priorities throughout the year as well as the outcome of internal assessment and SATs. From this we identify new areas of focus for the forthcoming academic year. These are some of the areas we have focused on and further development points for next year.

Recovery

Following the full reopening of school last year Mrs Webster-Smith and staff have worked tirelessly to reintroduce school routine and practices. With periodic outbreaks of Covid-19 resulting in staff and pupil absence this has not been easy. However, as always the Uplands team has risen to the challenge, been flexible in approach and created a positive learning environment for the pupils. Governors have continued to monitor this recovery, including the wellbeing of pupils and staff and the progress made to recoup lost learning. Our internal assessment data and our SATs results have shown strategies are working and progress is being made. Ongoing review informs us of further aspects of school life and the curriculum which still need further attention (such as writing stamina and spelling) and we will keep such areas under review to achieve even better next year.

Curriculum Development

During school lockdown teaching staff revised curriculum plans particularly for foundation subjects. This year has seen the implementation of these plans, refinement of assessment, marking, greater use of knowledge organisers and further development of creative and cross curricular learning to embed knowledge. We have also had external reviews of Maths, Writing and Reading plus Science and History. This refinement of foundation and core subjects will continue in the next academic year with a focus on developing memory, transferrable skills and sharpening of the use of assessment. This will help staff become even better at homing in on pupils' needs. The school website includes information on every subject and the topics to be covered in each year group. As part of our IT strategy, Governors have approved the purchase of more IT equipment for next year to support teaching and learning.

'Ambition for All'

In recent years we have moved towards Quality First Teaching. This is a teaching approach that focuses on high quality, inclusive teaching for all pupils. This approach along with a philosophy of 'Ambition for All' helps ensure all our pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, have full access to the whole curriculum.

Using some of the government catch up funding grant and our own budget we have been able to fund additional teaching support in all year groups. This has allowed Uplands to ensure Quality First Teaching as a means of providing intervention support to those who require short or longer term help. Additional staffing has allowed small group teaching to be carried out by the class teacher for core subjects ensuring continuity and consistency for those who need it most.

Special Educational Needs and Disability

In 2021 we requested an external review of our SEND provision as the specialist needs of some of our pupils increased. Led by Mrs Handscomb, our SEND Coordinator and supported by staff and external professionals, work has continued on developing this provision. Recently, we have been able to invest in a sensory room and this will be fully in use next year for specific pupils. Next year Uplands will develop an Autism champion to advise and help staff in meeting the high level needs of some of our pupils.

Wellbeing

Pupil and staff wellbeing is always a high priority at Uplands and coming out of the pandemic Uplands has had to look at new strategies to support the mental health of pupils and staff. We have seen great resilience.

Staff workload, helping reduce pressure on staff and supporting personal development is critical. The unprecedented challenges of the last couple of years has put an enormous pressure on schools and often put them in the firing line for wider frustrations. We will continue to work with the leadership team on ways to ensure our team are equipped and confident in their role and feel valued.

In support of pupil wellbeing, Uplands will continue to reintroduce and build on some of the initiatives that were in place prior to the pandemic. These include: The Art of Brilliance to support mental health; pupil ambassador roles to develop confidence, teamwork and leadership; and a Trick Box Team to offer peer support on the playground. Governors will continue to review the impact of these strategies and support the leadership team in addressing the wellbeing of our pupils and staff.

Parent Engagement

We recognise that opportunities to engage with parents has been curtailed by the Covid pandemic. School has successfully worked hard to keep communication channels open but we want to improve engagement further. Next term school will introduce the 'MarvellousMe' App to help keep parents informed of activities in school and updates from the classroom. We also know parents enjoy the opportunity to come in to school, see work and actively support their children. More events will be available for parents to take part in learning and cultural activities next year. Parent engagement is one of our key priorities for Uplands next year.

Uplands School Governors

- Mrs Debbie Anslow (Chair)

Parent Governors

- Mrs Serina Balu
- Dr Raakhee Ramesh
- Mrs Meena Chuhan

Co-opted Governors

- Miss Marie Bagley
- Mr Nigel Cox
- Mr Ramesh Kumar QPM
- Ms Rebecca Pick

Staff Governors

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

Associate Governors

- Mrs Walker
- Mrs Wellsted (Non-Teaching staff)

Vacancies: Local Authority Governor

You are welcome to contact governors through the school office

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

After over 10 years as a governor at Uplands we say goodbye to **Mrs Juli Forrest** who is now spending more time developing her own business. Juli initially joined as a parent governor and later remained with us as a Local Authority appointed governor. With her school and business experience Juli has Chaired the Finance & Pay Committee and in recent years been Vice Chair of the Uplands' Board. We are very grateful for her contribution to the school's development over the past 10 years.

We were joined this year by **Mr Nigel Cox** and parent, **Mrs Meena Chuhan**. We hope they have enjoyed being part of the school board so far.

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

School Governor Vacancies

We are looking for a new Local Authority governor preferably from a business or financial background to join our board. Local Authority governors do not have to work for the authority or have links to the school. A role in school governance offers a great way of developing skills and knowledge in leadership, team work, financial management, strategy development, risk management and of course education. If you know of someone who might be interested please contact the school office.

Later in the Autumn we will be recruiting a new parent governor. More details will be circulated later in the year.

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