



Welcome to our first Governor Newsletter- which will be sent out to parents each term, to update you on how, as Governors, we have been carrying out our roles and meeting our responsibilities.

We have a Code of Conduct which clearly defines our roles and responsibilities..... for instance

*'We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.'*

Code of Conduct Aut '17

Governors were made to feel very welcome at all levels, and are extremely grateful to Mrs Snowden, her staff, and the pupils for making their day so informative, and fun.

Thank you to all the class teachers and pupils at WHA who happily opened their doors and books for us to see how rich and exciting learning at WHA can be.

**Issue 1** **January 2018**



*"we are committed to providing first-class education and a safe environment for the children of Western House Academy to allow them to flourish and succeed in life"*  
the  
Governors

### Western House Academy Council

 <b>Simon Carter</b> Chair Community Governor	 <b>Coral Snowden</b> Principal	 <b>Liz Herod</b> Vice Chair Community Governor
 <b>Anjali Singal</b> Parent Governor		 <b>Suki Ranu</b> Parent Governor
 <b>Ranjit Siddle</b> Parent Governor	 <b>Kyla Parmley</b> Staff Governor	 <b>Helen Haines</b> Staff Governor

**Governors in School Day - 8th November 2017**

This was a very special day for Western House Governors. In our role as Link Governors, we visit the school regularly and also attend events and meet pupils and staff. It was a full day when we would be together experiencing a whole range of activities from greeting parents, maths and reading lessons, meeting pupil leaders to playground games.

So if you wondered about the new faces saying hello at the gate on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November, then you have met one of the Governors. It was a real pleasure to see so many smiling and cheerful faces; such smartly turned out children ready for what the day ahead may bring.



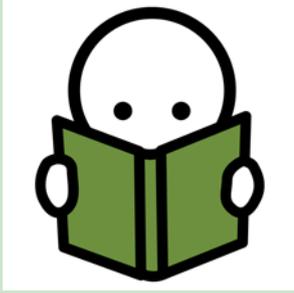
What a great start to the day.... Led Zeppelin played on guitar and steel pans at 8am!

There was such great energy and enthusiasm with children expressing their talents at the early morning music club run by Mr Robinson - the Governors were very impressed with the commitment and the relationship between the children and teacher.

Mrs Snowden's well thought out timetable saw all the Governors head off in different directions.

We visited the Nursery where the environment is rich with a range of well - resourced activities which clearly engage the children, judging by the purposeful atmosphere to be seen. The children were confident and more than ready to explain to a curious adult, just exactly what they were doing.

Reception classes were a hive of activity. The atmosphere in EYFS was so positive, children were busy, curious and confident and had a great relationship with staff.



*This year a new initiative in its approach to reading has been introduced. Responses by the children during guided reading sessions has been excellent. If parents can spend 10 or 15 minutes a day listening to their child read or just talking about the stories they are reading, this would add significantly to the progress each child could make. Reading fluently and understanding what they have read, opens the door for a child to all areas of their education.*



***Final thoughts: the day was a real success, we look forward to the next one!***

The morning seemed to fly by, giving Governors a valuable insight into a high level of quality teaching and a glimpse into a balanced and enriched curriculum. All the lessons we saw were purposeful and the learning is made fun within the school so that the children are fully engaged and make good progress.

For instance, a Year 5 French lesson revealed challenging expectations which the children eagerly engaged with confidently using French vocabulary in making sentences.

We really enjoyed being immersed in lessons and activities during the day and were struck by just how readily the children took to the presence of unfamiliar adults in their classroom, they spoke with confidence. We all learned something in every one of the lessons we joined, so perhaps it shows you are never too old, or maybe we just need to spend more time back at school! More importantly, we were all impressed by how well behaved and engaged the children were in class. We observed amazing learning both collectively during teacher-led lessons and independently inside children's books; everywhere we encountered excellent behaviour and attitudes which displayed the school values in different contexts.

There is no doubt in the Governors' minds that Western House is at the forefront in many curriculum areas.

Music and sport are not simply aspects of the curriculum, they are actively stretching children in other directions and opening new opportunities.

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is an ambitious addition to the curriculum, requiring a different teaching approach and lesson structure. Governors joined what was only the second session since introduction of the initiative but could see how it extends and complements a values-based ethos whilst developing high levels of maturity. The pupils responded and engaged well. Early indications show that P4C is a good choice for the school and its vision.

The lessons governors joined were highly interactive, they saw a wide range of resources employed including interactive whiteboard (IWB) technology, and they saw IRIS Connect, a teacher video coaching system, in use.

We were shown pupil profile books and were able to examine pupils' workbooks.

The Link SEND Governor had an excellent opportunity to observe the support WHA provides for pupils with additional needs. All the learning activities were interactive using IWB and printed resources that stimulated discussion and required pupil participation. Where tasks proved difficult, the teacher retraced the learning steps and this ensured that the children made progress in their learning during the session.

Mid-morning break is well organised and staffed at a really high level, which Mrs Snowden confirms has had a very positive effect on supporting the pupil's excellent behaviour and encouraging social interaction through games and other play resources. We saw that this enjoyable and safe environment continued at lunchtime, with Supervisors engaging with the pupils and games areas set out for a variety of activities.

A highlight of the day was the opportunity to speak with groups of pupil leaders. The experience of meeting representatives of the School Council was a wholly enjoyable and positive experience, they were articulate and unafraid to share their ideas and thoughts about the school, being a Councillor; what areas could be improved and so forth. Meeting with the music and library mentors was very insightful. The children expressed pride in being assigned roles which allowed them (in their words) to 'inspire others and to give back to the younger children what their previous mentors had given them'. It was extremely refreshing that children of ages 9-10 had the ability and capacity to think this way. They took their responsibility of being a mentor very seriously which again reflects the values and ethos of the school.

Representing a cohort at the pinnacle of their time in Western House Academy and the next generation of ambassadors for the school, the pupil leaders presented an articulate, engaged and passionate body. They were thriving on responsibility whilst also learning the challenges that leadership can bring from organising activity to imposing standards.