

Governor Newsletter – Summer Term 2024



Potten End CofE Primary School

“Rooted in faith, we nurture, grow and flourish”

July 2024

Dear Parents and carers

This academic year seems to have really flown by, or is it just us? It’s been a while since we last put out a newsletter but for us as for many of you, life has rather gotten in the way for us! We wanted to take a moment to share some of the highlights we have been privileged to witness over the last school year here at Potten End.

It really has been the most action-packed year here at Potten End and we know you will have felt this too – our children have been given so many enrichment opportunities on top of the quality teaching inside the classrooms – with our programme of visits and trips as well as lots of exciting visitors coming into school

Our **Friends of School** have been a busy band of passionate and committed individuals as well, bringing a wide variety of fundraising and social events for the whole school community to participate in. These have ranged from the very popular Christmas Fayre, Movie Night, Hairbraiding event, School Disco, ice cream sale as well as last week’s Quiz Night in The Plough!

This energy has seen a really positive enhancement to the sense of community within the school as well as raising much needed funds to cover the costs of replacing our Trim Trail in the playground as well as the visiting Pantomime at Christmas. We are so incredibly grateful to our 4 Co-Chairs as well as their wonderful team of class volunteers who go above and beyond to make such special memories for our children.

New lunchtime provision

One of the real privileges of being a Governor is the opportunity to come into school and observe and learn from our children. We get to see them during the calm of lessons during learning walks where we see them all focused, supported and happy to share their learning and books with us, however recently, whilst spending time with Mrs Ridgway, to observe SEN practice, I was also privileged to understand and observe our new lunchtime play provision.

Mrs Sharpling and Mrs Kennedy had been to visit a number of other local schools and had seen “free play” in practice. The opportunity to open up all areas of our grounds to our children and giving them a broader variety of inclusive activities to be available to them was a fairly new idea – I can honestly say I was blown away by the **sheer unbounded joy and energy** I witnessed in every part of the school grounds – children can explore Wonder Wood, climb trees, play with the Mud Kitchens, dig in the mud with diggers, dance to music, use the climbing frame and trim trail, dash about on ride on carts and scooters, shoot basketball hoops and hula hoop to name just a few activities. Every child at lunchtime was happy and engaged – moving freely between groups and activities.

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This inclusive approach to lunchtime play has truly transformed the atmosphere into a happy and joyful space for all to flourish.

SIAMS Inspection/SEA visits

As you will all no doubt remember we had our SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection at the end of January, SIAMS Inspection is the Diocese's version of Ofsted but focussed on how well we represent and support the development of our distinctive Christian vision as a school. We were delighted to be involved with this inspection alongside the staff as both Governors and for Claire Wallis and Emma Harris as representatives of the Church and Local Community. You will have already seen the results that inspection found us to *"be living up to our foundations as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish"* which is the best possible result we could have had – the staff, children and parents that also met with the inspector did us so proud! We also recognise the incredible efforts of both Mrs Kennedy and the SLT (Miss Ford, Mrs Sharpling, Mrs Hall & Mrs Ridgway) to develop and strengthen this ethos throughout the school.

We continue to welcome our SEA (School Effectiveness Advisor) who supports our ongoing monitoring and assessment of various elements of our curriculum to ensure we continue to deliver on our ambition of "Quality First Teaching" – Our SEA has done "deep dive" assessments of Reading provision as well as RE, Maths, Art and D&T curriculums – we have been able to be a part of these both as observers but also to be given feedback and we are delighted that all subjects and areas have been assessed as "Good" and all showing solid and continuing strengthening.

Staff Goodbyes

Michelle Gasper (TA) has been a part of this wonderful school for 20 years and has now decided the time has come for her to retire to be able to spend more time with her own grandchildren. Mrs Gasper has been such a fundamental part of this school, always smiling, always with a kind word and a sunny disposition and this energy and enthusiasm to support each and every child in her classes over the years will be hugely missed but we wish her all the very best for the next adventure.

Sophie Craddock (Year 2 teacher) – is also leaving to take up a new post in a school closer to her home. Miss Craddock joined us as a NQT (newly qualified teacher) 6 years ago. She has been heavily involved in the implementation of our Read Write Inc scheme. This move represents a huge opportunity for her to spread her wings and experience teaching outside Potten End – we wish her every success in her new role.

Laura Lopez – having only recently joined us as a **SEN TA**, clearly the children have had a fundamental influence on her and she has decided her future is absolutely in teaching and will start her teacher training in September – whilst at the school she has already made her mark and has built a strong relationship with those children she works with, as well as supporting our After School Club. We wish her all the luck for her training and hope to see her back at the school very soon as part of her work experience!

An update on our Governing Board

This year we have seen 3 of our Governors standing down for personal reasons – Beverley Hamilton (Foundation), Nadia Richman & Steve Cutler (Parent Governors), whilst Nadia has stayed on as Associate Governor, Bev has stepped down to spend more time with her new Grandson & Steve has resigned after 7 years of support in various roles, all whilst juggling his caring commitments. We are tremendously grateful the support, passion and commitment to the school both have given.



At last week's FGB we were able to present Steve with a small token of our appreciation to acknowledge his time and support.

We are delighted to welcome 3 new members to the board this month.



Rev'd Ben Brady becomes our **Ex-Officio Foundation Governor** following his installation as our new Vicar at Holy Trinity in June. As part of the role as Team Vicar he joins our Governing Board as well as supporting the whole school with exploring & deepening our faith and we look forward to continuing to strengthen our connections between Holy Trinity and School. We also welcome his stepson, Ethan, who will also be joining us in Year 4 in September – we hope the whole family will be very happy here.

Jane Healy was a long-time resident of the village and joins us as our newest **Co-opted Governor**. Jane has a granddaughter in Year 2 and a Grandson who will be joining us next year and who represent the 4th generation of her family to attend Potten End (including Jane herself). Jane brings us both her passion for the school & fundraising as well as her professional financial expertise from her role in managing pensions for a large enterprise in London. We are delighted to have her as part of the team.



Danny Richman – Danny was appointed as **Parent Governor** to replace Nadia (his wife – keeping it in the family!) and has Finn in Yr 2 with Freddie due to join us in a couple of years. Danny brings more than 40 years of running his own technology company, is an award-winning Mentor for The Princes Trust and an expert and thought leader in AI. Danny has already demonstrated this by holding workshops for our Year 6 classes over the last couple of years. Welcome Danny!

We still have two spaces on our Board – 1 Parent Governor (to fill Steve's vacant role) and 1 Co-opted (Community) Governor – if you or anyone you know might be interested in either of these roles – please do reach out to us on governors@pottenend.herts.sch.uk for an informal chat.

Year 6

This week is a busy but memorable one for our Year 6 cohort as they complete their Primary School journey before heading to various Secondary Schools in the area in September – the fun day on Cricket Pitch, Bikeability, Leavers disco and successful transition days were just a warm up for this week's end of term Performance which took place on Tuesday and was just brilliant – each and every one of the class were stars – they leave us with so much confidence and know they will be real credits to Potten End as they continue their education and we wish them every happiness and success for their futures.

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Well done, if you have stuck with us this far! As we mentioned, it's been an exciting school year and once again we are so very thankful to our hardworking staff who give so much in terms of their time and energy to make our school such a special place to be!

All that's left to do is to wish you all a happy and restful Summer break. We look forward to seeing you all again in September.

Best wishes

Rob Dale & Emma Harris

Chair & Vice Chair of Governors