

Governors Report for parents– February 2017



This report aims to describe for parents the work of the governing body and some of the key decisions it is taking on your behalf. The approved minutes of the meetings are also published on the [school website](#).

1. Update on the key issues you raised in the 2016 parent questionnaire

It is soon time for the 2017 parent questionnaire in which we welcome your thoughts and comments on all aspects of the school and how it is run. We strongly encourage you to take a short time to complete these and have your views heard.

As we wrote to you in April last year, the results of the parent questionnaires in 2016 were very positive and as always there were helpful questions and comments around some key areas. Here is a summary of what we have done over the year to address your feedback:

Homework – always a difficult balance to strike, some parents suggested that homework was not appropriate at primary age and others were keen to see more given to their children. From these comments, as you are aware, the staff have changed the way homework is done throughout the school, making it more project based on a half termly basis which has received very positive feedback from parents and children alike. It allows children to do as much as they like and take responsibility for choosing which projects to work on as well as encouraging them to read different texts which perhaps they would not otherwise come across. There is even a homework club on offer to allow children to complete some of their work while still in school with access to a multitude of learning aids.

Extra-curricular activities – feedback was positive around the extra-curricular activities on offer to our children, but more was asked for in terms of the variety and breadth of these. We now have what we believe is a great variety of extra-curricular clubs covering topics from sports to science, music to crafts, art to electronics - some are after school and some at lunchtime enabling children to take part at convenient times.

Communication – this is another one which all schools are continuously trying to improve. The feedback so far has been positive around the improvements which have been made to the timeliness and avenues used for communication. The Facebook closed KVS site is proving useful to parents who have become members, providing useful information, answering last minute questions and confirming times and dates and details of everyday school life. We have however had a few incidents where parents have used it as a 'suggestion box' using it to provide feedback to teachers on different topics. This is not, of course, what it should be used for, and we would always encourage parents to seek time with specific members of staff for their comments and feedback. The website is also continuing to be a valuable resource to parents and indeed the community and ParentMail is now the most used channel for communication from the school.

Behaviour – there was some concern about the school's ability to deal with and manage disruptive behaviour and we are pleased to report that throughout the year there was a consistent and significant decrease in behaviour logs to the point where there were no reports in some terms.

Science – there were some comments on the need for more science work to be covered in school. Raising the profile of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) is one of our objectives and the school runs 'experiment days', has had visits from volunteers bringing their professional expertise to science week and science clubs run as extra-curricular activities which have proved very successful. We are also working on providing a 'Science Shack' as an outside space for children to do experiments in.

2. Keeping our children safe

We are pleased to say that a recent review by Wiltshire Council of the school's audit of our child safeguarding arrangements, reported that across a range of indicators, the school had sound practices in place.

3. Focus on maths

We thought it would be helpful to follow up Mrs Venner's letter to parents last month with regards to SATs. Last year's analysis by the Head of our key stage 2 SAT's performance, identified that further focus was required with one particular aspect which was the application of learnt maths methods. That is why the governing body set one of the four [school objectives this year](#) as 'creating opportunities for applying maths learnt methods'. As a result, the school maths lead identified the resources required and developed an action plan to focus effort. This plan was considered by the governing body following scrutiny by the governor link for maths and was supported. We now receive regular reports on progress against this plan.

Although not our primary purpose, we are confident that this focussed effort will significantly improve maths SAT's performance this May, as we are already seeing consistent improvement across the board in pupil progress. We expect to be able to identify progress that pupils are making more fully with regards maths and numeracy at the school Data Committee, chaired by a governor, that meets next on 6th March.

In the newsletter article this month, Mrs Venner started a series of articles on numeracy, in which she will be illustrating progress against the school development plan, with pupil experience. Two initiatives that are sure to feature include the 'Biscuit club' for the year 6's every Tuesday after school that provides additional SAT's support, and the daily targeted booster sessions in class that provide 1:1 intensive input to pupils on developmental areas.

It was also important to us that we sought an independent view on our maths plan. All schools have a Wiltshire Council School Improvement Advisor (SIA) and so to do this we have purchased additional sessions from the SIA to specifically review our maths plan. This will include lesson observations this term.

Being a small rural school, there is a danger that we become inward looking and isolated. We are pleased to say that in fact, we play a significant leadership role within the local cluster of 15 primary schools, and Kennet Valley staff regularly attend a significant number of training sessions to ensure that they remain up to date. In addition, our Maths Primary Subject Leader attends 2 half day Maths Network Meetings per year, which enables her to keep up to date with significant changes, to compare aspects of our data with other schools, and to share best practice within the school.

Parents consultation evenings (being held on Thursday 23rd February and Monday 27th February) are also specifically designed by the school to give you information about the level at which your child is currently working and to explain to you the next steps in their learning journey. Your child's teacher will offer suggestions of activities that you can do with your child at home to consolidate and enhance their progress.

Finally, governors would like to support Mrs Venner's offer to parents to come in and have conversations with her about SAT's results or to arrange to join a Literacy or Numeracy lesson – parents that have been in, report to us how impressed they are – come and see for yourself!

4. Improving accessibility

We aim to be an inclusive school. That is why we have recently undertaken a survey of our school building and are making a number of small changes that will make it even more accessible for parents, pupils and teachers with visual or physical impairments.

You will be pleased to know that we are a thriving school and have 103 pupils who attend Kennet Valley, with attendances levels of 96.9% against the national target of 96%.

I hope that you have found this interesting – if you have any feedback or have a question, then please send us an email via admin@kennetvalley.wilts.sch.uk.

Rob Gittins and Sarah Till-Vattier, Co-Chairs of Governors