

Governor newsletter to parents and carers - Spring 2018



Funding and Class Sizes

The Finance Committee have approved the budget for the 2018/19 financial year. This is based on the number on roll on the Friday in the first week following the October half-term, which was 144. Numbers for Sept. 18 are expected to be over 150, and more crucially over 60 pupils in Foundation Phase. This means Crossgates is eligible for class size protection funding to ensure that no child in the Foundation Phase will be in a class where the teacher pupil ratio is more than 1:30. Consequently, funding is in place to support the continuation of the six class structure for the 2018/19 academic year.

The governors are aware of parental concerns over increasing class sizes. Yet, whilst there is a statutory duty to ensure that infant classes do not go over 30 there is no legislation requiring a junior class size limit. In terms of funding from the Council, class size protection (additional teacher) funding for KS2 is not authorised until the junior classes all contain 34 pupils and one class hits the 35th pupil. The ever-tightening funding regime remains challenging. The budget surplus is forecast to diminish during the next few years. For this reason, Mrs L Williams will be returning to the classroom to cover some teacher PPA time from September.

School Improvement and Estyn

Welsh Government published the National School Categorisation at the end of January which driven by our Estyn inspection outcomes, is set as Amber. This allows the school to receive additional LA support as we work on our recommendations. In February we received our second support visit from our Challenge Advisor. The school was judged to have moved up a category from satisfactory progress to strong progress in relation to Recommendation 1: Raise standards of writing, problem solving and reasoning skills in key stage 2. Estyn have requested a written progress report by the end of term in order for a desk based review to be undertaken during the summer term. The outcome will either be removal from Estyn review or an Estyn review monitoring visit.

Attendance

Our whole school yearly attendance target is 96.5%. As of the end of February the whole school attendance was below target at 95%. There are 190 school days each year. This means there are 175 other days for trips, treats, non-urgent appointments and holidays! Full attendance leads to the best educational outcomes – please give your child the best chance and make sure they are in school every day.

Inclement Weather

The term has been short, and a somewhat cold one, thank you for your support during the bad weather. It is appreciated that it is a challenge for you when we have to shut the school. The default position must always be that the school is open. Decisions to close, are made once health and safety assessments have been undertaken and there is knowledge about which staff are able to safely get in to school.

Other work of the Governors this term

Governors have attended training on GDPR, 'Successful Futures' and Understanding FFT School Analysis. The Data Group have met on three occasions this term to ensure the children have been receiving a high quality of education; we do this by carrying out learning walks in the classrooms, book scrutinies and talking with the children. The group have also undertaken a self-evaluation of its effectiveness and efficiency in facilitating school improvement. Clare Haslam has met with Mrs L Thomas (SENCO) as part of her ALN responsibilities. During our full meetings discussions have been held on the impending GDPR regulations and Plans for Powys schools. Communications have been developed with the school council to facilitate pupil voice.

The Governing Body welcomes contact with parents and carers; the school office will always facilitate this or you are welcome to email the Chair of Governors, Claire Lewis: clairel@crossgates.powys.sch.uk

We hope everyone has a good break and return to a breath of Spring, and your children looking forward to another term of learning and progress.