



Governor News

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Governor News.

The purpose of our bi-annual newsletter is to share with you the work that the governors do, on your behalf, to ensure that the learning experiences and educational opportunities provided for your child are the best that they can be.



The Governing Body



Sarah Wightman
Chair

Parent Governor



Rev'd Lynda Sebbage

Foundation Governor



John Gadd

Community Governor



Chris Young

Community Governor



Andrew Wilson
Vice Chair

Local Authority Governor



Helen Ashe

Headteacher



Nick Keefe

Staff Governor



Matt Bowe

Parent Governor



Jo Woodland

Foundation Governor

Thank you & Happy Holidays!

As we come to the end of another school year, I wanted to thank all the parents and wider school community for your continued support of Barrow Primary School. We are incredibly fortunate to have an excellent teaching and support staff team at school but they will always achieve more for the pupils at the school with your help and cooperation. As governors we feel it has been a great school year: indications are that the results for the statutory assessments are looking good, internal and external monitoring continues to provide very positive feedback and pupil perceptions, which we always closely monitor (because the children generally say it how it is!), have also been hugely positive. The governors are very fortunate to be able to spend time in school during the school day and we always come away commenting on the positive buzz in the classrooms - it genuinely does feel like the children are enjoying their time in school and having fun!

As ever, there is always more to work on and priorities and action plans for next year are in preparation. Before that though everyone deserves a well-earned break - I hope you all manage to find some time to relax and enjoy the school Summer holidays.

Sarah Wightman
Chair of Governors

Snapshot of Governor Monitoring - Summer Term

Attendance Matters

Attendance

This term I've looked further into one of Barrow's strengths - attendance to school. We are one of the top primary schools in Suffolk for attendance!



Coming to school day in, day out can be a challenge. But, at Barrow our attendance is comfortably above the national average and the school continues to try and improve it further.

We have a culture of very good attendance to school. Primarily, we have excellent teachers and staff who make learning fun and pupils don't want to miss out. In addition, we have had previous schemes that reward attendance such as 'not in miss out'. The new attendance reward scheme (including use of the swimming pool and family cinema tickets) looks set to improve the eye catching attendance rates even further.

The school also works with families and outside agencies to support pupils who face challenges in coming to school. The important work with these pupils has helped to improve their attendance. Well done to everyone for getting in to school as much as possible - your hard work will pay off!

Chris Young

Lunchtime Provision



I had the pleasure to monitor lunch time play provision in school a few weeks ago with Miss Fairweather and Mrs Fisk, the team leader for the Midday Supervisors. There was clear evidence that it is important to school that children have a good experience at lunchtime. Lunchtime play should be enjoyable and a chance to let of some steam in the middle of the day. It should however also be organised and supported such that children don't get 'lost' and incidents don't develop that might bubble over into afternoon lessons. It was delightful to see the children out enjoying a range of activities and a bit of freedom. There was skipping, hula-hoops, football, running, Poink (the new name for Tig/Tag/It apparently!), play on the Trim Trail, colouring, lego

and more! There was a nice level of noise. Adults were supporting and supervising play and their aim is to be able to be play facilitators. When the bell was rung it was impressive how quickly everything got tidied away (by the children!) and children lined up calmly and relatively quietly (they are still children!) ready to start afternoon school.

Sarah Wightman



Reading in Action - Year 1

In June I visited Year One to listen to them reading and to see how the phonics scheme is helping the children with their reading. The school lays heavy emphasis on the teaching of reading as without it the acquisition of skills in other subjects is greatly impaired. The Twinkl scheme the school has introduced is well embedded and is a successful innovation. The children can use phonics to break down new words and read familiar words with confidence.

Strong, sympathetic support is given to the pupils who are struggling with their reading. As well as that stronger readers get the chance to move on to more demanding books. As is the case with each visit I make, the children were confident, at ease in the classroom and, dare I say it, happy to be there. I am looking forward to visiting the same group in Year 2 to see their further development.

John Gadd

Investing in Employee Wellbeing & Retaining Talent

Educational headlines over the course of this year have been highlighting the pressures within schools when it comes to filling vacancies and retaining experienced teachers. High teacher turnover, vacancies that have remained unfilled despite being advertised numerous times, and experienced teachers leaving the profession have all featured within the various news reports. The education system has in fact been grappling with these concerns for several years now.



Within several articles, the well-being of the teaching team has been highlighted as an influencing factor when it comes to recruitment and retention. In terms of what we mean by well-being, it typically refers to the emotional, physical, mental and economic health of employees. It is also influenced by a range of factors such as colleague relationships, the ability to make and influence decisions, and the resources people have access to.

Pleasingly, Barrow has managed to keep a stable and experienced educational team, and this has been a deliberate approach. Deliberate, in terms of making sure we know how people are feeling and doing something with that knowledge once known, making changes to ensure resources are always allocated to support the best learning and teaching environment and making life simpler whenever possible. Additionally, we have also looked to develop and nurture early-career teachers at the start of their professional careers. Mr Hale and Miss Baker both started their teaching careers in the school. Something we are particularly proud of.

If things are stable, why does it remain important? In many ways, it links back to the articles I referred to in the introduction. Happy schools thrive for a reason; their focus remains on the quality of education offered to the children, ensuring the children remain safe and secure, understanding and managing risks, supporting the school's leadership team and ensuring people are in the roles that make the best use of their talents...and are valued.

In addition to gauging how the children are feeling within school we frequently test how we are doing as an employer in supporting workplace well-being. Our most recent 'pulse survey' (which provides a quick snapshot) was completed in June. Here are some examples of the questions that were asked:

- *To what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?*
- *How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your present job overall?*
- *How frequently do you feel your colleagues help and support you?*

The results showed that the team felt valued and supported, had a strong sense of a 'job well done', and would recommend the school as a great place to work.

You also play a part in these results...in so many ways: your active participation in the life of the school, the feedback and support freely offered, and the positive reputational ripples we receive from organisations we encounter every day, that I suspect stem from you. 'Thank you'.

Andrew Wilson
Vice-Chair of Governors

Parent Governor Changes

We would like to take this opportunity to say a warm 'thank you', on behalf of the governing body and the whole school community, for the support **Matt Bowe** has given to the school over the past four years. Having served one four-year term as governor, Matt has reluctantly decided that his work schedule and busy family commitments no longer enable him to offer his time for the role. He has brought his wisdom and experience to the school; being particularly influential in his role as our premises and health and safety governor. Whilst Matt has resigned as a school Governor, he will still be very much involved in the life of the school as a parent to three of our pupils. We wish him well.

Following the completion of our very recent Parent Governor recruitment process, we will be pleased to welcome **Sam Cheetham** to the Governing Board from September. As you may already know, Sam was voted in by the narrowest of margins following an online parent ballot. We are delighted that there was a healthy interest in the vacancy along with a great deal of support being shown for both candidates from the parent body.