



# Governors' Newsletter

Summer Term 2017

## Message from the Chair

Dear Parents and Carers

What a wonderful year it has been...the school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for improving standards in literacy & numeracy, a Gold Award from the London Children's Flower Society for the garden, Hollydale pupils have won 1st prize in the Voice newspaper's Black History essay competition, created music and performed with Peckham's Multi Storey Orchestra, came 2nd in the local Debate Mate finals....the list goes on!

It has been great to see the Friends of Hollydale growing, many thanks to the committee and all the parents who have helped out with the christmas & summer fairs, it's fantastic to see you all working together. New members of the governing board have strengthened our ability to challenge the leadership team and drive school improvement. The governing board forms a key part of the leadership and management of the school, through our meetings and visits we challenge and support Ms Reid and her team to make things better.

I am nearing the end of my 4 year term as a school governor and the school will have a new Chair of Governors next year. I have enjoyed my time as a governor immensely, working with a fantastic team of staff and seeing the dedication they have has been a real privilege.

We still have two parent governor vacancies - we need people from all walks of life, all backgrounds and cultures to make sure Hollydale's children get the best school experience possible. If you feel passionately about giving our children the best start in education, can make a commitment to attend roughly 8 meetings a year, make 2-3 governor visits and attend training please do talk to Ms Reid or any of the governors about the role. You don't need any prior experience or in depth knowledge about education and you can make a real difference.

I hope you have enjoyed hearing more about the work of the governing board through our termly newsletters. Look out for more governor surgery sessions next year giving you the opportunity to tell us what you think about the school.

I will finish by saying a huge thank you to all the staff, pupils, parents and volunteers who make Hollydale School such a wonderful, happy place. And a special thank you to Ms Reid, Ms LaMalfa & Ms Sultana, our very dedicated and talented leadership team. You are the best!

Wishing you all a wonderful Summer Holiday!

Toni Spong



## Summer Term Focus – Attainment & Learning Committee

Dear Parents and Carers

“What can we do about the second-best solution?” That’s not a question people ask very often. When we’re faced with a challenge, we always look for the best solution. But once the best solution has been tried, what do you do if you want to get even better results? Then you need the second-best solution too. This is the situation the Attainment and Learning Committee of Hollydale’s Governing Body finds itself in.

The Committee’s job is to make sure that children at Hollydale are doing as well as possible in their studies. This is a big challenge and an important job. Fortunately the best solution is well-known: make sure that the children are getting really good teaching. That’s obvious, but it isn’t easy to do.

As governors – lay people overseeing the school – the Committee’s job is to support and challenge the head teacher and her team, who work hard to make sure that teaching is as good as possible. Over the last couple of years the Committee has seen lots of really powerful evidence of this:

- We’ve looked at examples of children’s exercise books to see for ourselves how their work improves during the year.
- We’ve had presentations from the teachers responsible for key subjects (English, maths, science, languages) about the work they are doing to help all their colleagues teach these subjects effectively.
- We’ve looked at the displays in each classroom to see what the children have been learning.
- We’ve met groups of students to talk to them about what they have been studying and what they think about it.
- We’ve looked at data from the levels teachers give to every child once a term, to see how each year group is progressing.

All of these sources of evidence tell us the same thing: the quality of teaching at Hollydale is good and steadily improving. This is backed up by how well the children do in their SATs. On that measure, Hollydale is clearly the best school in Nunhead.

There’s still more that we want to do to improve teaching, but it’s definitely time to start thinking about the second-best solution. So, what is that? After teaching, what is the next thing that will help children do well at school? Here’s a list of five common ideas:

- Longer school days
- More teaching in sets
- Better buildings and classroom environments
- Less teaching in sets
- More teaching assistants
- Healthier lunches



The truth is that none of these make much difference at all to how well children do at school. That doesn't mean that there aren't other good reasons to make lunches healthier and buildings more pleasant, but those things aren't going to result in children suddenly doing better in their studies. So, after better teaching, what will make that difference?

The answer is all of us – parents. Children whose parents are engaged in their learning do better at school.

So what does being an engaged parent mean? It's not being a super parent. You don't have to go on every school trip, run the PTA, re-paint the school building or hand-knit every child an "I love Hollydale" jumper (although all those things would be great). Here are three really simple things that all of us can do quite easily:

1. Ask your children about what they are doing at school and praise them for their efforts and accomplishments.
2. Go to the meetings that the school organises about what your children will be learning, and afterwards talk to your children about what you found out.
3. If you can't go along, read the information on the web site, or find out from another parent, then tell your children about it.

All these things show your children that you think school and learning are important. When they see that you care about school and take an interest in what they are learning, it will motivate them and they'll do even better.



Fred Sharrock

Committee Chair,  
Link governor for  
Maths

Jess Heal

Committee Vice-Chair,  
Link governor for  
SEND

Jess Heather

Link governor for  
Literacy

Adeola Muir

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Safeguarding

