

## Fen Ditton Community Primary School Local Governing Body (LGB) Update – March 2022

Dear Parents,

We know that these past two years have been very tough on everyone, but as Governors we have been concerned to hear that this past term has been the toughest of all for the school, with staff and pupil absence due to the need to isolate causing daily challenges. We want to place on record our grateful thanks to staff, children and parents for the way you have responded to these challenging circumstances. At our meeting on Monday, it was encouraging to hear that despite the large number of cases, the attendance at Fen Ditton through this term is well above the average reported by the Local Authority for Cambridgeshire Schools.

However, we are also aware, and discussed this on Monday, that we anticipate a further reaction as we start to learn to live with Covid: Staff who have shouldered so much, without the opportunity to have proper breaks due to having to rework Risk Assessments and change policies and procedures (you may not be aware that over the past 2 years D of E guidance has tended to be issued just before School breaks or weekends!) are now beginning to feel the impact of these past two years; Children have not been able to get access to the extra support required as frequently, or as we desire, to catch up, due to the need to re-deploy staff in order to keep the school open; parents are weary of the constant changes and need to adapt...the full impact of these past two years is yet to be fully realised.

With this in mind, Governors would continue to urge us all to be looking out for one another, to support each other, to encourage staff, and to seek to understand some of the pressures faced on a daily basis. At the same time, we are also very encouraged by the fact that we are seeing trips and other extra-curricular activities starting up again – we are so pleased for the children that they will be able to, once again, have some of these experiences.

### **Governor Matters**

During this term, we have met 3 times as an LGB. The Governors have been delighted to be able to recommence Governor monitoring visits, managed carefully, but nonetheless, it is so much easier to fulfil our duties with in-person visits. The visits have been really encouraging too, as we have heard that, despite these past two years, the quality of what is being delivered has remained high. There is always room for improvement, but we believe the School is in a strong position. We spent a bit of time at one of our meetings reviewing the monitoring that is going on – the Governors have been putting in some hard work in between meetings with their visits, training and reading of seemingly endless policies (although with the help of Chris Lindley, we are working on streamlining these, any prospective Governors will be pleased to hear!).

We have also been having some preparatory conversations about Ofsted – a visit that we are anticipating, and which is overdue (due within 3 years of becoming an Academy, which was in March 2017). Making time to talk about what this will entail for us as Governors has been helpful.

We continue to review our School vision – and as part of that are consulting with various stakeholders. Part of that includes you, the Parents, and with this update there is a link to a short survey which will help us get a view from the parents. If you could find a few minutes over the next 2-3 weeks to complete this, we would be most grateful.

We were saddened to receive the resignation of one of our Governors, Pat Taylor. We want to express our thanks to her for her willingness to put herself forward to support us as a Governor. We are not rushing into recruiting, but we continue to keep our eyes and ears open for prospective Governors – who are able to join us as Associate Governors if all our places are full. If you think this is something you would be interested in, I'm happy to talk about this with you. We always invite potential Governors to observe a meeting as part of trying to understand the role. If you would like to know more, please get in touch.

### **Marleigh Primary Academy**

The new Academy is due to open in September 2022. I have the privilege of Chairing the LGB there too and am joined by Alex Smaridge and Steve Dawson from the Fen Ditton LGB. The newly appointed Head starts full time at the start of the summer term. There will be regular meetings with Mr Askew throughout the summer term as we work out together how both Fen Ditton and Marleigh can benefit from one another. There are some really exciting opportunities for both Fen Ditton and Marleigh.

### **Parent Forum**

We had hoped to be able to hold a Parent Forum this term, but there have simply been too many variables that we have been trying to manage. However, it is our aim to hold one in the Summer Term, and we will get a date out early in the new term.

We were invited to contribute to the latest consultation regarding the proposed relocation of the Sewage Works. We expressed our concerns particularly with regards to traffic movements and the impact on parents coming in from Horningsea and the knock-on effect to the road directly outside the school. We also highlighted our concerns regarding the smell and its potential impact on the school. We were assured our views would be represented in the final summary from this consultation process.

Speaking of the road outside the School, can I take this opportunity to remind you that the layby has been designated as a place for drop-offs by those who have a blue badge, or pre-arranged permission from the school office. Please respect the decision taken a few years back. It makes the staff's days so much easier and better when we all pull together.

May I finally wish you all a lovely break over Easter and hope, along with you all, that this fine weather continues. As always, if there is anything I can help with, or you wish to contact me about anything, my details are below.

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Chair of Governors (on behalf of the LGB)

March 2022