



Where children are
at the heart of all
we do each day.



Governors' Newsletter – Spring Term 2021

When we sent our last Newsletter in December, we couldn't have imagined how the spring term would abruptly change with the announcement of the third lockdown on the first day back. The schools had worked hard on a lockdown contingency plan during the autumn term, which was quickly put into place. In such a short period of time, everyone adapted really quickly to Google Classroom.

We have continued to work and support the schools, and for another term we have held our meetings virtually. We had hoped to visit the schools and see the children. Whilst this wasn't possible, we did join some afternoon sessions on Google Classroom and enjoyed seeing the children and even meeting some pets! It was very encouraging to see how children were continuing their learning and interacting with the teaching teams and their classes.

Parent survey results

We would like to thank all parents who took time to complete the survey and for sharing your views. We are committed to improving our schools and the outcomes for every child. As part of this commitment, it is very important that we have your feedback. Your survey responses help us to evaluate what we are doing well, areas we need to improve and to provide staff and governors with valuable information for future planning.

The responses received were very positive, with the majority in the 'strongly agree' or 'agree' categories. Our 2021 results show an improvement compared to the 2020 survey, although due to the pandemic the questions were different. There were many very positive comments that we have shared with the staff.

Please find the survey results on the links below:

Burley:

<https://www.burleyandsopley federation.org.uk/page/?title=Parent+Questionnaire+Results&pid=3857>

Sopley:

<https://www.burleyandsopley federation.org.uk/page/?title=Parent+Questionnaire+Results&pid=3858>

Resource and Finance

In the last Newsletter, we looked at the safeguarding and compliance committee and our duty to ensure the schools meet their statutory responsibility and that the children are safe.

One of our three core functions is overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent. During this term, the budgets from the previous year are reviewed and the new budgets are planned and set. Throughout the year we monitor the financial management of the schools to ensure we safeguard the public money we are responsible for.

How do we do this? We approve and monitor the school's budget and review income and expenditure against the budget throughout the year. We understand how the schools are financed and how the funding and grants should be allocated and spent to ensure the outcomes for all children are improved. We review how resources are helping to achieve the school improvement plans and priorities. We complete and submit the annual Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) to ensure we are managing our finances well and to give the Local Authority assurances that secure financial management is in place. We financially benchmark our schools against a number of other schools within the local area. We have a strategy that looks ahead to the next three to five years and ensures it is aligned with the schools' plans for raising standards. The strategy also looks at new ways of working to strengthen the federation and to ensure that the schools are financially viable in the future.

Governors' action plan

Each term, we have an action plan that includes the key areas we need to focus on, which are a combination of our statutory duties and the school improvement plan priorities. This term we have completed the following actions:

- Carried out health and safety site visits to both schools
- Regularly reviewed the COVID-19 risk assessments
- Held a virtual pupil conference with three classes, focusing on on-line safety
- Worked on financial forecasting, budget revision and three-five year planning for sustainability
- Financial benchmarking
- Completion of the SFVS for submission to the Local Authority
- Meeting with the Local Authority to review support for the improvement of teaching and learning in the coming year
- Completed a full IT review
- Completed annual governor self-evaluation
- Met with other local schools to share best practice, peer reviews and to discuss and develop school improvement
- Reviewed our policies, taking into account COVID-19, to ensure that they address the welfare of all members of the school community
- Reviewed and audited the federation and schools' websites
- Governor monitoring visits and virtual meetings in the following areas:
 - Safeguarding – health and safety visits to school sites, review of online safety
 - Google classroom review

- Lesson observations (online) in a number of different classes
- Virtual pupil conference with three classes, focusing on on-line safety
- SENDCO – reviewed the action plan and the support children with special educational needs receive
- Continued to ensure that the well-being of all staff is recognised through considerate working practices

Thank you

We would like to thank the staff teams who have had to manage another extraordinary term. They adapted and changed the way they worked with professionalism, passion, enthusiasm and commitment. All staff came together with a positive mind-set, adaptability and resilience to work as one team to ensure the children, both at school and at home, continued their learning journey and were supported through this difficult period of uncertainty. Since returning to school, the staff have worked tirelessly to keep the children safe, whilst trying to make school as normal as possible. We would like to **say a huge thank you for all their hard work throughout this term.**

We would like to thank the BPSA and FSS for their valuable support and enthusiasm and for continuing to come up with innovative and creative ways to raise money for the schools.

A **big thank you must go to all parents and carers for** your support again during this term. We appreciate how difficult it has been for you, often balancing your own work, whilst caring and supporting your children with their learning (as well as transforming your homes into classrooms!). Thank you for all your messages of thanks and support to the staff, it has been very welcome and much appreciated. Finally, we would like to thank the children. Their resilience throughout the pandemic has been incredible. Once again, they have coped magnificently with the changes and uncertainty. Their attitude and hard work were inspiring, and we would like to say **thank you and well done for being so amazing.**

Details of the full governing board, areas of responsibility and a register of interests can be found at

<http://www.burleyandsopley federation.org.uk/page/?title=About+Us&pid=46>

As some restrictions have been lifted and the days are getting longer and warmer, we hope that during this term, life will start to return to normal. We are encouraged to see the return of familiar school activities and events this term and look forward to coming back into school and seeing the children.

With our best wishes,
The Governing Board

