

GOVERNORS NEWSLETTER MAY 2022



Dear Families

During this time of celebration and reflection for the Royal Family we would like to reflect on another successful and busy year at Southway. As we start the final term we would like to thank you all for your continued support of your school

Buildings and Premises

Work will shortly begin on the new play area in the small playground at the front of the school. Mr Newbold and his team are always thinking about ways to enhance your children's learning experiences and we are delighted to be able to approve and support new projects around Southway as we know what a huge impact these have on your children. The new clamber stack on the field is a firm favourite with the children, as well as the striking new mural on the front wall.

Staff

We would like to thank the whole staff of the school for their continued dedication and commitment to making Southway the vibrant and forward-thinking school it is. They go above and beyond in so many ways to ensure our children have the best possible experiences.



Governors

We have had a couple of changes in our governing body recently and have been joined by Nikki Donson (Co-opted Governor) and Elinor Wood (Parent Governor).



Nikki is the Assistant Head, Pastoral & Boarding at Burgess Hill Girls. She started her career in the mainstream sector at a school in Nottinghamshire as a music teacher however she has always had a pastoral element to her role. When not at work she is mainly found with Hector the spaniel, CrossFit training or swimming. Nikki is a real asset to our governing body, with her strong educational background and passion for wellbeing.

Elinor is a fundraising professional with experience across the arts and education. Highlights include: organising a major donor dinner at Buckingham Palace, securing funding for a theatre project tackling knife crime, and achieving a significant Heritage Lottery grant for an archive and oral history project. The life of a fundraiser is nothing if not varied! After three years at Trinity School in Croydon Elinor joined Ardingly's Alumni & Development Office in 2019. We are delighted to have Elinor with us, she has an eye for strategy and boundless enthusiasm.





Curriculum and Activities

The past term has been a big term for Year 6, with SATS being the main focus for them. One of our roles as governors is to help invigilate the tests each year. We were extremely impressed with how calm the children were and how expertly guided they were through the whole process. The West Sussex Area Advisor, Victoria Ludlow, did a spot-check to ensure that the processes and procedures were being adhered to. She was equally impressed by how well our children and staff coped and asked to have a tour of our school. The feedback we received from her was highly complimentary.

There have been many school trips undertaken over the past few weeks. One of the highlights was the recent Young Voices event at the O2, where Southway even had a shout-out from the conductor – in front of thousands of other children!

Another one of our roles is to monitor the teaching and learning at our school – from observing lessons to looking at your children's work and talking to them about what they are learning. We also have regular meetings with staff members to talk through how the core and foundation curriculum is being delivered. We recently joined Pankhurst class on their visit to Burgess Hill Library and discussed their book choices and love of reading with them. It was a delight to see how enthusiastic they were and how engaged they were with their surroundings.



We keep a close eye on the activities that your children do both in person and via our website and Twitter feed. It never ceases to impress us with how much learning is done outside of the formal classroom – from growing plants in our market garden, observing nature from our bird hide and decking, baking cakes for the Jubilee picnic and keeping active on our many outdoor spaces. The life of a Southway child is certainly varied!

Support and Guidance

We have put our focus this year on reviewing the strategic direction of our school and carried out surveys with our children, staff and all of you families.

Thank you very much for completing the parent and carer questionnaire and for your comments and responses about our school. We had 109 responses, which shows a high level of engagement. We have discussed and shared the information gathered at our governor's meeting and with staff so that we can make our school an even better place to be for our families. We are delighted to report that we have had overwhelmingly positive feedback from you. Your suggestions and comments are valued and are important for us to consider as we go forward in our journey as a school. 94% of you feel that we make sure that our pupils are well behaved and that your child does well at our school, 93.5% of you feel that there is a good range of subjects available to your child and 93% of you told us that your child is happy at Southway.

One parent said “I cannot praise the school highly enough. It has a wonderful ethos and provides an excellent curriculum, which isn’t solely focused on the core subjects. We very much appreciate all of the staff and everything they do to provide lots of exciting learning opportunities in and out of the classroom.”



We were also closely involved in the recent re-evaluation and launch of our School Values. Every time we go into school we are pleased to see how well our children and staff embody the values and that they are the core of what drives Southway. Seeing how proud the children are when they receive recognition for what they have achieved or how well they have behaved is heart-warming. The Golden Awards assemblies are due to re-start very soon, giving public praise to all the amazing work your children are doing.

We are very excited that the swimming pool is about to come back into use, after being out of action since the first lockdown in 2020. All we need now is for the weather to behave itself then your children can benefit from our fantastic pool! We are also looking forward to attending Sports Day next month and cheering on your children.

One of the biggest responsibilities that we have as governors is to scrutinise and approve our annual budget. Investing in our school is vital to ensure a safe environment for our pupils and staff, excellent resources, high levels of staffing and the ability to authorise money to be used for projects around the premises. Our School Business Manager, Mrs Carter, does an outstanding job in managing our finances, alongside Mr Newbold – we are grateful for the huge amount of work that she does in keeping our budget healthy, enabling the above to happen.

Our HSA (Southway PTA) is in the process of restarting after a break, due to the pandemic. Please can you let the school know if you are interested in joining the committee or helping out at events. Historically, the HSA has put on fantastic events - from school fairs, discos and parties to cake and ice cream sales. The money raised has gone towards projects around the school and really does benefit your children. It would be brilliant if lots of you could get involved to get the school community active again, it really does make a difference.

Thank you again for your continued support of our school. We know that it is greatly appreciated by all the staff and children. We would also like to thank Mr Newbold and all the team at Southway for the amazing work that they do with our children, we are so lucky to have such hardworking and dedicated staff and truly value everything that they do to deliver an outstanding education to our children.

Stay safe and be kind,

Helen Lewis

Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Governing Body

