



# UPLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Governors' Newsletter - November

### Welcome to Upland

*A very warm welcome to our new children and parents who we hope are now settled and enjoying Upland. Key information about the governing board can be found on the school's website but if you do have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us via the school office or catch up with us at the many school events that we attend.*

### On the look out for new governors

*Next year we will need to recruit at least 2 new governors to fill co-opted governor roles. These are not usually filled by parents of children currently at Upland, but should you know of anyone who may be interested, do please ask them to contact us. We are particularly interested in individuals who have senior management experience and financial skills.*

### PA Events

*The PA do a tremendous job at raising money to buy those items that really do help us to provide an outstanding educational experience for your children. Please do all you can to support the PA at the many events they organise, especially in the current climate when school budgets are uncertain.*

### Chair of Governor's Message

This is my first term as chair of governors and, although the role is incredibly busy, I am enjoying it immensely. The Duties started before the school term began when I met with some of my fellow governors to discuss our key priorities for this year, building on the outcomes of our July governor day.

As most of you know, the Upland governing board has been recognised by both Ofsted and the National Governors' Association to be outstanding and that is a label we are all very proud of and work hard to maintain. We managed to secure this rating through hard work and dedication and the un-wavering guidance of our then chair Liz Dawes. I would like to publicly thank Liz Dawes for everything she has done and continues to do for Upland and for remaining on our board to help ease me in to the role of chair.

This newsletter tells you a little bit about what we've been up to so far this term.

Best wishes

Emma Johnson

### Sharing best practice across the borough

Governors actively encourage our staff to work closely with other primary schools across the borough. This enables us to share best practice and to compare children's levels to ensure our assessment of achievement and progress is fair and accurate. Some of our senior staff also mentor less experienced colleagues - this also develops Upland's leaders.

Similarly the governing board actively engages with other governors to seek advice, solve problems and share ideas.

## ***Financial contributions***

One of the governing board's key responsibilities is managing the budget. As you can probably appreciate from your own household finances, the cost of providing an outstanding education for your children continues to increase, whilst income is limited. So that we can provide educationally inspiring experiences, such as trips, outdoor activities and residential journeys, we do rely on contributions from parents and carers. Whilst these contributions are voluntary, please do all you can to ensure these trips and activities can go ahead. Should you have any difficulty in paying, please do speak to Mrs Sengupta.

## ***National Association of Governors (NGA)***

An article, written by us, appeared in this month's NGA magazine telling the story of Upland's journey from "requires improvement" to "good" (and beyond!). We have also played a key role in producing guidance for schools on engaging with parents and setting up a parent forum following the success of the Upland Parent Partnership.

## ***Upland Board of Governors—the year so far***

Many governors have attended training provided by the borough to ensure we maintain a good skill level and that we understand current legislation, Department of Education requirements and Ofsted areas of focus.

Our Resources committee has met to monitor the budget. Many schools are running a deficit in-year budget (they are spending more than they receive) but, due to our stringent management, Upland's budget runs with a workable surplus—not too much, because we want the children to benefit from the money we are given; but large enough to help us cope with any unforeseen emergencies or to take advantage of unplanned opportunities.

When the Curriculum committee met it reviewed revised Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies. These will be put to the full governing board for approval in early December. It also reviewed the new data being used to assess the children's progress as well as looking more closely at the results for our pupil premium children and those with special educational needs.

Governors attended a presentation from the school's Progress Advisor—an independently contracted expert—focussed on our 2014/15 results and what we can learn from them. Our results, as you know, for Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 were very impressive. But, together with the school leaders, we have identified several areas where there is still room for improvement. These will be the focus for the school's development plan for this year.

A panel of governors completed the head teacher's annual appraisal—reviewing last year's performance and setting key challenging and measurable performance objectives for this year.

Every governor has a responsibility linked to a school leader. Visits take place termly where governors find out more about progress in that particular area, to ask challenging questions to ensure key objectives are being met and to look at children's books and talk to the children to ensure what we are told is actually happening in practice and making a positive difference to the children. This year we plan to publish some of our visit reports on the school's website so you can see what we've been focussing on.