

Governors' Report to Parents Summer 2019



Dear Parents,

It's been another busy year at the Federation of Kenilworth Nursery School and Whitnash Nursery School and I hope staff, parents and children have a lovely time over the summer holidays!

The schools have been federated for 4 terms now and the partnership between the schools continues to flourish with staff benefitting from joint training, peer to peer support and sharing best practice, whilst retaining the unique identity of each school.



Governors are determined that both nursery schools continue to provide Ofsted-rated Outstanding quality education and build further on the already high standard of professionalism and high quality teaching.

What sets the nursery schools apart is the quality of the highly skilled staff who live and breathe the schools' ethos of

Recognising and Valuing the Uniqueness of Every Child.

This means that adults work alongside the child, understanding what kind of encouragement each child needs in order to develop, sensitively encouraging, knowing when to intervene and when to step back and let the children explore and discover for themselves. Their learning is most powerful when the children share their ideas with each other and spark off each others' curiosity.

Staff are highly attuned to facilitating ways for children to interact creatively with each other.

Every time I visit the nursery school I am impressed to see groups of happy, calm children quietly engaged in an activity together, interacting well with each other and with the adults working alongside them, but also working independently too.

We are facing challenging times for government funding of Local Authority Nursery Schools. Rachel Gillett, the Executive Headteacher, is very active in collaborating with local and central government raising awareness of the **importance of high-quality Early Years education**. In April I attended an All-Party Parliamentary Group meeting in Westminster with Rachel, where our local MP Matt Western signed a pledge to try to secure long term future funding for Nursery Schools. **Many thanks** to all of you who have supported the schools by signing petitions and promoting the schools locally.

The financial situation would be eased somewhat if all the places were always filled. If you and your child have had a positive experience of the nursery school, please spread the word and tell your friends and neighbours. **There are still some places available for September 2019!**

Childrens' Achievements and Progress



Childrens' communication and language has been a priority for the schools this year. The children have made high attainment and rapid progress, especially at Whitnash where many children have English as an additional language.

Every term staff carefully assess the children over the 17 different aspects of learning to tailor their next steps of development. In addition, this year, staff have written a 'pen portrait' description of each child's interests and needs to give a more holistic view.

Reception teachers say how much they value this rich information about a child to help them settle smoothly into their reception class. They wish they got the same quality information for all their new children from other pre-school settings.

"Everything is in place, you do a lot of things that keep children's minds active and you keep them happy. My child has come on in leaps and bounds and is ready for school"

Comment from a parent

Safe, Secure Children

The safety and well-being of your children is the schools' top priority and governors regularly monitor that the staff team is fulfilling its duty to safeguard children and stay up to date with training including staying safe online. We recognise that children need to feel safe and listened to, to be ready and open to learn.

As part of children's social and emotional development, staff help the children recognise their emotions and express their feelings in various ways. This year, encouraging children to talk to a soft toy helped some children open up. Many find it helpful to point to pictures of teddy bears showing different emotions to express how they feel.

Many children who may be reserved indoors, find they are more confident and can express themselves more freely outdoors. Forest School remains very popular with children at Kenilworth who relish the experience of cooking outdoors on an open fire or climbing trees - doing adventurous things safely.



Extension of Nurture Nursery Hours

In recognition that many parents need a longer session length to fit in with their work or study, the hours of nurture nursery at Kenilworth have been extended to 9 to 11:30 with the option of staying to lunch club, in line with main nursery. Unfortunately this has only been possible to offer at Kenilworth, not Whitnash

Continual Staff Development is important for maintaining and building on the high standard of teaching and keeping the children's learning fresh and stimulating.

In the staff training days at Kenilworth and Whitnash this term, the whole staff team and 2 governors worked together to embed our shared ethos and explore our understanding of what a perfect school would look like, with staff who have recently trained at Reggio Emilia, sharing their insights and experience.

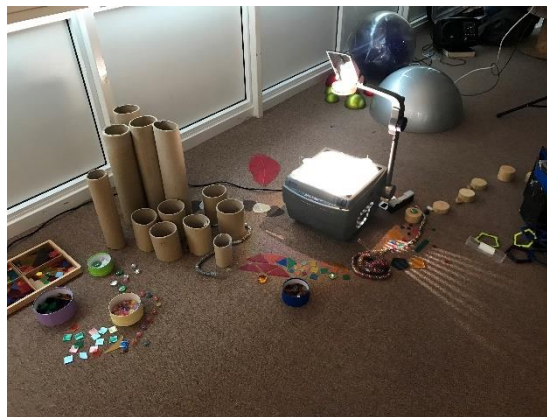
We looked at the importance of enriching our work by listening to other peoples' perspectives, which applies to both children and adults working in groups.

“Small people need big people with big minds to work beside them”

And the need for children to be encouraged to explore and given time and freedom to ask questions and find answers.



The training inspired a re-imagined classroom space at Whitnash



...and more open-ended materials to stimulate children's exploration and curiosity.



Teaching School - Sharing Best Practice



The nursery schools operate a Teaching School, which is a status awarded to top rate schools and headteachers who have a strong track record in providing high quality school-to-school support to spread best practice.

This year over 1200 Early Years practitioners attended the Teaching School's training courses, while our nursery schools hosted 6 'good practice' visits where practitioners come to see our classroom environments and talk to staff. Meanwhile, our staff benefit from the Teaching School by attending training courses presented by national names in Early Years education such as Ben Kingston-Hughes and Anna Ephgrave.

The Teaching School also runs 'Aspiration Networks' where groups of practitioners from a local area meet to receive training, share their teaching experiences and give each other peer-to-peer support.



"We just love this Nursery, we have sent both of our children here. it is still the same in its offer because it thinks about children and knows how to get it right for them"

A parent's comment

The **Governing Board** is made up of staff, parents and members of the community who have a commitment to education. The governors' role is to monitor the schools, their finances and oversee their strategic direction. If you are interested in becoming a governor, particularly if you have a background in human resources, law or finance, please contact Rachel Gillett.

Your governors are:

Rachel Gillett	Executive Headteacher
Alison Paveley	LA governor, Chair of governors
Christy Aylott-Mayor	Co-opted governor
Jean Lockley	Co-opted governor
Tanya Speirs	Co-opted governor
Lisa Richards	Co-opted governor
Amy Gullis	Staff governor
Liz McCarthy	Parent governor
Jonathan White	Parent governor
Laura McCarthy	Parent governor
Danielle Jennings	Parent governor
Leesa Scholes	Co-opted governor

Thank you to all the staff for their dedicated hard work and commitment to the children and the schools.

Finally, if your child is moving on to Reception in September, I wish them all the best for their future learning.

Best wishes,

Alison Paveley, Chair of Governors

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