

Governors Annual Report 2021

We would like to begin this year's report by once again recognising and applauding all the efforts that parents, carers, families, school staff and especially pupils have made in adapting to this year's covid related challenges and multiple disruptions. I think all of us would agree that seeing children back in school, and so enthusiastic, gave everyone a lift. As ever, it seems they have taken a lead in meeting the restrictions head on, and dealing with the impacts with a collective, communal, supportive spirit that is truly fantastic, and that embodies the values and ethos of Littledean C of E School. They show the courageous advocacy that the school aspires pupils to develop, and they should be very proud of themselves.

Whilst most of the school's normal activities could not go ahead, a lot has happened in school this year:

- Of course we welcomed a new group of children into reception, and we will be saying *au revoir* to the year 6 leavers: we wish them all the best for next year, and have no doubt they will be a positive influence in their new schools
- Laura May continued to do sterling work with the school Twitter account: it is great for the whole school community to be able to recognise the achievements of children using this platform
- Suzanne Webb (Family Support Worker and Mental Health Lead) provided much needed help to pupils and families, working with children outside in all weathers using a gazebo: this exposure to the natural world opened up new insights and opportunities. Despite children's resilience, covid has without doubt had an impact on them, and this was a special focus for the school on re-opening. Aside from Suzanne's work, empathetic *emotion coaching*, (using moments of heightened emotion and resulting behaviour to guide and teach the child about more effective responses), is now firmly embedded across all areas of teaching and pupil support. This helps with pupil learning and confidence, and develops their emotional resilience. In addition, Debbie Grey and Sam Worgan have been working towards an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) qualification as part of a partnership managed by the West Gloucestershire Schools Partnership, (<https://wgsp.education/>). This will allow the school to offer tiered support to pupils in future, with Debbie and Sam supporting Suzanne by working with small groups of children
- Class teachers have shown exemplary dedication throughout the year: posting learning materials online, (which continues to be a priority in case pupils have to isolate), phoning parents and children, running Zoom and Teams calls, and especially '*marking*' (in the evenings and at weekends) submitted homework. I expect we all now have a much better appreciation of all they do for our children, and this was recognised with a Twinkl award in recognition of all of the hard work by the school staff over the last year.

- The senior leadership team, (SLT), in school, (Hayley McGoldrick, Laura May and Wendy Worgan), in consultation with governors, provided a calm, sensible and consistent approach to meeting all covid requirements at all times, and staff delivered, mostly unsung and unseen. This was no mean feat, conducted in addition to the ongoing school educational and financial management. Their overall professionalism is recognised within the county, with their skills utilised to support other schools when needed. As governors it was pleasing to see increased use of online surveys and questionnaires for consultations with parents and pupils, as the school is always open to new ideas and feedback to improve performance. The school received covid catch up funding from Government, and this was aimed holistically at social, learning and development gaps identified by baseline assessment of children on their physical return to school. Though some changes in school that resulted from covid proved successful in enhancing learning behaviour, (for example staggered start times and classroom layout), we all look forward to more normality
- Many of us have moved to online working, and the school has embraced the change, with use of TEAMS and Zoom for collective worship proving especially useful. Great credit must go to Richard Prescott and Reverend Mike Barnsley for their significant contributions to this
- The Friends group continued to work hard to raise additional funds for the school. We would like to thank anyone and everyone who contributed financial and in kind support to the school over the year. Special thanks to Sophie Greenhalgh-Cook, Matt Wasley-Wood and the Littledean Community Centre team for organising the Easter Egg hunt that raised funds for school.
- The school council have been active, especially impressive being a fundraising video they created which resulted in a donation of £1,000 from Teresa Cross, (our local authority adviser), as a contribution to new iPads for the school. With additional funds provided by the Friends committee, these have now been purchased and are seeing a lot of use in school. The School Council also wrote to our Local Authority Advisor to ask for a donation towards the extension of the Trim Trail –
- this resulted in an additional contribution of £1,000. The council is one of the best examples of how the school endeavours to empower the children and help them develop the life skills they will need in future

Other activities this year included: Donated harvest gifts being used to support the Forest Food Bank; Children making cauliflower cards and gifts, and participating in the Shoebox and Poppy appeals, Children in Need, and for some, the Rock steady online concert. Sport and physical exercise has been brilliant this year, with Mr English from Prostars achieving near legendary status in school. The Tokyo Olympic themed Sports Day activities seemed particularly enjoyable for children, (pupil feedback was very good and they are bubbling over with ideas for next year). We look forward to working with Prostars next year and seeing further developments to encourage an active lifestyle.

As Governors we are dedicated to supporting the school in all that it does, whilst providing the 'external' scrutiny that is appropriate to the delivery of our responsibilities. We continue to develop as a team, and this year we have evaluated our overall skillset; undergone external review from Gloucestershire County Council; and undertaken collective training around the curriculum and the new Ofsted inspection framework, (in addition to individual courses). This development will continue apace as we seek, with the SLT, staff and parents, the most efficient and effective mechanisms to help the school, (and it's resilience), and especially the pupils. We also completed our Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools, (SIAMS), self-evaluation in preparation for our next review, and as always are conscious of a pending Ofsted inspection. All things considered, attendance this year was generally satisfactory, but the school have developed an attendance plan, especially working alongside, and helping, those who can struggle with this.

Sadly, we say / said goodbye to Emma Nice, (Local Authority governor), and Mike Dunton, (parent governor), this year; both have been dedicated governors, and we will miss Mike's calm, common sense approach, and Emma's passion and determined advocacy for all children. Linda Blagg our Foundation governor also came to the end of her term, and we thank her for her warm and considered help, especially in helping refresh our vision last year. However we now also welcome Andrew Greenhalgh-Cook (parent governor), and Pauline Rea-Dickins (Foundation governor), to the team: both have already shown that they will bring energy and ability to our work.

Pre-school finances have been challenging for several years, and we took the decision to close Little Acorns for the coming year: we have agonised long and hard over this, but sadly demand for next year was just far too low to guarantee financial stability. This perhaps reflects covid related changes for parents, and also wider issues in early years support for both parents and children in our society. If a need for pre-school does develop in future, then we will revisit this year's decision. We thank Sachelle Lawrence and Rimmini Hopkins for their hard work and wish Sachelle well for the future, (Rimmini will be staying in school as a Teaching Assistant). Wendy Worgan, (School Business Manager), continues to work wonders in the office, helping us maintain and develop the school infrastructure and its grounds, (note especially new fencing and security measures this year); balancing the books; and dealing with an endless, never ending list of jobs. She also took on Liz Millars administrative duties on top of her main work this year – thank you to Liz for her efforts in the office over the years, and enormous thanks again Wendy.

Lastly, some really treasured members of staff will be moving on this year, all of whom have made a lifetime impression on the pupils they have mentored at Littledean: Lindsey Haile will be moving closer to home to take on the role of Assistant Head Teacher, Sharon Foster has recently got married and is enjoying some well-deserved family time and Alison Anderson will be working in her partner's business and hopefully having some time to follow other interests. What can one say except that we will all miss you enormously, wish you every success in future, and thank you for your dedication to our children over many years. Replacement staff will be in place for the next academic year and we are lucky to have such a strong existing team ready and able to take on new responsibilities and opportunities. We will be welcoming Alice Pearson back from maternity leave, (congratulations to her and Chris for the birth of their son Milo); a new class teacher in Holly Berries, (Miss Aldred) as well as a new teacher to help support with maths teaching in the juniors (Mrs Walters): this will be in addition to class teachers and TA's.

As always, as governors, we are honoured to be involved with Littledean C of E school. It is uplifting to see the children enjoying their learning, helping one another, and living respectfully together. We salute each and everybody for the support you give to the school. To all the staff for their tireless energy and commitment to ensuring the school environment is nurturing, safe and inspiring for our children. To Mrs McGoldrick who works hard all year to support the staff and run the school so effectively and efficiently. To you the parents, carers, and relatives for continuing to support your children. But most of all to the children, who show us time and again what well rounded ambassadors they are for the Littledean school community.

As governors, we will continue to do our best to support the school in all that it does, and we pay tribute to everyone who contributes. We look forward to seeing continued success for, and from, the children.

Reverend Mike Barnsley	(Chair of governors)
Emma Nice	(Local Authority governor)
Kelly Hall	(Parent governor)
Andrew Greenhalgh-Cook	(Parent governor)
Jim Swanson	(Parent governor)
Richard Prescott	(Associate governor)
Pauline Rea-Dickins	(Foundation governor)
Jenny Hughes	(Co-opted governor)