



# St John's Green Primary School

**Learn to Live, Live to Learn**

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## Chair of Governors Report – 2014/15

Dear Parents,

I had intended to prepare this report earlier but for a number of reasons this hasn't been possible. So let me apologise if this is later than it should be.

### One School – Two sites

Well we successfully moved into the new building and though there were a number of teething problems, including the Telecommunications, just about everything has been sorted out thanks to the hard work of the Head and staff. Whilst the new site is light and airy the existing site is steeped in history and has its discrete charm, I feel that we have been able to unite the two locations and spread the school ethos and atmosphere from the Town site to the whole school.

The Head, supported by the Governors, will continue to ensure the presence and availability of the senior managers at the school at both sites during the start and end of school. This is designed to enable parents and carers to have access to the Head, Deputy etc. on an informal basis and is an important part of our on-going engagement with the pupils and their families.

The development of the outdoor area for the 90 Foundation children has been a major priority and continues to be an area of focus. The new all-weather surface was installed over the summer, a triple water way is being installed in November, we have created a bespoke outdoor writing area and the governors have just agreed new playground markings. Personally, I especially enjoy the digging area and mud kitchen. The governors have also promoted the training of school staff to be Forest School leaders, which they are currently completing. When our staff are qualified it will mean more trips to the woods for not only our Foundation Children, but other groups and classes across the school too.

The implementation of the Free School Meals initiative for Key Stage 1 has also been an area which the governors have been closely monitoring and this was also coupled with the government changes to the ranges and types of food to be served each week to achieve a more balanced diet for the children. I have eaten at both sites during the year and have enjoyed the experience. The catering staff have had to deal with both significant growth and menu changes with also the use of the new kitchen. We decided that cooking needed to be done on both sites and this has been shown to be a great success both from a quality and cost viewpoint.

As part of the school expansion the Head, staff and Governors have had to adjust their original plans to some extent. The logistics of the two sites hasn't created any real problems but the staff arrangements and management of the school has needed adjustment. We needed to increase the Leadership Team by the appointment of a permanent Assistant Head whose primary responsibility is with the Abbey site and "early years" children. As the school expands we have decided to appoint one of the class teachers for each year as a "Year Group Leader". This is to ensure close co-ordination of the curriculum across each year as well as mutual support for the teaching and LSA resources in that year. There have also been some changes in the deployment and activity of the LSAs.

We have also decided that the Financial and Personnel functions need to be close to the primary location of the Head and these have been moved to the Abbey site. In order to achieve minimum coverage at the Town site we have needed to appoint an additional person for the school office.

### What have the children achieved?

This is the reason we have a school. So what have they achieved?

We were concerned about the achievement of year 5 in 2013/14 and so to boost their education we were able to use an additional teacher and split the class into two 15 pupil units.

The Key Stage 2 results for the year have shown that this ensured significant progress for the children who left in the summer. We are considering the possibility of doing this again, for at least part of the school year but need to look at the financial implications in the light of the additional costs.

St John's Green Abbey Fields Site (Years F, 1, 5, 6)  
5 Circular Road East  
Colchester  
CO2 7SZ

St John's Green Town Site (Years 2, 3, 4)  
St John's Green  
Colchester  
CO2 7HE

We raised the targets last year above those required to fulfil National performance results. This has had a mixed success with some years and some pupils reaching these extended standards. In almost all cases the children are achieving above the National Average and improving year on year.

### **The coming year and beyond**

We will now be taking in 90 children each year and the school will need at some point in the future to increase the number of classrooms to accommodate a final school roll of up to 630 pupils. Plans for this extension are being discussed with Essex County. This work will not be necessary for at least a couple of years.

At the same time we will need to expand the resources, including staff, each year to meet the increase in the number of pupils. Whilst the school has extra provision because of the difficulty of managing two sites, additional costs are expected to limit resources. Whilst the government has indicated that monies per pupil will remain as they are, there are a number of unavoidable costs which will put pressure on finances and staff resources. These increased costs include, increases in National Insurance Contributions paid by the school as well as additional contributions to the Teachers' Pension Fund. Some of these costs are being met by the staff but others will fall upon the school's funds.

There will also be changes to the pupil assessment methodology with the so called "abandonment of levels". So the expectation that pupils in year 6 will reach Level 4 or above at the end of the year will disappear. Instead pupils will be expected to be "year 7 ready". A similar approach will apply to each year group. However, pupils will be assessed on the basis of the following four concepts for each subject elements linked to the National Curriculum. These are defined as:

### **Remembering – Understanding - Applying - Mastery**

This latter class is further defined as Developing, Embedding, Mastery.

It will be interesting to see how the new scheme works. For Governors who are now used to the current Levels and point scoring system it will be a new experience. At a recent presentation I attended the feeling was that the new scheme would be easier for parents/carers to understand.

At their September 2015 meeting the Governors adopted the following Priorities for 2015/16

1. 80% of children to reach the Early Learning Goals (ELG) in reading, writing and number.
2. Pupil Premium children to close the gap by 5% for all year groups in each of reading, writing and maths.
3. Mastery level to increase by 20% in each of reading, writing and maths in each year group.
4. Gap to be closed between boys/girls in all year groups in each of reading, writing, maths by 5%.
5. Governors to develop their understanding of assessment without levels to enable them to hold the school to account through data analysis and questioning.

The Governors also decided to increase the attendance target to 96.9% having achieved 96.7% last year.

It would also seem that for the present the free school meals provision will remain.

### **And finally**

This isn't one of the little anecdotes that usually ends the Weekly School Newsletter. I would just like to personally thank the staff, children and parents for all their efforts during the past school year. My most vivid memory is of the catering staff a couple of days before the new building opened wrestling with the new kitchen equipment for which the suppliers had failed to provide any operating instructions.

Well done everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Short  
Chair of Governing Body

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