



12th September 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

On behalf of the Swing Gate School's Governing Body, we would like to welcome pupils, parents and carers to our school. We hope that everyone is returning raring to go and full of energy, for what will no doubt be another packed term - and we extend a special welcome to the new pupils and staff who are joining our school family for the first time.

Last year was another highly successful year for Swing Gate School and also one of major change. We said goodbye to Mrs Dunmur and welcomed in Mrs Gallagher as our new Headteacher. We also strengthened the Senior Leadership Team by creating a new role of Deputy Headteacher and appointed Mrs Dean to the post.

Governors will continue to work with the Senior Leadership Team to continue to build on the achievements. It is our priority to support teachers in their continual efforts to reach new goals, drive improvements forward and make a positive contribution to your children's education.

Our work is often carried out behind the scenes, so we thought a short summary of, who we are and what we have been doing, would give you an insight.

Who are the Swing Gate Governors and what do we do?

Our Governing Body is made up of 11 people who come from our local community, parents and staff. We meet as a full group once a month and we also have a separate Pay and Performance committees that meets at key points during the academic year. In addition, there are further stand-alone meetings to look at specific areas in more depth. The members of the Governing Body do not get paid for any of the time and effort they put in and most of the meetings are held in the evening or at weekends as the majority are in full time work. The Department for Education asks us to be responsible for the strategic direction of Swing Gate. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook> Our main functions are to:

- set the aims and objectives for the school;
- set the policies and targets for achieving these aims and objectives;
- monitor and evaluate the progress the school makes towards these;
- be a source of challenge and support to the Headteacher.

How do we set our strategic objectives?

At the beginning of each academic year we agree a school improvement plan with the Headteacher which sets the key objectives to work towards. Priorities include:

- developing effective leadership at all levels to build a culture of continuous improvement;
- improving further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment;
- developing a deeper knowledge and understanding of personal safety and well-being in pupils;
- raising the standards of pupil achievement further.

Great progress has already been made in each of these areas - and we keep building on these each academic year.

How do we hold the school to account?

We monitor what's going on at school in different ways. These include:

- regular reports from the Headteacher at Governing Body meetings;
- visiting the school during the day. We have a termly drop-in week where Governors join in lessons to see for ourselves how the school operates and get direct feedback from staff and pupils.
- Core subject Link Governors also sit down with staff subject leaders to discuss developments in Maths, English, Science, Computing and RE and also to discuss special educational needs and disabilities;
- participating in feedback sessions from our Hertfordshire Improvement Partner from Herts for Learning;
- scrutinising school performance data, and by attending events such as school plays, sports days, and parent consultations to gain a wider perspective on school life.

You can read more on the school website, such as how funding for sports provision and the pupil premium grant (additional funding from the Government to support vulnerable pupils) for 2015/16 was used and its impact.

Whilst academic success is always important, we believe as Governors that the wider aspects of school life are just as important. So we will continue emphasising the importance of providing a broad and balanced curriculum that ensures outstanding learning opportunities for all pupils - as well as extracurricular activities such as music, drama, and school trips.

On that note, we should also say a big thank you to the Friends of Swing Gate School who do such a fantastic job and help to provide essential resources that could not be provided through the school budget.

If you've been reading this and like the sound of taking on a role yourself that makes a difference to our school, why not think about becoming a parent governor? We have a vacancy on our team and would really welcome your input. If you want to know more then please feel free to contact me chairofgovs@swinggate.herts.sch.uk or any of the Governors.

Yours sincerely



Mr Martin Hyland
Chair of Governors