



YORKE MEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNOR NEWSLETTER

Spring Term 2016

Letter from the Chair of Governors

Dear Parents, Carers and Staff of Yorke Mead,

Parent Questionnaire

Governors were delighted with the response to our parent questionnaire. We received completed forms from 165 families which was fantastic. Detailed analysis of the responses is proving very useful. The questionnaire is a combination of standard questions that we ask every time we run the survey and questions about current developments. We were very pleased to see that the responses to the standard questions show high and improving levels of satisfaction. Parents confirm our view as governors that Yorke Mead provides high quality education and continues to improve. Governors were particularly grateful for the many thoughtful reflections on the work of the school. These are providing excellent stimulus to governor discussions. Following up the survey will continue to be a major item on our agendas for the rest of the academic year.

Outdoor play and outdoor learning

As the governing body of Yorke Mead we take the task of setting strategic priorities very seriously. One of our priorities is the development of outdoor play and outdoor learning. While a great deal of work remains to be done on this I hope that you will all agree that the impact is already considerable with the much improved play areas for all children. I am particularly pleased to see the improvements in the outdoor provision for early years. On a recent visit I was observing a group of children having a brilliant time in the 'Mud Kitchen', this seemed to exemplify the value of learning through outdoor play. Many thanks to all the staff and children for the work that has gone into this project. Part of the project is the 'Forest Schools' initiative and we look forward to seeing how this develops over the next couple of years.

School finances

Another key task for governors is ensuring that our finances are managed well. To do this we have a Resources Committee which meets every half-term. This committee works in partnership with school leaders to set a budget each year and then to monitor spending through monthly returns. This budget is set in line with school improvement priorities. One way in which this committee strives to ensure value for money is through bench-marking, using information provided by the local authority to compare how much Yorke Mead spends under the different budget headings to the spending of other schools.

Staffing structure

As the school continues to expand with more children, more families and more staff, governors have needed to keep a close eye on the staffing structure and to work with Ms Pollard to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose. A recent working party of staff and governors reviewed the staffing of the school office. This has resulted in a number of important decisions including a new part-time colleague working in the school office at busy times of day and an extension of the role of our Business Manager, Mrs Gavin.

Governor training

At Yorke Mead we are fortunate in having a highly expert set of governors who bring a wide range of knowledge and skills to their work. But we are not complacent about this. All governors attend external training courses related to their work on the governing body and we have regular training events for the whole governing body led by external trainers. Our next scheduled training event is on e-safety an ever growing cause for concern in schools. Our prioritising of this area exemplifies our strong commitment as governors to ensuring the safety of the children. The children's safety is a standing item on every governing body agenda.

External confirmation

To ensure that we as governors can be confident about our view of the quality of work of the school we seek expert external opinions and advice. As part of this we pay for regular visits from a senior adviser from Hertfordshire. This adviser visits classrooms, looks at children's work, talks with children and staff, and analyses performance data. In a recent report this adviser confirmed our view that Yorke Mead provides high quality education and that the school continues to improve. Governors congratulate everyone concerned with the school for this external recognition.

I hope that you find this letter informative and helpful. I wish to end by thanking everyone in the school community for working to make Yorke Mead a wonderful place: the parents, the staff and volunteers, governors, and of course the children themselves.

Yours faithfully,

Will Connolly
Chair of Governors

You can email us at: governors@yorkemead.herts.sch.uk
Or leave a message at the school office and we will contact you.

