



Shepherds Down School

Achievement, Fulfilment, Enjoyment

Spring/Summer 2020 Governors Update

As Governors of Shepherds Down School we want to take this opportunity, during what is a very strange time in our history, to assure you that we are here in the background supporting Debby and her team at Shepherds Down.

As you know, we have an amazing school and I'm sure you will all join us thanking each and every member of staff for their support in recent months - many of which have definitely gone way over and above any expectations captured within their job descriptions to give individual support to each child and family that has needed it.

The coming months will continue to be challenging with ever changing rules and guidance from our government, but Shepherds Down will remain constant in offering the best support to ensure that our children and their families are getting the support that they need.

We have been revisiting our strategy to make sure that we are incorporating any new challenges or issues that we feel we should be addressing. A reminder of our School Strategy is here:

1. For the school to be comparable to local mainstream primary schools in appearance and atmosphere for the benefit of children that attend Shepherds Down, their siblings and families, keeping the premises maintained to a high professional standard, providing a welcoming site where pupils are happy and want to learn, including:
 - Ensuring Safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do
 - Valuing the state of the school, its look and feel
 - Sustaining a strong presence and image of the school in the community
2. To ensure that there is an established, consistent method of measuring attainment, success and achievement for all pupils and to ensure a strong system of evaluating the effectiveness of our teaching. It is imperative that pupils reach the highest levels of achievement and personal development possible with a highly engaging curriculum, focusing on the whole child.
3. To make Shepherds Down School a workplace where staff are fulfilled and want to work, ensuring that we maintain safe staffing levels with a good balance of skills. The motivation of our staff is a high priority.
4. To ensure robust monitoring of the Budget, and make the most effective use of the budget provision and all funding sources available to the school for the benefit of all the children.
5. To offer a range of support and effective communication to parents to help provide a clear pathway to external support, (e.g. access to social services, occupational health, SHIP, CAHMS etc.).

Before COVID-19

Before we hit lock-down in March we were working on a number of things as a Governing body, here are a few of the highlights

January and February

- A school visit with Senior Leadership Team - a really good visit giving us insight into how they work together leading our school
- We started to prepare for a possible Ofsted inspection - we now understand that this is likely to be postponed until 2021, but we must still ensure our school is ready!
- We've been looking at the curriculum to get an understanding of how this works for our school and more importantly as governors how we can monitor the effectiveness
- As always we are always reviewing our school finances - funding for schools is squeezed more and more each year and its a tough job to ensure we can afford to keep the school running the way we all like it
- We've been focussing on point 3 of the Strategic plan to ensure that our staff well-being is a priority, and now more than ever with the additional strain that they are working under we need to ensure they are supported and feel protected
- We were also looking at our exciting New Build, which does also look like it will be impacted by the virus but this is only a delay - plans will continue once safe to do so
- We also welcomed a new Governor to our team, Pam Coen. Pam joins us as a Community Governor and has a background in the NHS which brings a very valuable skill-set to our governing body

March and April :

- We said goodbye to Rosie Fearn as she moved back to live closer to family, we thanked her for her dedication and contribution to the governing body
- We welcomed Emma Clayton as a staff Governor to the Governing Body, I'm sure Emma will be a great asset to us representing our teachers and also supporting the school
- We had some policy updates to be reviewed and agreed
- Debby started to share September intake plans with us, this gave us insight into the number of children leaving us from year 6 and the number of new children and families joining us
- We also looked at safeguarding and how we can ensure this is maintained during the build