



Aiming High, Achieving Together

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Dear Parents / Carers,

Governor Newsletter - Spring 2021

Back to School

I am delighted to be able to say a big "Welcome Back" to all children and parents after another very different and challenging term. It was wonderful to see the balloons and banners on the 8th March and lots of smiling faces on the playground.

I would like to take this opportunity to say an enormous thank you and well done for all that you have done in supporting your children with remote learning over the last few months. I appreciate that it has not been easy and many of you have been doing this whilst also trying to continue with your own workloads.

I hope you will also join me in recognising the effort, dedication and commitment of the staff team who have worked hard to ensure that every child has had access to the curriculum, additional support and input according to their individual needs.

Remote Learning

While the majority of children have been working from home accessing our on-line learning, we were able to support approx. 40% of children with face to face teaching.

The introduction of Google Classroom meant children at home were able to access the same learning opportunities as the children in school. The Remote Learning staff planned activities across the school's broad and varied curriculum with activities covering Science, Art, Music, RE, History and Geography as well as English and Maths. Live lessons became a highlight of the day for staff and children with sessions such as PE, Maths, Phonics, PDL and daily story time with various members of staff, including Mrs James. The children were also able to participate in national theme days such as Internet Safety Day and World Book Day, as well as our own school theme weeks including Mental Health Week and the year 1 Picture Book Award Week.

The Great Outdoors

While many of the children have been indoors working at home over the winter months we have been busy having new equipment installed ready for the Spring. We have further developed the area behind the Pirate Ship with a new play trail and the inner courtyard is in the process of being transformed into a Wellbeing Garden. This space will be a quiet and reflective area for the children to escape to and enjoy the natural world.



Headteacher: Mrs Larissa James BA (QTS) NPQH





Due to be installed in the courtyard Wellbeing Garden at the end of May 2021

Mental Health

Mrs Wisken has recently trained as our Designated Senior Mental Health Leader. As a school, we have been focusing on Mental Health and Wellbeing and have been working on embedding the fundamental skills for positive Mental Health into our curriculum.

New Governors

We are pleased to be able to announce that we welcomed two new Parent Governors to the Governing Body in February - **Gary Pierce** and **Wendy Rowland**.

'My name is Gary Pierce and I have lived in Basingstoke for the past 12 years. My daughter has joined Merton Infant School in Year R. I am passionate about the community, young people, and education. Professionally I am Logistic Officer in the Army, currently appointed as a Training Development Manager in a Defence Logistic College. I joined the Army 26 years ago as a Private and I have promoted all the way through to the rank of Major. With me I bring a vast amount of knowledge, skills and experience in leadership, management and learning and hope I can positively contribute to Merton Infant School. I promise to support the school for the benefit of the children, parents and staff by ensuring that I live by and support the school's values: Motivation, Excellence, Respect, Teamwork, Opportunities and Never giving up in my role as a Parent Governor'.

'Hi, my name is Wendy Rowland and I was born in West Berlin before arriving in Basingstoke via Ireland. I am married with two children. I have a child currently in his last year at Everest and a daughter in Year 1. I enjoy reading a wide selection of genres and have an interest in the creative arts, including 5D painting and small scale construction. I decided to become a Governor to develop some more outside interests and be more involved in my child's education'.

Governor Vacancies

We are still looking for new governors to join our [governing body](#). We would be delighted to hear from anyone who:

- Is interested in children's education and the performance of the school;
- Is community spirited and would like to represent the community;
- Has spare time and the energy for the role;
- Is able to work well as part of a team;
- Has an enquiring mind and the confidence to ask questions and debate issues that affect the school; or
- Can consider matters objectively and make informed judgements .

These volunteer positions are open to parents, grandparents and guardians. Becoming a governor gives you the opportunity to develop your own personal skills, gives you access to a programme of free training in respect of education/governance matters, a sense of achievement in helping make a difference to children reaching their potential and plenty of support and guidance from fellow governors.

In looking to fill these vacancies we are particularly interested in applications from people with finance/budgetary experience and also anyone with a knowledge of SEND, although please do not be put off if you do not have these skills. What is most important is enthusiasm, interest and the willingness to learn. Being part of this school and the children's lives is such a privilege. If you are interested then please leave your contact details with the school office or email Emily Mean, Chair of Governors on Emily.Mean@merton-inf.hants.sch.uk.

Finally, as a Governing Body, we would like to wish you all a very Happy Easter.

Please do remember to follow the advice given by the Government

[Coronavirus: guidance and support - Gov.uk - www.gov.uk](#) to ensure the safety of ourselves and others over the Easter holidays, as we continue on the road out of lockdown and look forward to the promise of further freedoms to come.

Yours sincerely,

Emily Mean
Chair of Governors