



Oaklands Infant School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

Once again, we find ourselves at the end of another academic year. And yet again it has been a year filled with achievement, pride and success but also change, challenge and the need for resilience. It's customary for the Chair of Governors to communicate with our families at this point in the year and whilst I value the importance of communication, I'm also acutely aware that everyone is ready for the break and that time is precious. To that end I will try to keep this short and to the point.

School governance is a very small yet vital part of what goes on at Oaklands Infant School. As governors, our role is to work with the headteacher and the senior leadership team to drive the strategic development of the school and raise the standards of achievement.

The school's governing body has been on a progressive journey for a couple years now. I'm incredibly proud to look back at this last year alone which has seen increased engagement with the Corvus Learning Trust, with our teaching and support staff and with you - our community. The work is ongoing and requires a huge amount of dedication from a very small number of volunteers. I am incredibly fortunate to work alongside people that put their whole selves into the role without any thought of reward or recognition. I'd invite all of our families to learn more about these individuals and their roles on the governor pages of the school website.

However, I would like to single out one individual. Carole Barke has made the decision to step down as a governor at Oaklands Infant School after 8 years following the completion of her current term. For the last 2 years, she has served as Vice Chair of the governing body and, more often than not, as my moral compass. School governors are supposed to be a "critical friend" to the school meaning they should both challenge and provide support in equal measure. Carole has never once failed to be that balance; every action and challenge has been honest, heart-felt and driven by a genuine desire to make things better. My personal thanks to Carole for doing just that - leaving us in a better place than she found us.

At the start of this letter, I pointed out that school governors play a very small part in the wider school community. We do not run the school, nor do we actively participate in the day to day running of the school. This would be entirely inappropriate. That heavy lifting is entirely down to the staff and the senior leadership team. This year, whilst not blighted with the likes of COVID-19 restrictions, hasn't been entirely absent of its challenges. Most of you will be well aware of the disputes between teaching unions and the sitting government over the course of this last year. Our teachers, like many other front-line professionals, have to contend with a turbulent economy and increasing living costs in their personal lives. They do this whilst also balancing a very visible public role, ensuring the consistent safety and education of our children. It's not my place, nor the place of the governing body, to make any sweeping political statements. Nor can we hope to solve all of the world's problems from our meeting area in the year 2 library. But we can recognise our people and their efforts to always put our pupils first and themselves second.

To all of our teaching, support and office staff - we see you, we appreciate you, and we thank you.

Perhaps not as short as some of you may have hoped but that is all from me. I hope that every single person in our community has a safe and happy summer break. I know Miss Weston and her team are looking forward to welcoming our new starters in Reception this September and to those of you with pupils leaving us in year 2, I wish you all the very best. I know many of you personally and will miss seeing you around school, but I also know that your children are a credit to you and without exception will achieve brilliant things in the year to come.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mat Parker', with a stylized, flowing script.

Mat Parker
Chair of Governors