



Learning for the Head, Heart and Hand



Dear Lady J school community

We hope that you have been enjoying the changeable weather and are looking forward to the summer break. As always at this time of the year, the school calendar has been extremely busy! We have been absolutely blown away by the incredible performance of 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' last week. The children were complete superstars, with amazing lead roles and equally amazing ensembles. The wonderful thing about the year 6 production is that it really is a whole team effort, from staging, props, costumes, music and lighting, direction and of course each and every child's performance contributing to the success of the show! Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (the car) was also a masterpiece, built with a great deal of skill by Terry, who would surely get 'Exceeding expectations' in design technology! We wish all the very best to our year 6 leavers as they move onto secondary school. You will be missed!

There are many successes to celebrate this year and people to thank as always. It was a huge success to achieve the UNICEF Gold rights respecting award earlier this year. Achieving the gold award was a whole school community effort, but special mention goes to Briony Kwouk who led the application. The school was commended for the opportunities children have for leadership roles and pupil voice, for how rights are integrated into the curriculum and our inclusive policies and practices. We look forward to building on this success and further improvement as we continue our rights respecting journey.

In February, we had our visit from Ofsted. Again, the whole school community came together with views and a warm welcome for the inspection team. We were lucky to have the opportunity to meet the inspection team ourselves and attend the final inspection meeting which was extremely positive. We felt very proud of the school and particularly grateful to Mrs Foster and the senior leadership team for all their substantial hard work supporting the inspection process.

There are so many other successes to mention, with dance, drama, sports, music, and many more brilliant opportunities for the children. We can't thank all the staff, teachers, teaching assistants and support staff enough for everything you all do every day for the children. As well as the 'everyday' there is also a huge amount which the staff do beyond their main roles, such as running clubs and extra-curricular activities, school trips and other opportunities for the children. Thank you!

We also want to thank the Friends' association for everything they do raising funds and running wonderful events that give everyone the chance to get together as a school community and have fun! There are also many others who help in school volunteering in many different ways, thank you all too! Thank you also to the Thornhill Trust for your continued and committed involvement with the school.

Lastly, a huge thank you to the governing board members who give many hours of their time to school governance. We have some insights from our board members below to give you an idea of our roles and what we do.

An interesting fact – school governors are the largest group of volunteers in the UK with over 300,000 people volunteering as school governors. If you may be interested in being a governor, please contact us. We would really like to hear from anyone who may be interested, regardless of background or experience, as we look to ensure we have a diverse board who represent all parts of the school community.

Have a wonderful summer break and we will see you all in September, for another fantastic year!

Ellie Brown and James Coumbe

Co-Chairs of Governors

Every Child, Every Chance: How Governors Champion SEND at Lady Joanna Thornhill

At Lady Joanna Thornhill Primary School, inclusion isn't just a value—it's a promise. As a governor we play a vital role in making sure that promise is kept for every child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

This year, as a SEND governor I have been actively involved in monitoring how the school supports children with additional needs. Through regular meetings with the Inclusion Lead, classroom visits, and reviews of key policies, we ensure that SEND provision is not only compliant—but compassionate, creative, and child-centred. I have been impressed by the inclusive ethos of the school and the dedication of staff to adapting learning for every child.

I have seen how well the school adapts learning, how transitions are supported, and how staff are trained to meet a wide range of needs. I have seen first-hand the care, commitment, and innovation that go into making learning accessible and meaningful for all.

I am proud to say that SEND is not a bolt-on—it's embedded in everything that the school does. Lady Joanna is building a school where every child is seen, supported and celebrated.

Stephen Cartwright, (SEND and Inclusion governor)

Health and safety

The role of health and safety governor is one of the governor roles which is required by law. During the year I have carried out health and safety monitoring visits, when I spend time with Terry, our site manager, to ask about how the school makes sure all health and safety legislation is met and that everyone coming onto the site is as safe as can be. This year the school had a health and safety compliance visit, which gave the school an excellent report - so good I almost feel like I'm not needed anymore but the co-chairs tell me otherwise!

Being a school governor is eye opening as we get to see how hard the headteacher and all the school staff work. There is so much that goes into running a school as well as the main job which is of course to educate the children. I hope that Rachael and all the team make sure they have a great summer and get some rest before we return in September.

Lenny Jeffries (Health and safety governor)

Safeguarding at the heart of everything we do

This has been another busy year for us as we perform our roles of being both parent, and safeguarding governors at Lady J. From regular monitoring reviews with the Headteacher and staff it is clear how much all staff care for the pupils at Lady J and how much work goes on behind the scenes to keeping children safe – be that in the playground, on the internet or with helpful communication to ensure all children are happy and achieve their best during their time at school.

Also, as the two parent governors on the Board, we have both brought our own experience, and perspectives of those of you who have reached out to share your views with us, into the heart of the Boards decision-making. The Ofsted inspection was a clear milestone for the school and confirmed that the school has effective safeguarding arrangements, but it was also delightful to see the outstanding work being provided at Lady J recognised in other areas too.

True to the Lady J values of 'aiming high' we know there is always scope to improve and look forward to working with the school, the pupils and the Governing Board to ensure Lady J continues to go from strength to strength.

Caroline Hart-Johnson & Adam Priestley (Parent Governors and Co-Safeguarding Governors)

Hearing the voice of the child

I have been a governor since 2019. The school has seen a lot of change in that time. The one thing that has been consistent throughout is that meeting the children who attend the school is the most rewarding part of the role. Mrs Foster has always encouraged children to meet the governors' team, either as part of a monitoring visit or during a governor meeting where we get to hear directly from the kids about what they enjoy (and dislike) about the school and show and tell us about the work they have been undertaking.

What has always been clear is that the children have a voice in the school, through the school council where a boy and girl from each class meet to put forward any idea or concerns that their classmates have raised. Whenever we speak with members of the council there are a wide range of topics put forward and various changes have been implemented as a result. When in a classroom observing lessons, all the children I meet are unfailingly polite and want to engage in a conversation and tell me all about what they have been doing – I even left an Early Years class with a portrait secretly done of me as I was speaking to different children.

So, although being a governor can feel quite process and policy heavy at times, you get a real chance to understand what is going on at the school and a chance to influence this. The senior leadership team at the school very much engage with us and our views on the topics under discussion. The real highlight is helping to make a difference to the children and hearing directly from them about how much they enjoy being at the school and the numerous activities they get to participate in.

Rob Muskett (Quality of education and leadership / learning and development parent governor, vice-chair)