



Learning for the Head, Heart and Hand



To all the leadership team, staff, parents, carers and children

Thank you to everyone from the Governing board!

The commitment, drive and passion of the entire team has led to a wonderful year for the school, giving the children a huge range of rich learning experiences.

As we come to the end of our first year as Co-chairs of governors, we have a long list of thank yous to write!

Firstly, we want to say an enormous thank you to the headteacher and senior leadership team, who work tirelessly to lead the school community and who have made this school a leading place of teaching and learning, not only for our own school but in sharing best practice with other schools and teachers.

Our own teachers, teaching assistants and support staff really do go above and beyond! We are so impressed by the commitment of our staff, not only in carrying out their main roles but also for their generosity in giving up their time to take children on trips (with special thanks to the team for the year 6 residential trip to the Isle of Wight in October). They run extra-curricular clubs to provide that broad and expansive curriculum for the Head, Heart and Hand that we want for all the children, hosting and planning countless events and activities such as sports days and matches, drama, dance, music, Rights respecting school, School Council, and so much more.

We want to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to the teachers and TAs who are sadly leaving us for new adventures and experiences. We are so grateful to you all for your hard work this year and throughout your time at Lady J. We hope that you take away fond memories of your time at the school and can be assured that the children and staff you leave behind will miss you very much!

We also look forward to welcoming all our new staff members from September 2024 and hope that everyone in the school community will help make them feel at home as quickly as possible.

We truly are a whole community school, and we also want to send a huge thank you to everyone who gives their time to help the school. The Friends' association has run many fantastically successful events this year, including the Christmas fair, summer fair, treasure hunt, cake sales, school disco, fireworks and much more. Not only have these events been hugely enjoyable for the children and families, but they have raised valuable funds for the school. The Friends put in an enormous effort, and we can't thank them enough.

There are also many more lovely people who volunteer in school, reading to children, going on school trips, running after school clubs, helping with special classes such as cooking and art, and much more. Thank you to you all!

We would like to thank the other members of the governing board who behind the scenes volunteer a huge amount of time and energy to support the school in its continuing work towards improvement in line with the school development plan. We are very lucky to have such a committed board.

We are so proud to say thank you to our biggest stars – the children. Their achievements this year have been absolutely awe inspiring! There have been successes in sports, notably the girls' team winning the Kent County cricket tournament, drama with the first performance of Hamlet by Lady J pupils at the Marlowe, music, with several incredible choir performances, including at the Young Voices at the O2, and more! As well as these notable events, we shouldn't overlook what is achieved day to day, in the classroom, the playground, and all around the school, where we see first-hand how the children demonstrate their *collaboration, curiosity, compassion and resilience* and their understanding of the three school rules 'Aim high, stay safe, be respectful'. Well done to you all!

Congratulations in particular to our Year 6 leavers. We may be a bit biased as some of the governors have children in Year 6, but we couldn't be prouder of all of the children who have shown such progress both inside and outside the classroom during their years with the school. We have loved seeing them make the most of the opportunities to do all sorts of extra-curricular activities and to take on responsibilities such as being school council members and ambassadors. Not least, the Year 6 production which took place last week was an absolute triumph! An army of people put in a monumental effort to help to stage a jaw dropping production of The Lion King. It was a very ambitious project, but they truly succeeded in not only entertaining three audiences over the week, but in providing every child the chance to sing, dance, act, create costumes and props and to shine. Thank you and well done!

We hope you have an enjoyable summer break and we look forward to welcoming you back in September, for another productive and wonderful year.

Best wishes,

Ellie Brown and Jamess Coumbe

**Co-Chairs of Governors , on behalf of the Lady J governing board.
On behalf of the Governing Board**

Lady J Governing Board Governance Activities 2023/24

Governance activities

In 2023, the governing board formulated its three year governance strategy, which is published on the school's website ([Lady J governor strategy 23-26](#)). The three core elements of our strategy are children, inclusion and community and we have spent some time recently evaluating how our governance activities this year have contributed to our strategy.

Children

The children are front and centre of all the decisions the governing board takes. During 23/24, the governing board has visited the school many times for monitoring visits with different focus areas.

One of the most rewarding things about school governance is the occasional opportunity to meet with children to ask their views on their learning, wellbeing, extra-curricular opportunities, and more. In July each year we spend an afternoon in school meeting different groups of children to get more in-depth views from them. This year, we met with children from the School Council, Year 6 leaders, and children in different year groups talking to us and showing us their work on Science, English, history and geography. In past years we have also had presentations from subject leaders on focus areas for curriculum design such as music, performing arts and computing.

Our monitoring of the curriculum, from specific curriculum monitoring visits with senior leadership and subject leaders, Early years visits and our afternoon in July, has given clear evidence of how the school effectively implements its curriculum for the Head, Heart and Hand, and the stepping stones to enable all pupils to make excellent progress from their starting points, be socially and morally responsible, and be ready for the next stage in their learning.

Inclusion

The governors aim for the school to be an inclusive environment, with all children's needs met, an accessible curriculum and celebration of diversity and equality. We have carried out regular and detailed monitoring of provision for children with Special Educational Needs (SEND). From these visits it very clear that inclusion is of the highest priority for the school.

As we move into the second year of our strategy, we will be deepening our focus on Equality and Diversity as set out in the EDI policy and progress against the school's EDI objectives.

As part of this we are also looking at how the governing board itself reflects the school community, and considering how we can aim to make school governance open and appealing to everyone, regardless of any protected characteristics, background or circumstances. We have a vacancy at the moment of which details are below – please do get in touch if you are curious to find out whether the next governor at Lady J could be you!

Community

The school's success is made possible by our strong community links. As members of the CARE Foundation, the school has the opportunity to collaborate with the other CARE group schools in events such as the annual carol service and CPD day for the staff. The headteacher and co-chairs attend regular meetings with the CARE Foundation headteachers and chairs of governors, which offers valuable cross-school support and information sharing opportunities.

The Thornhill Trust remains strongly involved with the school, with our own board member Lenny recently taking on the Chair role for the Thornhill Trust. Thanks are due to the Thornhill Trust for funding the Year 6 leaver books, which are a wonderful memento for the children.

We continue to work to foster good relationships with the local community, and our children in particular have benefited so much from the sense of involvement with the village. Children in reception have had trips to the local café and the church, which as well as giving a real sense of belonging provides the beginnings of the understanding of geography, confidence in interactions with others and an early opportunity for responsibility. The choir visited Luckley House to sing carols to the residents there which was a memorable experience for all.

As we move into the next year of our strategy we are looking to further deepen our community relationships, which will help provide the opportunity for the children to become socially and morally responsible, and to enhance sharing of resources and experience with others around us.

To learn more about the work of the governing board (and who we all are!) please see [Lady J governors](#).

School governor vacancies

As you may have seen from our last newsletter, we have recently welcomed a new parent governor, Adam Priestley, to our board. We still have a vacancy on the board for a Co-opted governor. Co-opted governors do not have to be parents of children at the school and are appointed by the Full governing board rather than parents and carers.

As noted above, we are focussed on improving the diversity of our board as part of our EDI work this year. In particular, based in our current board membership, we would welcome applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds and / or younger adults to better represent the school community which we serve. In terms of skills, we would welcome anyone with skills or knowledge in finance, but governance covers a very broad range of skills so anyone with any type of education, safeguarding, family or business skills or experience would be extremely welcome to apply.

We feel really lucky to be on the governing board and to have the opportunity to support the school directly. Governance also provides fantastic learning and development opportunities which are very complimentary and valuable in the workplace and in other voluntary roles. If you may be interested, or know of someone who may be, then please contact chair@ladyj.kent.sch.uk to ask any questions or for more information.

HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER!

