

# GOVERNOR DAY IN SCHOOL

Westgate Governors' Annual Newsletter

February 2018

## Wonderfully Welcoming

Last week saw a delegation of governors enjoy the wonderfully welcoming atmosphere around school. The children are so used to visitors that they are more than willing to tell us about what they are doing, what they like and what they would improve. The Governor Day in school is a very important part of what we do as a governing body, checking that what we discuss is actually happening during an ordinary working day. It also allows us to look at where the school needs to move strategically. Despite the quite serious agenda, we never come away without smiles on our faces, having been welcomed by the children and staff in their classrooms. The discussions which take place with different groups shows a level of maturity well beyond the children's years, something which has been picked up on by other visitors too. This year, we followed another visitor to the school from Ofsted, who had an equally thorough day in school, before the holidays. She quite rightly awarded the school a Good again, whilst at the same time fed back some very useful action points to take the school further forward. Westgate is a hive of activity, buzzing with new ideas which are already moving the children on to bigger and better things. I am proud of the school and the experiences and education it gives all of our children, which are all down to the hard work of the staff.

I personally enjoyed speaking to lots of different groups of children on a wide range of topics, which were explained to me very clearly and confidently. My tour of nursery was fantastic; experiencing a very confident team in the 'café', a wide range of delightful 'baking', some very talented and imaginative building, lots of experiments at the water table and a lovely chat about what the little ones enjoy, whilst having a snack. All of the older children had a wonderful attitude to learning, you can see all of them want to do well and listen to each other. Their ideas and creativity could be seen everywhere I went. All the children really do represent Westgate so well.

**Rob Wilks, Chair of Governors**

## Brilliant Book Reviews!

It was very interesting to see the age appropriate approaches to Book Reviews in Years 2 and 6 on Governors' Day in school this year. Year 2 were introduced to the concept of Book Reviews for the first time. By contrast in Year 6 it was amazing to see 3 actual book reviews online that had been submitted by Westgate pupils onto the Leeds Book Awards website. It was fair to say that the Westgate pupils' reviews stood out as some of the best. It was lovely to see the progress from Year 2 to Year 6 in action.

**Sarah Mumford, co-opted governor**

## Becoming Writers

I have just spent another very enjoyable day with the staff, pupils and governors of Westgate. I was particularly impressed with the accurate terminology used by children during writing lessons. In year 3 children were learning about causal conjunctions for use in their explanation writing whilst Year 6 pupils were discussing the use of specific vocabulary to use in their persuasive writing.

**Jane O'Kane, co-opted governor**

### **Governors of the Future?**

I met the Peer Mediators, in the playground, who aim to solve small problems before they get any bigger. The team is across all years, identified by the white lanyards around the neck. The idea teaches the children to deal with their own problems in a more mature way and gives them useful life skills. When asked where they could use their skills in the future, one student said to be a school governor! The playground is as lively as ever but even with all the equipment available, the most popular activity is still running around and playing tig. Nothing changes!

**Jonathan Kirkland, local authority governor**

### **School Council Make Their Voices Heard**

We had an interesting meeting with School Council and got to hear about the different roles they take in the school. It was great to see the ideas they were generating, for example organising an event as part of Fair Trade fortnight. They clearly felt their role was important and that they were listened to and able to contribute to decision making in the school. A number of members of school council have been to "pupil voice" events at other schools this term, including an event with Leeds City Council on how money for youth services should be spent in NW Leeds and a workshop on how to reduce absence in schools.

**Andrew Ross, parent governor**

### **Confidence Growing from a Good Start**

The new lunchtime procedure in nursery is clearly working well; the children were sitting together around the table, quietly and politely waiting for us to arrive, and were seemingly very enthused about our visit. One child was so keen to chatter to me that she forgot to eat! The confidence that attendance at nursery instils in the children should not be underestimated, and its development can be witnessed right across school. Every child in Year 4 was engaged in their PHSE lesson and they were keen to discuss their feelings and ideas about discrimination in an astonishingly forthright way for their age.

**Susan Carson MBE, parent governor**

### **Sports Leaders With Ambition**

Having met with the Sports Leaders it is evident that the Westgate Way fosters a very caring and considerate group of children. The group had some very inspiring ideas about how their role as sports leaders could be further developed to increase participation and keep the school active at lunchtimes. All were very passionate about their roles and are key to its ongoing success. Well Done Sports Leaders and keep up the good work!

**James Millson, co-opted governor**

### **The View from the Team**

As usual, Governor's Day in school is one that staff embrace and look forward to...honestly! It's a chance to demonstrate how well our 'team' works. The children are always keen to talk enthusiastically about what they do, and teaching staff are proud of how they make learning fun across our broad and balanced curriculum. It's always great to read the feedback from the Governors and discover that, like us as staff, they see what a good school Westgate is.

**Daniel Hackney, staff governor**

### **School Food Ambassadors**

I really enjoyed meeting with some of the School Food Ambassadors, all of whom were very articulate and obviously proud of their role. It was interesting to hear how the role has developed including regular meetings, leading a school assembly, food tastings and asking other children for their opinions about food and dinner time at school. They can feedback comments good and not so good directly to kitchen staff or via Mrs Hattersley and this can result in real changes and improvements. I was impressed with the overall awareness of healthy eating for both school dinners and packed lunches and I am looking forward to seeing the entries in the upcoming poster competition.

**Victoria Mirfield, parent governor**