



Whitecross Nursery School

'Your Child, Our Inspiration'

Governing Body Newsletter – January 2023

Hello, as we start a new year we would like to take the opportunity to welcome the families and children starting with us this term and update you all on the work of the Governing Body over last term.

What Does the Governing Body Do?

The Governing Body works with the nursery staff team to provide the best possible education for the children who attend Whitecross by:

- Setting the strategic direction for the nursery school, including vision and values, and agreeing on school development plans and policies;
- Monitoring and evaluating the educational performance of the school and delivery of the vision and values of the nursery school;
- Ensuring the school is accountable to the children and parents it serves; to the local community; to those who fund and maintain it and to the staff it employs;
- Ensuring financial health, probity, and value for money.



The full Governing Body meets every half term. There are two committees in place – Resources and Standards – with each committee meeting at least once each term. We also support and attend various events throughout the year such as the Christmas concert, Parent Evenings, and Nursery outings.

Who Are We?

Our Governing Body comprises a few different types of governors, and all members have differing backgrounds and skills.

Parent Governors are elected by you, our parents, and we have two parent governors at any one time.

Co-opted Governors are appointed by the governing body based on their skills and experience. We have six co-opted governors on our board.

Authority Governors are appointed by the Local Authority. We can have one Local Authority Governor.

Staff Governors are elected by our staff team and we have one staff governor on our governing board.

Headteacher, there is a governor role for the headteacher on every school governing board.

Clerk to Governors, our governance professional is Julie Fowler. It is the governance professional's role to support and advise our governors in their work.

New Governors

We were delighted to welcome several new Governors to our board during last term, following a fantastic response to our recruitment drive last summer. Jess Allton joins us as our new parent governor, Sasha Gillen has taken up a co-opted governor role, and Emma Nichols joined us as an Associate Governor with a view to becoming our Local Authority Governor this term.

We would like to thank all our new governors for taking up these important voluntary roles and for the contribution they are already making to the Nursery.

To find out a bit more about our new and existing governors please see our 'Introduction to the Governors' section at the end of this newsletter.

Autumn Term Update

The start of a school year is always a busy time for school staff and governors as we welcome new families and children, review and reflect on the previous year, and set our plans and objectives for this academic year. Last term was no exception and here is a brief summary of the activities undertaken by the governing body between September and December 2022.



Governors met twice last term as a full board and each committee met once. In these sessions and alongside the nursery school leadership team we have;

- reviewed the impact of the 2021/22 School Development Plan,
- agreed the objectives and targets for the 2022/23 School Development Plan, which includes further development of outdoor learning across the curriculum and work on our phonics and maths curriculums,
- agreed the governing body objectives for 2022/23, to include supporting our new governors through their induction, building our engagement with key stakeholders following the recent pandemic restrictions, and improving our understanding of the Ofsted inspection framework,
- reviewed and approved key safeguarding and child protection policies using the latest statutory guidance,
- approved premises work on the hot water system and children's toilets in line with our budget,
- completed training including new governor induction, safeguarding, equality, diversity and inclusion, Ofsted inspection – what to expect, governor visits to school, and headteacher performance management.

We also very much enjoyed attending the wonderful Christmas concert last term and have had the pleasure of visiting staff and children in nursery as part of our termly monitoring visits. We look forward to hopefully meeting many more of you over the coming term.

How to Contact the Governors:

If you have any messages or would like to discuss anything with the Governors, please don't hesitate to contact us via email on clerk@whitecross.derby.sch.uk or chair@whitecross.derby.sch.uk, or leave a written message with the school office team.

Further details about your governing body can also be found on the nursery school website.

An Introduction to Your Whitecross Governors

Claire Devey, Chair of Governors, (Co-opted Governor)

My sons both attended Whitecross Nursery and we were wowed by the professional, caring and knowledgeable team at the school, which prompted me to apply for a parent governor vacancy in 2016. Before starting my family, I held a senior position in retail logistics and have been able to bring my experience of strategic leadership, project and contract management to the role. It has been a pleasure working alongside the wonderful Whitecross staff and governor team over the past six years and I have learned a huge amount about the importance of excellent early years education and the positive impact it can have for so many children and families



Su Wall, Vice Chair of Governors, (Co-opted Governor)

Hi, I am the governor for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEN) at Whitecross. I am absolutely delighted to be part of the governance team at Whitecross Nursery School. I have worked in the early years/education sector for over 25 years now with a focus on children aged 0-5yrs. My passion is working with the early years offering high-quality provision for all children to thrive in.

I am currently a senior lecturer at the University of Derby on the BA (Hons) Early childhood studies with specialist expertise in SEND, Safeguarding, Play and the great outdoor learning environment. Previous to this role, I have worked in a variety of nursery environments and I have also been a Local Authority Advisor offering support and guidance for nursery settings.



Julie Jennens, Standards Committee Chair, (Co-opted Governor)

My daughters Isla & Elodie both attended Whitecross and I cannot say enough about how utterly fantastic Isla and Elodie's experiences have been. The staff are so welcoming and make the journey into 'formal' learning a real adventure. I live locally and like other governors, wanted to give something back. I have worked for the Probation Service for over 10 years and use some of my experience in my role as Safeguarding Governor.



Sara Woodward, Resources Committee Chair, (Co-opted Governor)

My son Edward started at Whitecross in January 2022, and I was very struck by the kindness and care shown by all staff towards him from the outset, particularly as he has significant health needs. It was because of such positive first impressions that I was keen to support Whitecross and become more involved. I'm currently taking a career break to look after Edward and am new to the role of Governor, but will bring many skills such as project management, collaborative working and sharing best practice to this role. I look forward to undertaking further training to be able to make a positive contribution and support the success of this outstanding nursery school.



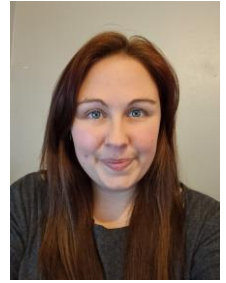
Jayne Staves (Co-opted Governor)

I worked in Early Years for most of my teaching career and am passionate about providing children with the best possible start to their educational journey. Having taught at Whitecross for a number of years, I have seen the impact the school has on children and their families. I am pleased to continue to be part of this dedicated team working together to provide the very best for all children.



Sasha Gillen (Co-opted Governor)

I am mum of 2 with a pupil at Whitecross. During my working day I am a community relationship manager working on the National Careers Service across the West Midlands. I have worked within the employability industry for 6 years working on multiple contracts to support the removal of barriers to opportunities. I am also a lead mentor for the girls' network supporting 13+ girls from economically disadvantage backgrounds access opportunities they thought were not possible for them. Finally, I work very closely with Lawn Primary as Chair of the PTFA, to enhance the children learning through extra curricular opportunities. These are the reasons I chose to become a governor. Enhancing provision and learning to our young children is something I am passionate about. In my spare time, if I had any I enjoy reading, children's books included. My favourite children's book had to be Monkey Puzzle by Julia Donaldson.



David Galloway (Parent Governor)

I am dad to Thomas, who attended Whitecross in 2018/19, and Frank, who attended in 2020/21. From our first encounters with the staff it was clear that this was a special place and I feel it has given both boys an excellent start to their learning experience. Most importantly they have really enjoyed their time at Whitecross and grown in confidence. I joined the governing body in November 2020 as parent governor and hope that my background working in education (albeit with much older pupils!) will help me to contribute to the team.



Jess Allton (Parent Governor)

My daughter Nia currently attends Whitecross and we have been delighted by our experience here. The staff are incredibly skilled and nurturing, and have created a welcoming environment that ensures children thrive. My experience as a primary school teacher has highlighted the importance of an excellent early years education and the positive impact this has for children throughout their school life. In my class teacher role, I had a particular interest in outdoor learning as well as supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities. I hope this understanding will allow me to make a positive contribution by supporting the school and staff within the role of a parent governor.



Ros Walker-Smith (Staff Governor)

I have worked as a teaching assistant at Whitecross since 2014 and have loved every minute of it. My son Thomas previously attended the nursery so I have experience of being a parent at Whitecross, and of being part of the staff team. It is a privilege to work with such dedicated and experienced colleagues. I am delighted to be part of the governing board and to support the school continue to provide excellent early years education.



Emma Nichols (Nominated for Local Authority Governor)

I am a mother of 2 girls (7 and 3 years old) who keep me busy when I'm not at work. I currently work for Derby City Council within Early Help and Social Care for children, alongside studying at the University of Derby to obtain a BA (Hons) in Business Management and Leadership. I have had over 17 years' experience working with children and young people in various roles. I am new to Whitecross Nursery, and it is a pleasure to be working with the committed nursery staff and other governors. My daughter Ella has recently started nursery at Whitecross and can't wait to go every week. I find Whitecross to be a nurturing environment for her and am pleased to be contributing to the future success of the nursery school.

