



NURSERY • PRIMARY

ABOYNE LODGE

CREATIVE • CURIOUS • CARING

GOVERNOR NEWSLETTER SPRING TERM 2022

Dear parents and carers,

It's been a busy start to the year, and we're pleased to hear that the children are adjusting to a more 'normal' routine!

We've been delighted to learn about all the exciting events and opportunities that have been on offer this term. In school, we've had the theatre teams in for workshops, and it was great to have so many people involved in Science Week and the library and author visits during Book Week. The school has been able to offer trips to the Abbey and museums in Hendon and St Albans, while Year 5 have been on a visit to Woodrow. We're also really proud of the continuing successes for the school sports teams.

Here are a few updates from us, the school's governing board.

School environment

We're pleased to announce that the building works were completed in February, so the playground and car park have now reopened, and the school site feels whole again. The last steps, including removing the old Year 6 classroom, will be finished off over the next few weeks. It's also been lovely to see the trees that the Eco-team have newly planted around the school.

We're also grateful for an award from the St Albans Civic Society for the creation of a sensory garden. The school and ALSA are looking at further funding options for projects and we'd welcome any ideas or expertise that you might have.

Aboyne Lodge Foundation

As you may be aware, state school funding is a significant national issue and Aboyne Lodge, as a single form intake in a relatively affluent area, receives fewer additional subsidies and continues to face financial difficulties. In the current financial year (which is ending now), the school was forecast to end in a deficit position. However, through good management and making some difficult decisions the school with the support of the governors, has been able to materially reduce the level of that deficit. It has also been able to put in place some changes that will make it more financially stable in the future. These including taking in-house the before and after school club and finishing the building project to enable lettings to start again.

Like many schools across the country, the School and Governors established a charity to raise funds for vital matters relating to the education of the children, the Aboyne Lodge Foundation. This enables the school to raise funds through direct debits, to which Gift Aid can be applied, in

a way that allows them to plan expenditure through the year. The Aboyne Lodge Foundation, whose trustees are the Head, Deputy Head and certain governors, spends those funds on items that are important for the day-to-day education of the children but would not otherwise be available out of the funds provided by the state. In the last year, funds have purchased IT and play equipment. Raising funds through the Aboyne Lodge Foundation for the educational essentials also allows ALSA funds to be focused on the matters which really elevate the educational experience of the children.

The financial support from parents and ALSA are critical in helping to reduce the financial deficit and enabling the school to deliver the best possible education to the children and so we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those parents, carers and ALSA representatives who have so generously contributed to the school.

Please note that there has been a change to the account number of the Aboyne Lodge Foundation – if you haven't managed to do this already, please move any payments across to the following details:

Account number: 60191690

Sort code: 82-11-07

Registered charity number: 1179532

Gift Aid forms are available from the school office.

New website

It's great to see that the new website is up and running, and we'd encourage you to visit the new page to keep up with the weekly bulletin and find out more about the school. We also publish some important information about the school's policies and procedures, together with minutes from recent governors' meetings. These can be found in the 'statutory info' section of the site. We're very grateful to the parents and members of the community who supported the development of the website, especially Anna Peck and Michelle Stacey from Midnight Blue and David Hope for his kind donation.

Thank you!

As always, we'd like to say thank you to everyone who has supported the school this term – it's hard to catch everyone, but we've tried to cover some highlights:

Since Mr Smithard joined the school just a few months ago, the staff have been working really hard to review, develop and implement a refreshed, broad and sequenced curriculum, and it's clear that this is already having a positive effect on the children's learning. We're very grateful for their commitment and dedication and look forward to hearing more in the Summer Term.

ALSA's constant energy and creativity is inspirational, and we're really grateful for all the opportunities that they provide the children to have fun and the school community to come together.

To the parents and carers, thank you for the support that you provide to your children and the school every day.

Lastly, all the exciting events (and day-to-day support around the school) couldn't happen without our parent and community volunteers. We're very grateful to everyone who has run events, made props for plays, supported reading, taken photos for funding applications and everything else that has made this term such a success.

Proposed closure of the nursery

You'll have seen a message from Mr Smithard about some significant changes to the school's nursery provision which may take effect in the coming year. The nursery is a lovely place and we have always been very proud of the care it provides. However, its financial viability has come into question: there are several other nurseries nearby, some of which offer wrap-around care which makes it difficult for us to compete. Consequently, Herts County Council has started a consultation process to close our nursery in January 2023, with further information to follow in the Summer term. The school will keep in touch with you as things develop.

The governing board

The governing board comprises a mixture of staff, community (co-opted) and Local Authority volunteers and parents. Our key roles are to oversee the strategic direction of the school; to support and hold the headteacher to account; and to ensure the school's financial wellbeing. We also support the school on specific projects and we carry out various 'link' roles relating to the school curriculum and strategic priorities.

We'd like to say a big thank you to Cecilia Fenech Brincat who has stepped down after a number of years as a co-opted governor. We have now recruited two new co-opted governors and, after an election, a new parent governor to join the board, and we welcome Adam, Dan and Tom to the governing body.

Here's a list of the current members of the board and our responsibilities:

Keith Smithard	Headteacher	
Alex Leech	Y1 teacher	
Alex Farley	Parent Co-chair	Data & performance monitoring
Clare Sayce	Parent Co-chair	Inclusion (incl. SEN, PPG, CLA, FSM, EAL, more able)
Olly Milton	Co-opted Vice Chair	PE, Premises and Sustainability
Rob Blok	Parent Chair of Resources Committee	Humanities (History, Geography, RE)
Dan Smith	Co-opted Chair of School Improvement Committee	Safeguarding, PPG, English
Tina Shaw	Local Authority Clerk of School Improvement	Inclusion, STEM

Committee

Tom Walsh	Co-opted Clerk of Resources Committee	Maths, Grievance & Discipline
Adam Brown	Parent	Health & Safety, Arts, Governor Development

We're always looking to co-opt governors from the community and to improve the diversity and representation on the board. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please get in touch!

We hope you have a lovely break over Easter and look forward to seeing you next term!

Clare Sayce & Alex Farley, Co-Chairs, on behalf of the full governing board

