



# Southwood Infant School

## Welcome

Before half term we advertised for a parent to join our governing body as a parent governor. I am delighted to say that Neil Wilcox applied and as the only applicant for this position was elected unopposed. We are looking forward to welcoming Neil to his first governors' meeting in July. I am sure many of you already know Neil as he is a regular volunteer with FSIS, however, we will be introducing him and the rest of the Governing Body in our Autumn newsletter.

We have welcomed our new reception children and their parents to stay and play at the school and a new parent meeting. It was lovely to see some new and old faces who will be joining us in September. It probably feels to some of you that it was only a blink of an eye and that was you. In the coming weeks there will be transition days for all year groups as we prepare them for moving into the next year group and for our Year 2s on to Junior school. We would very much value your feedback and we will be asking you to complete a parent survey. We will share the results of this with any points of action in the Autumn newsletter.

The governors have been visiting school and conducting monitoring visits on their nominated areas and some of the findings are shared with you within this newsletter. Along with parent governors, Mim Cure and Neil Wilcox, I visited Basingstoke Canal centre with the Year R children. We were very fortunate to only have a few light showers whilst we were outside pond dipping, minibeast hunting, having a boat trip along the canal, making forest art and sketching things we had seen. The children were all wonderfully behaved and eager to learn all about the habitats that minibeast live in. From the conversations amongst the children I could see that they enjoyed their day as much as I did.

As we head towards the summer holidays, I would like to wish all our Year 2 children the very best wishes as they head off to their new schools. I look forward to the leavers' assembly with my tissues ready as we proudly send them on their journey. For those of you who are moving into Year 1 and 2 I hope you have a fun filled holiday and I look forward to seeing you in September. Before that don't forget the Summer fayre is on 6th July and is always a great day and I hope to see you there.

Nina Lynch, Chair of Governors

## Governor Newsletter to Parents Summer Term 2019



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## Starting School at Southwood

We are really proud of the way in which Miss Park and her team prepare the children for starting at 'Big School'. It's a major milestone in every little person's life and offering a really effective and reassuring transition process from preschool is crucial to how quickly and happily they settle into their new classes and environment.

Transition arrangements recognise that every child is a unique individual and their 'readiness' for school and excitement regarding this new adventure will be very personal to them. That's why the building of relationships between staff and their new children is at the heart of our transition planning.

Staff liaise regularly with the various settings from which new children join Southwood. Miss Park and her team take time to visit the children's preschools early in May to meet with them and their key worker.



The new parents' meeting in June is there to reassure and inform parents so that they too feel ready for their little one to start their Southwood journey. It gives the guidance needed for parents and carers to feel confident that they are doing all the right things to prepare their son or daughter for a happy and smooth start to school in September. Parents are told their child's class and teacher at this point so they can chat about this over the summer to build familiarity.

The six 'Stay and Play' sessions in May and June are just fantastic. They offer children the chance to come along to play with their teachers and new classmates at various times during the day and after school. They love these sessions as they get to bring along their parent or carer to play too. Activities, songs and a treat of squash and biscuits make these sessions great fun and a super way to help new children to feel confident about being at school.

Home visits are organised at the beginning of September to re-establish that close connection after the long summer break and then the children are welcomed into school in their smart new uniforms in a very measured and calm staggered entry over the first days and weeks of term. School is quite a leap from preschool and so having a part-time start for just a few days with just some, rather than all, of their contemporaries makes the whole process that little bit less daunting and means that teachers have more time to help each child to settle in happily.

At Southwood, the team remains in close touch with the preschools and 'Tapestry', the information / communication online system, with which parents and carers are familiar, is continued throughout the Early Years to provide super continuity for the children, their families and schools.

Once the children have started in their new classes there is an ongoing focus on getting to know them as individuals and as members of their family with activities such as a chance for parents to come to school to share a school lunch ensuring that the key focus of meeting their personal, social and emotional needs is well managed.

The Reception year flies by and it's soon time for a new set of transition activities to meet new teachers, teaching assistants and classmates as the children are eased towards a happy and successful move into Key Stage 1.

We want to make every moment count and to have happy, confident children who are ready to achieve. So, it's a big thank you to Mrs Southgate, Miss Park and all the staff for making this happen.

Jacqui Jennings, EYFS Link Governor

## **Governor Assembly & Lunch**

On May 17th the governors led an assembly for the children explaining our role at the school. Some of the children have excellent memories and could still remember the assembly from last year. We asked two children to join us at the front and consider what questions they would ask Mrs Southgate if they were governors. We were incredibly impressed with the questions they asked, which were:

1. What will you spend the Easter Fayre money on?
2. How do you know the children are learning and not daydreaming?
3. How do you know the children are safe?

After the assembly, the governors stayed for lunch and we were incredibly impressed with the quality of food served to the children and the impeccable behaviour we witnessed in the lunch hall. The children spoke confidently to us about their learning, their enjoyment at school and their interests outside of school.

It was a wonderful morning and we are already looking forward to next year.

By Laura Dobson

## **Health & Safety**

As a governor of the school it is part of my remit to look after Health and Safety in the school. Every term I visit the school and along with the Headteacher we inspect the buildings and the grounds.

In the grounds we look at the paths and accesses, all the play equipment and fixtures in the grounds. We ensure all external lighting is working and that all the equipment the children can use is in a safe condition and good working order.

Inside the building we check to make sure there are no trip hazards, cleaning chemicals are securely stored and all equipment locked away. We check the lighting, sports equipment and electrical equipment. We also check the kitchen to ensure it meets current hygiene standards for preparation of food. Finally, we check the carpets are in good condition and that the toilet areas are clean and working correctly.

On completion of the inspection a report is prepared. Any major items are referred to Hampshire County Council. Small items are dealt with in-house.

If we have contractors on site they must produce method statements and risk assessments for the work they are carrying out. For larger contracts such as the new roof we had last year HCC check the risk and method statements. For small contracts we check them ourselves.

Gordon Cooper, Chairman Resources and Personnel Committee

## Focus on SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)

At Southwood Infant School, pupils with SEND are always a priority for teaching staff. I have visited the school to talk to Suki Taylor (SENCO) on three different occasions this year academic year. On all three occasions I witnessed pupils with SEND making great progress from their starting point. The teaching staff (including the amazingly experienced TAs) tailor the learning to suit the individual child, with brilliant, noticeable outcomes. From individual visual timetables, home learning journals and Individual Education Plans (IEPs), to focused 1:1 teaching recorded in work books or on tapestry, every child with SEND has their own individual targets, which they are encouraged and helped to achieve. All pupils demonstrated pride in their learning and their achievements, which is a huge step to making great progress. A huge 'WELL DONE' to all of the wonderful teaching body!

By Hannah Stiff

## Our Wonderful Support Staff

The children at Southwood are very fortunate to have such a wonderful team of support staff. Having recently visited the school at lunchtime I was struck by the lovely atmosphere – both in the dinner hall and in the playground. The dinner ladies do a great job and clearly know all the children well – full of smiles and friendly chatter. The lunchtime supervisors ensure that the children eat enough food and circulate chatting and laughing with the youngsters – having a son of my own in Year R – this was a very reassuring sight. Out in the playground the children play fantastically together and have a great deal of fun – again testament to the staff working hard to look after them and keep them safe whilst allowing them to enjoy themselves and burn off some energy!

Thank you to Mrs Andrews for running several extra-curricular clubs – the children really love attending the Gardening Club and the Recorder Club – they really appreciate all your hard work and enthusiasm. Also thank you to Mrs Patterson for helping with the Gardening Club and giving up your time to help all of the children have fun and participate fully in the activities and gardening skills.

As the end of term approaches the governors would like to thank all the support staff for all your hard work – it is very much appreciated. We wish you all a well-deserved summer break.

By Mim Cure

## Spotlight on Maths

Great work has been done this year by the Maths Leader, Penny Kinsella, and the teachers and teaching assistants, to develop maths teaching in the outdoor setting. The aim was to help children have a more positive attitude to maths by introducing fun and enjoyable outdoor learning activities. All year group teachers have been committed to plan carefully and provide a variety of interesting tasks/games for learning maths outside. Year R and KS1 pupils have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities and greatly benefited from them. It has been proven to be an excellent way to reinforce the maths learning in class!

By Lena Potamianou



## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is paramount at Southwood Infant School, and all concerns are taken seriously. If you have a concern about a child, please do not hesitate to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Wendy Southgate.

## **Things we are proud of at Southwood this Term**

As governors we are consistently impressed with the work of all staff at the school and the achievements of the pupils. Here are a few highlights from this term.

On 1st July we held our annual sports day and as always it was a fantastic day, made even better with beautiful weather.

There were several governors present on the day and all commented on how well behaved the children were and how fantastic it was to see so many parents taking part in the parent races!

The governors would like to thank FSIS for the amazing events that have been run over the last year. Not only do these raise invaluable funds for the school but they are also popular and great fun for the whole community. The governors try to attend as many events as possible and offer help if we can. Having attended several events, we appreciate all the hard work that goes into organising them and making them as successful as they are. They promote our school within the local community and have helped to secure our excellent reputation within the wider community.

The governors have recently reviewed the closing budget for the last financial year and would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and express our sincerest thanks for the financial donations made by FSIS over the last financial year. As many of you will be aware there are many activities and equipment that simply wouldn't be available to us without the significant donations made by FSIS. The amount of money raised year on year by FSIS is staggering in ratio to the pupil numbers within the school.

We are very much looking forward to the Summer Fayre and also want to thank you for your continued support in providing the Year 2 leavers' dictionaries.

Finally, we would like to take the opportunity to wish you a very happy summer holidays!