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### Introduction from the Chair

Welcome to our latest governors' newsletter. It's time once again to reflect on our successes and challenges.

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate all our students, parents, carers, staff and governors for their hard work and enthusiasm in continuing to make Ash Lea the fantastic school that it is especially in light of all the recent changes.

As you know, the facilities at Ash Lea were dated and fell short of meeting the needs of our 21st-century students. Our Headteacher, Dawn Wigley, and governors have been working long and hard to secure the improvements that our students deserve. After lobbying our local M.P., the Right Hon. Kenneth Clarke, he kindly arranged for us to meet the then Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, at the Department of Education in London. Dawn and I were able to make a strong case, which resulted in our securing over £2 million from the Local Authority. This will allow the construction a new two-storey building and the extension of our existing assembly hall. I hope you had a chance to look at the plans that were on display in school in July last year.

As you are well aware the whole school has successfully relocated to our current temporary premises in West Bridgford. Staff and governors did everything they could to minimise the impact on the students and we have been so impressed with how well our students have coped with the transition.

Unfortunately we now face further financial challenges due to a change in the funding formula that is used to calculate our resources. Budgets are not yet finalised but we are in negotiation with the Local Authority to achieve the best possible outcome for our school.

I would like to thank Dawn Wigley and all the staff for the tireless work (often unseen) that they have put in over the past year, especially during their summer break in light of the extra work involved in moving premises. I know that they are rising to the challenges of this school year with their usual dedication, care and commitment to their students.

**Dr Alex Macdonald - Chair of Governors**



## Building Update

The school successfully moved to its temporary premises over the summer holidays and in November we heard the great news that planning permission had been agreed. The governors would like to express their thanks to the school staff team for enabling such a smooth transfer.

Since then although the school has been involved in meetings regarding the final design no work has started on site in Cotgrave. The delays have been attributed to negotiating final costs with the contractors.

We are pleased to announce that the work will start on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April with a finish date of 22nd December 2017.

The school staff team and pupils will have the opportunity of the next couple of months to contribute their views on the colour schemes, design of the multi-media room and other areas of the finished design. We hope to keep everyone updated with the progress of the build in the coming months.

**Dawn Wigley – Headteacher**

## School Fundraising



The governors would like to thank everyone for their tremendous efforts in so far raising an incredible **£62,448.86** on the 'MyDonate' page. It is anticipated the monies will be spent on items that we feel are essential for our school, but that have not been included in the budget for the new build.

These include equipping the post 16 room with ovens and other kitchen equipment, hoists for the main hall and items for the multi-sensory room.

Money will also be required to ensure the rest of the existing building is in keeping with the new build by re painting, re carpeting etc. where needed, so please do carry on your marvellous efforts <https://mydonate.bt.com/events/creatingabetterenviroment>

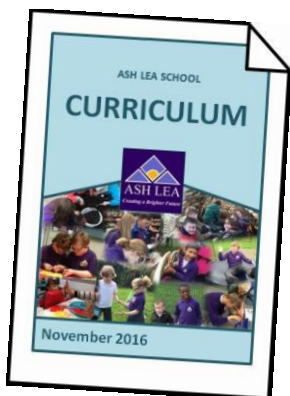
## FOALS Fundraising

We would also like to thank all members of FOALS for their invaluable fundraising which enhances the lives of our pupils. The following is a list of what they have contributed towards school activities in the past year alone.

- Private hire of Cotgrave swimming pool in Nov 2015 & May 2016 plus buffet: £381.51
- Broadway cinema hire: £135
- Santa train: £444
- Donation to prom night for car hire 7 disco: £200
- Fun week donation: £1000.00
- Entry for students and carers to Drayton Manor: £288
- Entry for students and carers to Twin Lakes: £144.90



## Curriculum Changes / Updates



Over the last three years the staff at Ash Lea School, in conjunction with other schools and experts, have been working on the development of a more appropriate curriculum for our pupils. After consulting with staff, parents and governors the process started with an inspirational INSET day lead by Peter Imray who is a leading academic in our field and who co-wrote 'Curricula for Teaching Children and Young People with Severe or Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties'. The governors were really excited to see the finished curriculum document. Throughout the three years it was being developed, the governors have been kept up to date on its progress as part of the Pupils, Curriculum and Strategic Planning Committee. We believe that this new curriculum better meets the needs of the pupils in school as there are three curricular strands – pre-formal, semi-formal and formal

and these are tailored to the individual needs of our pupils. All staff have been involved in writing the curriculum, through INSET and staff meetings and are now ready to share it with parents through a parents' meeting. As it is implemented, governors will continue to monitor its effectiveness.

## Governor Visits

Governors make visits to classes, school events and trips throughout the year. They fill in governor report forms which are passed on to the Full Governing Body.

## Evidence for Learning



Evidence for Learning is an app that tracks pupils' progress and achievement. Initially some teachers used a free trial of the app but as it became clear that it was something that would really support the assessment process, it was taken up by all and an enhanced version of the app purchased. Staff use Evidence for Learning to gather, annotate, assess, manage and curate evidence of students' learning.

Governors have been interested to know how this is working and have been given demonstrations by class staff in how to use it, how the evidence is stored and what the evidence tells the class teacher. They were able to see that it is a very useful tool as it supports assessment, planning and management of the curriculum as well as demonstrating pupils' progress and attainment.

## Health and Safety

Health and safety at Ash Lea School is, of course, the responsibility of all staff members.

There is however a Health and Safety Committee which takes the lead in this respect and it is staffed by the Headteacher, the Admin Assistant, the Site Manager and a Governor. This committee meets regularly to monitor this aspect of the school where anything that has been highlighted or brought to its attention is discussed and hopefully, put right.

The committee have attended and successfully completed The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health training course to help them in their role.

I believe H&S is at an excellent standard and regular monitoring by the H&S team ensures this standard is maintained.

We received a very good report from our last external check whilst at Cotgrave and we are continuing in this vein.

The current premises were checked on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> Feb and there were only two comments regarding minor housekeeping.

These assessments reflect the hard work and dedication put in by the staff and committee at Ash Lea.

## Leadership Development Programme

The Chairs of Governors' Leadership Development Programme provides opportunities for chairs and aspiring chairs to develop their school leadership skills and utilise these to promote school improvement. For the last 12 months Jeremy Pickering and Dawn Wigley have been attending this training in Leicester.

We feel it should make a difference to the strategic leadership of the school, improving the experience of children and their outcomes.

But in addition there will be other benefits that:

- develop leadership skills in a flexible way
- feel confident and ready for Ofsted
- develop relationships with the Headteacher and ability to support and challenge effectively
- support succession planning of the governing body by encouraging the vice chair to become involved at the same time
- get to know other local chairs and aspiring chairs, a benefit which can outlast the programme itself

We are almost at the end of the programme and will be feeding back to the full governing body in June. Both governors feel it has enhanced their understanding and confidence.



## 15 Years Governor Service for Ash Lea

We would like to say a very special thank you to **Alan Swales**, who this year received a certificate commemorating 15 years of service as a governor at Ash Lea School.



## Welcome to our Newest Governor



My daughter, Holly, has been at Ash Lea for 5 years, initially on a split placement and then full time from September 2014. She is currently in class 4 with Miss Cody. As for me, I am a qualified solicitor and have had my own business. I took a career break 6 years ago to care for Holly and now work for my husband, David, selling lighting for business jets! I'm looking forward to my new role as parent governor.

**Rachel Tyler - Parent Governor**

## Governor Vacancies

There are currently two vacancies on the Governing body - one for a parent governor and one for a co-opted (non Parent) governor. We would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in joining us. Please consider joining us yourself or invite any family or friends who might be interested to contact us, via the school office. We would especially welcome someone with a financial background in any way for one of these positions, as we do try and keep a balanced skill set across our governing body.

### Governor Training

Recent training includes:

- Safeguarding Children
- Financial Training
- New Governor Induction
- Optimus Education – Online Training Resource for Staff and Governors
- Equality and Diversity

### MEETING DATES FOR 2016-2017

#### Spring Term

<b>FINANCE</b>	<b>06.02.17</b>	<b>5.30</b>
<b>CURRICULUM</b>	<b>08.02.17</b>	<b>1.30</b>
<b>FULL GOVERNING BODY</b>	<b>27.02.17</b>	<b>5.30</b>
<b>PRE-BUDGET MEETING</b>	<b>13.03.17</b>	<b>5.30</b>

#### Summer Term

<b>FINANCE</b>	<b>15.05.17</b>	<b>5.30</b>
<b>CURRICULUM</b>	<b>17.05.17</b>	<b>1.00</b>
<b>FULL GOVERNING BODY</b>	<b>12.06.17</b>	<b>5.30</b>

### Contacting Governors

You can contact the Chair of Governors - Dr. Alex Macdonald via the school office, either by letter or e-mail - [office@ashlea.notts.sch.uk](mailto:office@ashlea.notts.sch.uk)

## Ash Lea Governors



Mrs. Tyler



Mr. Gardener



Mrs. Wilson



Mr. Swales



Mrs. Wigley



Parent Governor



Mrs. Parry-Evans



Mr. Pickering



Mrs. Nicholson



Ms. Gell



Mr. Macdonald



Co-Opted Governor