

Governors' Annual Report 2023-2024

It is hard to believe that another year has elapsed since my last Governors' report. Once again, it has been a very eventful and successful year for Old Dalby Primary School. Building work has been in evidence for much of the year, but the transformation of the campus is now complete. Improvements have included a new multi-weather play area for the EYFS children, planting of trees and hedges in the grounds, the long-overdue refurbishment of the staff room, and, after numerous delays, the extension to the Hall. The latter was finally completed in the last week of the summer term, but was well worth the wait, resulting in a much larger and beautiful space for assemblies, PE and school productions. Mrs Browne and the staff are to be congratulated on managing these projects so efficiently with minimal disruption to school activities.

Their brand new classroom provided the year 6 pupils (Hummingbird class) with excellent facilities in which to study for their SATs. They are to be commended on their promising results, which reflect their hard work throughout the year. Their average scores were above the national averages in reading, spelling punctuation and grammar, and maths, providing them with a firm foundation for their future studies. Whilst it is always sad to say goodbye to our pupils, we are confident that they will continue to flourish in their secondary schools. The Year 2 children did not sit Key Stage 1 SATs, as, from 2024, these tests are now optional. Internal assessments continue to be used to inform teaching and planning. The introduction of a new phonics scheme has proved very successful with 82% passing their phonics check.

Outside the classroom, the children have participated in a wide variety of sporting activities, including gymnastics, orienteering and futsal, with the popular after-school club providing further opportunities. A visit from representatives of Leicestershire Cricket Club was met with great enthusiasm. Residential trips to Beaumanor Hall, PGL at Caythorpe and Whitby were extremely successful, receiving very positive feedback from both parents and children

The school's commitment to supporting the physical and mental health of its pupils was evident in its mental wellbeing day and the establishment of *Zones of Regulation*. Coombs Catering Partnership were contracted at the start of the year to provide healthy and appetising school lunches for Old Dalby along with a number of other local primary schools. As a consequence, there has been an increase in the uptake of school lunches. Furthermore, the Community Meals Project continues to help a number of children in the school access school lunches by providing financial support. The project was recently given a boost through the broadcast of Baroness Casey's "Fixing Britain" programme on Radio 4, together with articles in the Times and Sunday Times.

The Governors are grateful to the village community for their continued support. The school's *Harvest* and *Children In Need* collections gathered food and monetary donations for local good causes, whilst two coffee mornings raised funds for cancer charities. The Governors would like to acknowledge the work of Mrs Deborah Wright who has stepped down as Chair of the PTA after 6 years at its helm. Mrs Wright built up the PTA from a very small group of committed parents to the large and enthusiastic group that it is now. She is succeeded by Ms Julia Birkin who brings the same drive and energy to the role. This was evident in the Parent Teacher Association's annual summer fete in May, which was well attended and enjoyed by all, raising over £2600 for school projects.

During the Harvest Festival, the school said goodbye to Reverend Jamie Mackay, who retired after 6 years as Priest-in-Charge at Old Dalby. He was a familiar face at the school, regularly leading collective worship, both in school and at the village church of St. John the Baptist.

Popular with the children, he possessed the ability to communicate with them in a language they understood and some of the songs he taught them have become firm favourites. We wish Reverend Jamie and his wife, Eva, every happiness in their retirement.

Mrs Jayne Scott also retired from the school staff in March, after almost 11 years. Throughout that time, she proved a most committed and conscientious practitioner, in her roles as EYFS teacher, SEND co-ordinator and deputy head. The Governors thank her for her dedication and expertise and extend our best wishes for the future. Mrs Alderson and Mrs Horan have taken on additional responsibilities following Mrs Scott's departure and are embracing their new roles with alacrity.

The Governing Body has seen few changes this year; we are fortunate to have a team of individuals who are committed to working with the Headteacher and the staff towards the continued improvement of this lovely school. Mrs Clare Allen was appointed in October 2023 as the new educational advisor to the Governors. She replaces Mr Stephen Gleave, who has supported the school in this capacity for more than 20 years. Mrs Sue Evans stepped down from her role as Clerk to the Governing Body in order to spend more time with her grandchildren. Mrs Evans provided invaluable administrative support for Governors' meetings and her knowledge of the local community proved an asset. The governors thank her for her work and companionship over the past year, which has been much appreciated. Mrs Julie Gillies was appointed as the New Clerk to the Governors in July 2024 and we look forward to working with her from the start of the Autumn term.

Governors continue to attend relevant training to further their knowledge. All Governors complete annual Safeguarding training and Leicestershire Governor Support and Development (GSD) provides training on a number of topics. In October 2023, the Governors received training from the Leicester Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) on the new SIAMS framework, which examines the school's Christian vision for education.

In their monitoring role, the Governors have undertaken a number of visits over the past academic year. These have included scrutiny of Safeguarding procedures, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision, as well as the teaching of phonics, humanities and science. These visits enable governors to see first-hand what is happening in school, to talk to the staff and pupils, and to make recommendations where necessary.

As governors, we consider it a privilege to serve Old Dalby C of E Primary School; it is a school which embraces its Christian values and puts the children at the heart of everything it does. Within the security of its walls, children are nurtured and taught how to navigate an increasingly complex world. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributes to making Old Dalby School such a special place for our young people, not least its enthusiastic and committed teachers and support staff, led by their Headteacher, Mrs Browne. The Governing Body will continue to support the school in delivering its objectives, striving always to develop and improve.