



# Abbey Lane Primary School

## Governor Newsletter July 2024

### Message from the Co-Chairs

This school year has been full of change and activity for Abbey Lane School. I want to thank all the staff and the leadership team for their dedication to our children during this uncertain period.

In January, alongside Jane, I was elected as Co-Chair of the Governing Board of Abbey Lane School, which was a tremendous honour and privilege. It is both daunting and rewarding. In my new position, I was involved in the OFSTED inspection that took place earlier this year. I didn't know what to expect on the morning of the inspection and felt a bit nervous. However, my nerves disappeared when I met Mr. Calcutt and the leadership team. They were 'cool as cucumbers' and had everything well in hand. From that moment on, I knew we were in for a great couple of days.

While an OFSTED inspection might not be something one typically enjoys, the staff and children seemed to revel in the opportunity to showcase our school. My fellow Governors and I had the chance to meet the inspector, which was sometimes emotional. It was one of the highlights of my professional career when he expressed what a great school we have, particularly praising our fantastic children—who are, of course reflections of their parents.

In closing, I want to thank the rest of the Governing Board. We are a new team, and I appreciate their hard work and support in this challenging volunteer role. Speaking of volunteers, a shout out to PALS who do so much to help our school. They are currently looking for more volunteers, so please contact Kate and the team if you would like to help. It's a great way to support the school.

I hope everyone has a great summer.

**Dan Smith**

It's has been a very busy but successful year for Abbey Lane Governors.

Dan has already captured a lot of what has happened this year and I echo many of his comments and sentiments.

We almost have a full complement of Governors for the first time in a long time, which is hugely positive and that will help us to deliver our ambition for the school alongside the leadership and the staff team. Our biggest asset I believe is our fantastic team of staff, Mr Calcutt will continue to be the 'front man' but behind the scenes he is backed by a great leadership team.

The children continue to be a huge source of pride. My favourite part of being a Governor is spending time with them. Cleethorpes with the Y1's was fantastic - if very noisy!

Finally, a huge thank you to our families that support school to be the great place that it is. Have a great summer.

**Jane Austin**

### **Claire Holland - Vice Chair**

Hi everyone. I can't believe we've nearly finished another school year already. It really has flown.

I have now completed my first year as a parent Governor, and I was also appointed as Vice-Chair in November. Due to being on maternity leave this year, when I am in school, it is normally with my baby who has become our honorary mini governor!

Once again, I have seen firsthand how hard staff continue to work to give our children such a high quality education. It makes me really proud to be a part of the community at Abbey Lane.

It's been a busy year full of new changes and challenges. As a Governor, it's exciting to be involved with creating the next chapter of Abbey Lane as we move through the academisation process.

I hope you all enjoy the rest of the year and have a fantastic summer holiday.

### **Mr Calcutt - Acting Headteacher**

I started working here in January 2023 as Deputy Headteacher and have loved getting to know the children, families and community in the 18 months since then. I am incredibly proud to be both part of the staff team at this school but also part of the governing body.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the role of a governing body in relation to a primary school, here's a brief overview. Our governing body is responsible for the strategic direction of the school. This remit includes holding school leaders to account for the educational performance of the school, ensuring that the ethos and vision of the school are correct and clear and overseeing the financial management of the school. In short, Abbey Lane's governing body helps to ensure that there is accountability, oversight and assurance.

I love being part of the governing board at Abbey Lane. It is like being in the engine room of the school where all major strategic decisions are either formed or approved. It's great to be involved in and this is particularly true when it is within a school as awesome as ours which has an exciting future ahead of it.

### **Katie Leonard - Parent Governor**

I've seen the great work of the school up close since I started as a Governor in November. I've spent time in FS2 crafting and learning about Phonics (the children were better than me!), invigilated Maths and English Y6 SATs (they know more than me!) and helped out on school trips to White Post Farm, Magna and the Emergency Services Museum. I've loved getting to know the staff and the children and am really looking forward to next academic year and helping the school continue its great work.

I was in at the deep end with one of my first formal duties: meeting the OFSTED inspector! I can only imagine what it is like for the staff, as I was nervous enough and was revising the night before like I was preparing for an exam! Thankfully, the children and staff had done such an amazing job at showing off the fantastic work of the school on day one of the inspection, on day two the governors had plenty of time to speak from the heart about how wonderful we feel the school is. And we really do. It is going from strength to strength under the leadership of Mr Calcutt, and I can't thank him and the brilliant staff enough for taking such good care of our kids. Of course, it's a community effort and our school would be nothing without our fantastic children and their families. Thank you for being so supportive over the last year during some challenging times.

## Denva Phipps-Powell - Parent Governor

Hi. My name is Denva. I have recently joined the governing body as a parent governor. I have a daughter in Y2 and she is really happy here!

I joined because I wanted to have a helping hand in the school and its further development and community presence. I have only been part of the team for a few months but already feel included and comfortable with sharing my opinions and ideas.

There are some exciting changes coming to the school and I am happy to be part of it.

## Andrew Mumford - Parent Governor

My first academic year as a parent governor has flown by. It's been immensely rewarding. My daughters, in Y1 and Y3, really enjoy learning at Abbey Lane and being part of the school community. I wanted to become a governor to help contribute to the development of all Abbey Lane's pupils by bringing my skills and experience to help maintain high teaching standards and enhance the school's effectiveness. I work in Higher Education, where I have built up 15 years' teaching experience, contributing to the governance of the university where I am a Professor.

Rebuilding good relations between the school and parents is essential and has driven much of the work we have done this year in order to create an open, friendly environment for all.

As the 'link governor' for History, I thoroughly enjoyed spending the afternoon with the Y3's during their Ancient Egypt Day in May. All the children revelled in telling me all the weird and wonderful facts they'd learned about pharaohs and mummies. The immersive costumes were a great touch - although the sight of Mr Robinson dressed as Cleopatra (wig and all) is burnt on my retinas. In the same vein, I'm really looking forward to accompanying the Y2's on their trip to Manor Lodge Castle in July.

Among all the other activities I've undertaken, whether it was accompanying a Reception class down to Woodseats Library or invigilating a Y6 SATS exam, I've been struck by the dedication of the teachers and the passion of the pupils to learn. Those are exactly the elements of the school I look forward to helping maintain and develop that over the next three years.

We'd like to welcome the newest addition to the Governing Board, **Jack Lowe**. Jack was appointed in May and has filled our last remaining parent governor vacancy. We're delighted to have Jack on the team and that we now have a full complement of parent governors.

We have a vacancy on the Governing Board for a co-opted governor with a background in finance. Whilst this is not a parent governor position, parent and carers are welcome to apply. If you or anyone in your wider network is interested in finding out more about the role, we'd be very happy to hear from you. Please contact Jane at [janeaustin.gov@abbeylane.sheffield.sch.uk](mailto:janeaustin.gov@abbeylane.sheffield.sch.uk).

## Contact us

If you'd like to get in touch with the Governors, you can:

Phone: 0114 2745054 and leave a message with the school office

Email: [governors@abbeylane.sheffield.sch.uk](mailto:governors@abbeylane.sheffield.sch.uk)

Write to: The Governors, c/o Abbey Lane Primary School, Abbey Lane, Sheffield, S8 0BN

Or drop a note in to the school office.