



Oatlands School
Living Our Values, learning for Life

Governor Newsletter 2025

Dear Parents, Carers and Staff,

A very warm welcome to the first edition of the Oatlands School Governor Newsletter.

It has been another busy and eventful term here at Oatlands and as the festive season approaches, I want to take a moment to look back at what the school has achieved this term but also to look ahead to what is being done to maintain Oatlands' position as a thriving and successful school within our community.

The beginning of the autumn term is all about the Reception children – starting at school for the very first time with all the excitement and nerves that go with it. I had the pleasure of attending a class assembly in October and was amazed at how well behaved and respectful the children were. Well done to all the teachers who have worked so hard to help these children flourish.

The end of term saw each year group perform their Christmas shows. The Year 2 performance was a joy to watch and I was so impressed with how the children performed their roles, learnt their lines and sang their hearts out. The room was filled to the brim with festive cheer.

This term saw the departure of Mrs North and Mrs Brittan. Both have been hugely valued members of staff for over 15 and 13 years respectively. We are grateful for all they have done for the school and wish them both the very best for the future.

In the classrooms, the teachers and children have been working hard. Highlights include the success of the Year 1 phonics screening, which saw the highest results for many years and the successful delivery of maths challenges in Year 2.

But it hasn't been all hard work: at Oatlands, the school tries to provide a rich, varied and interesting set of extra-curricular activities: there have been visits to the school by a theatre company, all three of the emergency services (pre-planned not call outs!), Reverend Mark from St Mary's Church, and from an expert on the history of toys.

Financially, the school is in a good position, and we are always looking to see how we can improve the school environment. Over the summer holidays, we invested in new intercom-controlled gates and outdoor lighting which meant improved access and safety for those using Oscar club. We hope to make further improvements to the school facilities in the year ahead.



Despite this sound financial position, our funding is becoming ever more stretched, and we are very grateful to the PTA committee, led so ably by Carina MacKenzie, for all their hard work this term. The funds raised by them are essential to the school, so parents and carers please do get involved with our PTA if you have the time.

I was delighted to see the high level of interest in the recent parent governor elections. There were ten excellent candidates, and we look forward to welcoming Catherine Beeby-Mills and Cassie Stanley on to the board.

On behalf of the governing body, I want to thank Mrs Mooney and her fantastic team for all their hard work this term. It is because of them that Oatlands School is such a kind and nurturing environment, giving each child the chance to shine.

Finally, I would like to extend my warmest wishes for a peaceful and joyful festive season.

Very best wishes,

Charles Langley
Chair of Governors



Governors at Oatlands: Who We Are and What We Do?

Oatlands Governing body is made up of 14 governors consisting of the Headteacher, a staff governor, a Local Authority governor, 2 parent governors and 9 co-opted governors. As school governors our role is to provide strategic leadership and accountability in school with a focus on three areas:

1. Setting the vision and strategic direction for the school;
2. The educational performance of the school, its staff and its pupils;
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

We are responsible for ensuring the school's effectiveness and providing oversight, but we do not handle the day-to-day operations. We meet as a full Governing Body and in subcommittees (finance, curriculum, personnel and facilities) once a term.

Oatlands benefits hugely from being part of a strong 3 school partnership with Manby Lodge and Cleves. Each term the Heads and Chair of Governors from each school meet to share ideas, discuss performance and consider ways of improving our schools. Although we have our own autonomy, ethos and character, we recognise that we are just one part of a seven-year journey for each child and we benefit significantly by working together.

For the profiles of our governors, please see [the website](#).



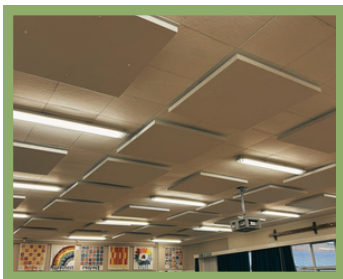
FACILITIES (CHAired BY HILARY BUTLER)

The Facilities Committee oversees the school buildings and grounds. It has a responsibility to ensure the school complies with health and safety regulations.

Committee members carry out termly visual inspections of the school and report their findings to the full Committee for action. In the last two years this has resulted in successful funding bids to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for refurbishment of OSCAR Club toilets and a new security gate and lighting. The latter was installed during the summer holidays and prevents unauthorised entry/exit which had been a serious concern. This term's premises inspection identified that the downstairs toilets need refurbishing. The Committee is considering a CIL bid for this work.

The Committee monitors major building projects and plans for repairs and decoration (maintenance schedule). It provides support to the school when required to ensure that the school is safe and able to support high-quality teaching and learning. The replacement of Year 2 flooring had been identified as a priority and this was completed over the summer holidays.

The Committee reviews and approves premises-related policies including the Health & Safety Policy and Lettings Policy. Pupil and staff safety is a priority. The Health & Safety Policy was updated this term and all staff were asked to complete the Health and Safety for School Staff online training.



WELFARE AND SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding, wellbeing and inclusion remain our absolute priority and this year we have included these areas in all of our visits to the school to ensure they are woven into every aspect of school life.

All governors have completed the annual safeguarding training and are committed to ensuring Oatlands is a safe and inclusive environment for all.



FINANCE (CHAired BY LIAM MCKEEVOR)

The Finance Committee continues to closely monitor expenditure against the school's financial plan to ensure we secure the very best outcomes for our children.

A key part of our strategy is to actively seek funding sources outside of the standard government budget. Last term we are pleased to confirm a successful CIL funding bid for a new security gate and lighting for the playground. These upgrades have enhanced safety, particularly for after school OSCAR.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to the PTA for their ongoing support and fundraising efforts. The PTA's donations of over £33,000 to the school in the 2024-25 year provided funds towards several capital projects including computer equipment and furniture. The PTA has further funded general curriculum support; freeing up the school's budget for spend on high-quality teaching.

Finally, in what remains a challenging financial climate for schools nationally, we would like to recognise the exceptional work of our Business Manager, whose careful stewardship and proactive approach have enabled us to maintain stability while still investing in key priorities.

PERSONNEL (CHAired BY HILARY BUTLER)

The Personnel Committee oversees the school's staffing, including recruitment, pay, appraisals, welfare and professional development.

This term the Committee continued to prioritise the well-being of staff and their professional development in order to support school improvement and ensure that all pupils are given the best opportunity to thrive and achieve their true potential.

Staff are consulted on well-being issues through an annual survey and the results and feedback are considered and subsequent actions monitored. Preparations for this year's survey are underway and it will be issued by Governors in the spring term.

The Committee monitors and reviews staff-related policies to ensure they comply with national guidelines and meet the needs and objectives of the school and the School Development Plan. This term the Committee reviewed the Special Leave of Absence Policy, Appraisal Policy, Separated Parents Policy and the Data Protection Policy. The Committee agreed that the Data Protection Policy required greater scrutiny and this will be followed up in the spring term.

The Committee can deal with staff grievances and disciplinary matters.



CURRICULUM (CHAired BY CHRISSY PREBBLE)

Our curriculum team continue to work alongside Mrs Mooney and the staff to monitor changes and developments to ensure we continue to deliver high standards in all areas of our school. We were thrilled to hear about the success of the Y1 phonics screening, which saw the highest results for many years and successful delivery of maths challenges in year two, which saw some children taking part in maths competitions with children from local schools.

Attendance remains high, above both the national and surrey average and we thank parents and carers for their commitment to ensuring their children into school on time ready to learn.

Committee meetings have focused on safeguarding, policy reviews and analysing the aims and actions in the school development plan, particularly in reading, developing language skills in the early years, and new aspects of the writing curriculum. We are looking forward to seeing these in practice during monitoring visits in the new year.

Work with partnership schools goes from strength to strength as our teachers work with colleagues at Cleves and Manby Lodge to support transition between schools and ensure a thorough and engaging coverage of the curriculum during the primary years.

We are committed to ensuring staff are able to stay up to date and build on their knowledge and understanding of child development with high quality training in both academic and pastoral areas of school life, including how to enhance learning experiences using AI in a meaningful and effective way. These skills have been used to develop interactive, personalised quizzes which will help to inform our assessment of pupils' progress in the new year.

Staff continue to work hard to embed the children's understanding of our 'Ready, respectful, safe' rules and are pleased to have had very positive feedback from external visitors, which support our findings on the children's behaviour and engagement during lessons.