

Lickey Hills Primary School & Nursery

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Annual report to parents and carers for 2020/2021

Welcome to our Governor annual report for 2020/2021. This has probably been the most unusual year in all our lives. In many ways it has flown by, but it seems a very long time since we sent children home in March 2020 and I'm sure none of us expected us to still be living with such significant day to day restrictions as a result of the pandemic. We hope 2021/22 will see a return to normality and the children and staff will regain the full educational experience at Lickey Hills Primary School and Nursery.

Whilst the lockdown arrangements have changed the focus of the Governing Body, on reflection, our most significant achievement this year has been supporting the school to remain open as much as possible, and keeping children, staff and the wider community safe. The Senior Leadership Team and site staff worked hard over the summer break to put plans in place and enable a full re-open in September 2020. Ensuring all risk assessments were in place for the start of term meant that many teachers worked through part of their holiday, and we are grateful that the staff worked together to support our re-opening. We also wish to thank parents for their patience whilst we ironed out logistical teething problems around the staggered start and pick-up arrangements. It has been fantastic to see so many Senior Leaders throughout the year, out in all weathers, making sure that people remain safe.

It was therefore sad, but not unexpected, when in January the Government once again asked people to stay at home and our learning moved online for most children. Key worker children remained in school and staff supported home learning, this time using the Oak National Academy resource which allowed more variety and interaction for children in their learning. These were supplemented by on-line assemblies and stories being read by staff which gave the children a welcome connection with teachers and friends. Thank you to all parents who supported their children's learning through this second lockdown. Keeping children interested in learning during lockdown II was much more challenging, made all the harder by the darker evenings. Balancing time with children was tricky when many employers were asking people to return to more routine working patterns. The children demonstrated how resilient they were with amazing home-learning being submitted and displayed in the year blogs. It showcased the wider talents and interests the children have which is encouraged and celebrated at Lickey Hills.

We continue to be extremely proud and appreciative of our superb teaching staff, support staff, office staff and site staff. They have maintained focus and dedication throughout this challenging and uncertain time and continued to provide a school provision for our key worker families and home-learners, whilst juggling their own family demands and personal circumstances. So a special thank you to them all.

We also value the Hive, who under the management of Miss Lynch has offered our before and after school club provision for key worker children during the lockdowns and, also for the wider school when open for most of the year. We recognise that not all schools have opened their wrap-around care, and we also know how many parents rely on this facility.

Not being able to have face to face gatherings has not stopped the parents and carers who support our PTA. This team has continued to work behind the scenes and the school very much enjoyed the 'Break the Rules Day' which was a great way to have some safe, and socially distanced fun in school. The PTA is always looking for more parents to get involved and I encourage everyone to think about what you could do to support them as they are extremely valued, both for their social events and also the financial support they provide for the school. We really look forward to them engaging with the wider school community once restrictions are lifted in the future.

Old Birmingham Road, Lickey, Birmingham B45 8EU • Telephone 0121 445 1992 • Fax 0121 445 5803
email office@lickeyhills.worcs.sch.uk • www.lickeyhills.worcs.sch.uk

Headteacher Miss Amanda Salisbury, B.Ed(Hons), NPQH



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Since the full return in March, the Country has seen the development of a variant and cases rising in some regions which reminds us that we must all continue to be vigilant and stay safe. It is a credit to Miss Salisbury that under her leadership, we have kept most bubbles open continuously. Whilst it is hugely frustrating when we have to close a bubble, we have continued to ensure that our risk assessments are robust, our plans are signed off by Worcestershire County Council and we are following the guidance from Public Health England on the scale of any closure.

As Governors, it is frustrating to have another year without SATs results as we know our children are capable and have worked hard, but our focus now is to monitor the school's 'Catch-up Funding'. This will be used to support and consolidate learning whilst also identifying and plugging any gaps in education which our children have. The catch-up plans and progress against these plans are reported to us and we will continue to focus on the impact of this investment.

We are also excited to be able to support the introduction of a new curriculum for next year. Some of our teachers presented their proposals at our last Governor meeting and we are very much looking forward to seeing how Art and DT, History and Music will be taught across the year groups, in line with the new National Curriculum and providing children with subject specific learning opportunities. Other curriculum areas will be presented to us when we return in September. The aim is to ensure pupils can build on their learning and make connections across the subjects. The lesson plans demonstrated a variety of learning styles which will hopefully engage pupils and provide a sound base from which they can continue their studies in the future. We are grateful that staff have been able to work on this significant project alongside keeping the school open and continuing their day-to-day roles.

We are also pleased to confirm that there are no changes to our staffing body this year. Mrs Ray and Mrs Trafford have welcomed children this year and we look forward to working with them again when they return.

We are also prioritising the educational priorities identified in the School Development Plan as well as ensuring staff well-being remains as good as possible. We cannot wait to get back into school and see teaching in action. Meetings have been difficult to manage remotely, particularly with the level of additional work we have had to deliver, so I am particularly appreciative for the time and energy my Governor colleagues have provided as well as a special thank you to the Clerk to the Governing Body, Sarah Lamb, who has kept up to date with a significant amount of guidance which has been provided and helped steer us through this year.

Finally, we would like to wish our Year 6 children who are moving up to high school a big thank you for their hard work throughout their time with us. The Senior Leadership Team were adamant that they shouldn't miss out on everything this year and so we were thrilled when we were able to grant permission for them to attend a PGL activity week in early June. Fantastic fun was had by all and it is great that the children have not missed out on this residential opportunity which many other schools have not been able to arrange and support. It was sad that the year 6 bubble had to close recently, but we were pleased to welcome them back for the last few days of the term, enabling them to experience a Year 6 leavers send off. We are proud to send these children on to the next step in their learning journey and hope that they will look back on their time at Lickey Hills Primary School with happy memories. A special farewell also to those parents who are leaving us and thank you for your continued support over all the previous years.

We wish all families a happy and healthy summer break and hope that by September, infection levels have remained sufficiently low to enable all children to return to school. Then, as the year progresses, we hope to be able to re-introduce some of the school activities, including those with parents in attendance, which we have all missed over the past 16 months.

Emily Mayne
On behalf of the Governing Body

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