

## **Annual report to parents and carers for 2020/2021**

Welcome to our Governor annual report for 2020/2021. Probably 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, using a blended approach of online resources, such as White Rose Maths and Oak National Academy, with non-screen based activities such as P.E. and art, which allowed more variety and interaction for children in their learning. These were supplemented by on-line assemblies, singing lessons and stories read by staff. The use of Google Classrooms enabled daily interaction between staff and children, as well as direct feedback to learning, giving 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 this time it 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 demonstrated 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.

Since the full return in March, the country has seen the development of a highly transmissible Covid variant causing cases to rise nationally, reminding 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.

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 lockdown 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.

Despite all of the disruption this year, and whilst continuing to provide the highest standards of teaching across all learning contexts, our teaching team has redeveloped our non-core subject curriculum alongside core subjects, English, mathematics and science. This new interconnected school curriculum links themes across year groups giving children the opportunity to ensure learning is deep, meaningful, relevant and long lasting. This whole school curriculum creates a coherent learning journey for children across non-core National Curriculum themes. Three 'Golden Threads', Global Citizenship, Legacy and Childhood, Home and Family, seamlessly link one theme to the next, each year group to the next. The primary focus of the curriculum is through history and geography elements which ensures that a skills-based approach is established rather than one that is content driven. We aim for children to have a good grasp of what it means to be a historian and a geographer and be able to apply these skills to future learning, rather than learning a series of facts. Other non-core subjects then interweave through the curriculum creatively, again with a focus on developing key subject-specific skills. Each teacher in school is a

subject lead and each has developed skills progression grids, overviews and teaching resources for each year group for their subject, so that expert guidance can be given to each class teacher. A trial through the Summer Term has been enthusiastically received by pupils across the school, ready for a full roll out in the new academic year.

There are only two changes to our staffing body this year. We say goodbye to Mrs Bird, the LB2 Teaching Assistant, who has been with the school for many years. We also send Miss Elerton, the LB1 Teaching Assistant, off to a new adventure as she returns to her teaching career in a Nursery class. We wish them all the very best for the future. Mrs Ray, Mrs Matthews and Mrs Trafford have welcomed their own children this year and we look forward to working with them again when they return from maternity leave.

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 has been sad to recently hear that the Year 6 bubble has had to close but we look forward to welcoming them back for the last few days of term and 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.

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 how the 'Catch-up Funding' is being utilised. This will be used to support and consolidate learning whilst also identifying and plugging any gaps which our children have. The catch up plans and progress against these plans is reported to us and we will continue to focus on the impact of this investment. 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. 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.

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