

Brabourne Church of England Primary School

Brabourne, Ashford, Kent TN25 5LQ * Tel/Fax 01303 813276 * email office@brabourne.kent.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Stapley

14th July 2021

Dear Parents,

Congratulations on making it through a unique and challenging year! As governors, we have very much taken a back seat this year, supporting from afar as the school copes with obstacle after obstacle thrown at them. Virtually everything they have needed to deal with has been on the operational side of education which means it's been over to Mr. Stapley and the staff. We have stayed abreast of events through full governing board meetings and committee meetings held over Zoom but our usual visits have been suspended to protect both staff and pupils.

Teachers have needed to cope with changing back and forth between distance learning and classroom teaching. Even in lockdown, many pupils needed to attend school and be supported and supervised and even after lockdown, some pupils needed to isolate yet still be educated. This in turn meant the Teaching Assistants have had a key role in school too – providing the face-to-face support for those pupils in through lockdown and feeding back on online learning. I'm sure you've all struggled to adapt so frequently to the changes in guidelines too, all whilst trying to keep your children happy and engaged. The good news is that all those efforts seem to have paid off. Since the regulations have lifted slightly, I've made it into school a couple of times and met with enthusiastic, happy little people who seem completely settled. Even the academic results which might be expected to have suffered are bouncing back towards a more normal level for this point in the year – thanks to some extra targeted support at school and lots of help at home!

Meantime, the wider curriculum has probably been the biggest sacrifice this year. There have been very few trips out and no 'non-essential' visitors allowed in for most of the academic year. There have been last minute changes and far-too-frequent cancellations for planned events when guidelines change. Once again, teachers have been as creative as possible to find safe solutions to bring the wider world into the classroom, able to take advantage of newly available technologies and online working as everybody struggles across the same hurdles. In recent weeks the school has also battled the loss of access to all the 'control' systems including emails, calendars, finance and HR systems, data etc. etc. Just a final spanner in the works to finish off this year-to-be-forgotten in the same style!

So, thank you all for your patience and support and apologies for any changes and missed communications you've experienced. Behind the scenes, the swans have been paddling hard whilst trying to appear serene on the surface.

Looking forward, we really hope next year will be a chance to regroup and to plan for the future again. With a settled coaching team lined up, there are great plans for a wider range of sports and plans to enter more competitions – giving opportunities for all those children that would like to learn more skills. We also hope to continue our integration into the local community and beyond. Jupiter class has recently been doing a project on democracy and have had a Zoom meeting with

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our MP – normally this would be a trip to parliament and the school is keen to start up these sorts of experiences again. On the upside, outdoor learning has been strongly encouraged throughout this year which has continued to support the mental and physical well-being of both pupils and staff. Our job as governors is to work with the staff to pull all of the plans together into a long term, cohesive strategy that meets the school's needs as well as the requirements of Ofsted and the Church inspections. This will be a priority once day-to-day life is more settled again.

We've also had a few changes on the governing board through the year with both Sarah Vant and Sarah Hopker reaching the end of their terms of office as parent governors in February. Their experience will be much missed. We're very thankful to the new parent governors who have stepped forward over the year – Selina Eyles, Lena Valentine and Natasha Hilton. Mrs Vasu has also replaced Mr Taylor as staff governor. Our governing board is now as follows:

- Hester Fenwick (Chair) – Co-opted Governor
- Roger Shaw (Vice-Chair and Chair of Finance Committee) – Co-opted Governor
- Lucie Edmed (Chair of Teaching and Learning Committee) – Local Authority Governor
- Rev. Chris Denyer (Chair of Ethics and Culture Committee, Safeguarding) – Ex-Officio Foundation Governor
- Ruthie Gilbert – Foundation Governor
- Becks Massie (SEND) – Parent Governor
- Selina Eyles – Parent Governor
- Lena Valentine (Health and Safety) – Parent Governor
- Natasha Hilton – Parent Governor
- Andrew Stapley – Ex-Officio as HT
- Katie Vasu – Staff Governor

Clerk to Governors (professional adviser and minute taker) – Kerry Percival-Smith

To find out more about the governing board, go to the governor page on the school website. If you'd like to know more or have specific questions, do contact me or talk to any one of the governors if you see them at school. With five current parents and two grandparents on the board, chances are you'll see one or other of them on the school run sooner or later!

We hope you all have a relaxing holiday and pray for a calmer year ahead.

Kind Regards,



Hester Fenwick (hesterfenwick@hotmail.com)