

Annual Governor Report: 2012-2013

Our vision: We will achieve excellence through an holistic approach to developing every aspect of the individual. The school will actively encourage innovation; we will be inclusive and welcome all members of the community; and teaching and learning will be rewarding and fun.

A love of learning and the raising of standards are our main priorities. We believe in developing confident, considerate and responsible citizens.

The school governors and staff at Watton at Stone Primary and Nursery School hope you all had an enjoyable summer break and would like to welcome you back to school at the start of the autumn term.

This is the first of our annual governor reports, intended to provide children, parents and the school as a whole with more information about what our role as governors entails and what direction we hope the school will take over the coming months and years.

The role of the school governing body

Governors have an important role as a ‘critical friend’ to the school, working in partnership with the school community to help provide the best possible education for our pupils. This is achieved by setting the school’s values, vision and strategic aims, agreeing plans and policies, and making creative use of resources.

Further, it is our role to monitor and evaluate performance, to support and challenge the head teacher in managing the school and to ensure the school is accountable to the children and the parents it serves, to its local community, to those who fund and maintain it and to the staff it employs.

Put simply, through asking questions and regularly visiting the school we keep a close eye on how things are done to make sure that it runs as smoothly and effectively as possible.

School review

The appointment of Mrs Hussain as Head Teacher has been a great addition to the school. There have been noticeable changes to the way the school looks with improved play equipment, the bike and scooter shelter and efforts to encourage practical, outdoor learning with features such as the reading tree and gardening club. Budding gardeners and willing volunteers to help run or assist with after school activities should contact the school office.

The parents’ survey, which was sent out earlier in the year, generated a lot of encouraging feedback. Many of you expressed support for the availability of staff and the head teacher in the playground at the start of the school day. Communication between the school and parents has also improved. Perhaps, most importantly, you reported that your children feel safe, happy and secure at school.

We know that there is still room for improvement. In its most recent inspection, Ofsted rated the school inspection grade 2. For those of you who haven't seen the report: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 requires improvement and 4 is inadequate. Come the next inspection, we hope to be on our way to becoming an outstanding school and with hard work we believe that goal is achievable.

To view the current Ofsted report in full, please visit the school website at: www.wattonatstone.herts.sch.uk or try the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.org.uk.

Class sizes

We have received a significant rise in the number of applications to the school, indeed we welcomed some new families earlier this year. The current roll call (at the time of going to press) stands at 244 pupils. In particular, we received more applications to join the Reception class than we have places available.

Many newcomers have been attracted by our good reputation for identifying and supporting those children with special educational needs. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special needs is above average. Support staff have undergone specialised training in identifying and supporting children with conditions such as Autism and ADHD.

Not surprisingly, more applications have boosted class sizes somewhat. This generates its own set of challenges and it is of greatest concern to you, the parents, who naturally want the best possible learning environment for your children. Rest assured, both the school and the governing body have and will continue to monitor any impact this may have on the children, whether this means further split classes or monitoring those pupils working in classes with 30+ children or more.

So far, the signs are positive. The children are happy and pupils' progress and achievement overall is good.

Kind words, kind hands

Behaviour on the whole is also good. Nevertheless, incidents of bullying and anti-social behaviour will inevitably occur. What is important is that these incidents are spotted early and acted upon promptly. Some of you may have already received a letter about the recently formed anti-bullying working party. With input from staff, parents and the children themselves, the working party has created an anti-bullying policy that states exactly what bullying is and how the school will deal with such incidents as they occur. We hope that many of you will attend a meeting about the policy in September to find out more. The full policy will also be available to view on the school website later this term.

Where next?

This year, we will be focusing on a number of key areas including:

- improving writing skills at the school
- developing outdoor learning
- making progress in Maths and English
- further developing our Early Years Foundation Stage provision

We would also strongly encourage take-up of free school meals which, at present, remains low. Even if you are not eligible for *free* meals, a hot lunch may still be beneficial to your children, particularly as the weather turns colder. It costs £2.05 per day

and you don't have to send your child every day; or pay for the whole term in advance if you are unable to. If you would like to see the menu or if you think you may be eligible for free school meals, please speak in confidence to the school office.

Talk to us...

We are listening and we value your feedback. If an issue arises regarding your children we would advise always speaking to your child's class teacher first, then to the head teacher, Mrs Hussain. If you feel that the matter still has not been dealt with to your satisfaction, you may contact the Chair of Governors via the school website or the school office.

For more general issues, the parent forum is also a good outlet available to parents wishing to tell the school what is going well and where there is further room for improvement. Details of the next parent forum will be published in the school newsletter, so keep an eye out after half term to find out when and how you can have your say.

Come and have fun – Friends of Watton

Last but not least, a message from the Friends of Watton, without whom much of the school's additional funding and resources would not exist.

As a governing body and as a school, we want the children to have the best possible facilities available to them. Therefore, we need as many of you as possible to attend the events that FOW works so hard to organise throughout the school year. Don't just assume that someone else will go. We want to see as many of you there as possible, not just to raise money for the school, but because we want to continue the strong sense of community that we believe the school offers and Watton at Stone is so proud of.

If you can spare an hour or two to help out at an event, or have an idea for an event that you would love to come to, please let FOW know (see the school website for contact details). The money that we raise really will benefit not just your own children but everyone at the school and hopefully the local community as well.

If you would like to find out more about the governing body and the work we do, or if you are interested in becoming a governor in the future, please speak to one of us, or visit the school website: www.wattonatstone.herts.sch.uk