



Carrington Junior School

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11th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Governor New Year Newsletter- January 2021

It is just over a year since I last wrote to you to update you on the role and work of the Governing Board. Although it is already February this comes with belated wishes for a happier New Year to you all. 2020 was a challenging year and the start of 2021 continues to be so as well in so many ways, especially for children and parents whilst schools are partially closed.

I know that you will be doing all you can to support your children both educationally and their wellbeing through this period, whether they are in school or not, alongside all the very real challenges, uncertainties and anxieties which COVID-19 and lockdown has brought to every family in one way or another.

Over the past year it has been a massive challenge for every school to respond to government DfE requirements for safe opening, (whether partial or full) whilst also creating as welcoming an environment as possible whether online or in school, and offering a rich and engaging curriculum for every child.

Mrs Majcher and her staff have worked tirelessly, including through holidays and weekends since last March, to create the many ways of working to achieve this. Governors have worked alongside her team to provide additional support, information, monitoring and guidance by linking their knowledge of the school with their experiences in the wider world. We are very lucky to have governors who have expertise in Public Health, ICT, Human Resources, e-learning and management. This pooling of skills and collaboration has helped the school respond to the many challenges and changes now in place. You will be familiar with many examples: reorganising the school to maximise social distancing, financial and other resources diverted to ensure additional learning resources and computers are available, more staff for cleaning, additional support for children and families in need, mental health support, new ways for staff to plan and deliver lessons online while working from home. The list goes on!

For you, as parents, this has also included compliance with all the new government requirements set out in the COVID Home School Agreement, closure of 'bubbles' in response to COVID cases at short notice, home learning support, and the communications and encouragement you have sent the school via Seesaw and other means. We thank you for this.

By working together as a school community, our focus has been to 'rebuild' the way the school works from the bottom up to benefit your children as best we can in COVID times. I am very proud, as are the whole Board, of what the school is offering your children and the ways your children are positively responding as people and developing their learning with your help and encouragement.

It has been a steep learning curve for everyone, and it continues to be so; but **achievement** is in no small measure because you have **believed** in and supported the school and your children in so many ways so that they continue to **succeed** in spite of everything.

Of course, I know that in all of this there will be good days and bad days but it is important to have a positive perspective on this. Mrs Cameron's newsletter last week gives lots of useful tips and supportive ideas to help manage this.

Some of you may still be worried about your children falling behind educationally and this concern is being fuelled by the media. Mrs Majcher and her staff are doing everything possible to limit this and have put in place additional support for those children who need it whether they are in school or at home. I think you should also be encouraged that, following last year's lockdown, with careful teaching most children had caught up educationally in key subjects of English and maths by last Christmas. A catch-up programme with additional government funding is being developed as children's needs are identified to make sure this continues.

As Mrs Majcher has said in several newsletters, reading is the most important activity for children and an essential skill to success. All the evidence shows that reading for pleasure is good for wellbeing and helps children explore their imagination and the world beyond the confines of lockdown. Reading gives children the skills they need to fill any educational gaps and progress as well. So, it follows, if pressures at home mean you can do nothing else, then doing some reading every day is the most important thing to do.

I think it is vital you do right now what you think is right for your child and family circumstances. All teachers are there to support you and your child through this and none of us need the guilt on top of everything else that our home schooling is not good enough. The key is just for everyone to do their best.

The following quote attributed to the Greek philosopher Plato (428-328 BC) said:

"Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover the peculiar bent and genius of each child."

This advice seems to me to be completely right for the current circumstances.

Meanwhile, our thoughts are with you all as you find the ways to work through the current lockdown situation; especially those of you coping with sickness, loss and concern for loved ones, job pressures and economic uncertainty and all issues in between. We know that no one is untouched by the situation.

We thank you for your support as we work together to secure the best for all our children and look forward to spring and summer. We hope that by then the combination of falling infection rates and vaccination will help to make life easier for everyone and for schools to fully open again.

Best wishes



Mrs A Sheddick
Chair of Governors