

Chair of Governors Report, Eyam C of E Primary School Summer

2023

Introductions, good-byes, and hellos

On behalf of the board of governors, I'd like to thank all the staff for their dedication to the children and their contagious love of learning. We can see the time and effort you put into the school, as well as your willingness to do more and ask for feedback so that you can always get better. Thanks to the PTFA for helping to make learning more fun for all the children at school.

We welcome Pauline Hutson as our new Community Governor, and we'd like to thank Barry Lomas, who has stepped down from his full duties, but continues as an associate governor taking care of the premises.

We also have to say goodbye to:

Jess Anderson (infants), Catherine Cass (Catch up SEND teacher) and Liz Longley (sport)

We're sad to see you all go and wish you well in your new ventures.

Evaluating our work.

As governors, we have gone to school often to talk to children about what they are learning and what they have done. This is at the heart of what we do. Our improvement plan for last year focused on:

- Learning to read better as a key skill.
- Improving how children can talk about what they've learned, how they've learned it, so they can make connections between different subjects and school life as a whole.
- Staff and children's mental health

With Mrs Gilbertson, we scrutinise based on these priorities, so we can improve the quality of education, celebrate differences and similarities, and be ambitious for every child.

Also, as a team, we talk about how we can improve school and push each other to do so.

Our school's values of respect, resilience, and responsibility help the governing body ask if our policies and practices live up to these values. We know that inclusion needs to be a part of everything we do so that everyone can benefit. For example we know that resilience means something different to each child and we look to see how this is achieved. How we become more inclusive as a school will continue to be a focus for governors.

Here is some of the work we have done outside of our usual roles as governors.

- Mental Health policy and practice: prioritising this for all through our ongoing ELSA support and mental health action plan. We also support Mrs Gilbertson to prioritise mental wellbeing, for both staff and pupils.
- We have been working on how to address barriers to learning, starting with Woodlands After School Club. As soon as we started to think about this, we realised that we needed to extend our review to also look at the "Cost of the School Day." We have started to ask how financial barriers affect things like getting a school uniform, learning at school, going on school trips, and making friends at school. We plan to collaborate with the parent forum to develop our practice and also talk with the PTFA.
- You may have noticed that the school launched a new mobile friendly website this year. It has all the required legal information, but we also want to use it to strengthen ties with the community. We hope you find it useful, let us know what you think and how to improve it further.
- We also attended training to make sure we were ready to do our jobs well. We have completed Ofsted Readiness Training, Induction Training for new governors, training on Prevent, Safeguarding, Headteacher Performance Management and regular Chair's strategic briefings, microaggressions, and LGBTQ+ awareness.
- We have been happy to support Mrs. Gilbertson with her Headship development programme and Mental Health Lead training while still doing her day job. Mrs Lewis, Mrs Cass and Mrs Gilbertson have all acted as Mentors helping Mrs. Barrett, Mr. Beresford and Mrs Buttle, who are about to finish their two years as 'early career teachers'. So congratulations and thanks to all for the hard work we don't see during the school day.
- This term, as governors, we finished a long Safeguarding Review and were reassured by the staff's commitment to keeping our children safe. This has included working and learning with children about online safety and ensuring the new I-Vengers programme is talked about by the children at school.
- We as governors encourage and support the school to be outward looking and are pleased that there have been and we hope continue to be trips and visits such as the recent whole school visit to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park to celebrate art in a natural environment, the visit from a family of the school to share their Jewish beliefs and be willing to answer questions, participation in music competitions as well as sporting ones: we want to support the school to maintain a broad and far reaching curriculum and embrace the world beyond Eyam and Derbyshire. We are pleased to report that the school has once again been awarded the Fair Achievers Fairtrade Award.
- The strategic direction of the school is one of the most important jobs of the governors. Considering the government's ongoing plans to academise schools, we have been proactive about thinking about the school's future. During the next school year, we are wanting to facilitate conversation with other small rural village schools, to explore options. We don't have many answers at the moment, but lots of questions.

Finally, thanks to everyone who gives their time for free as a governor to help our school.
Take advantage of the summer as much as you can.

Claire

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