

Swavesey Primary School

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Dear Parents, Carers and Staff,

As we begin the new academic year, I am pleased and proud to reflect on the achievements across the school during 2023/24. The committee reports highlight these successes alongside the challenges we have faced, especially financially, and the actions we have taken to secure the best possible outcomes.

As many of you will already be aware, funding is one of the biggest issues facing schools across the country. Education funding has not kept pace with the real costs we incur and this represents a continuing squeeze on our budgets. We are incredibly lucky to have a brilliant School Business Manager working alongside the Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership team to enable us to make the most of the available resources, but this wouldn't be possible without the engagement of the whole staff. We have had to make some difficult decisions this year and the understanding and support from the staff has been much appreciated throughout.

Each year the school produces the School Development Plan (SDP) which sets out the priorities and actions for the programme of continuous development across the school. This programme is in addition to maintaining the standards of our existing provision and this year our overarching priorities were:

- To ensure combined pupil achievement improves across the school with a focus on challenge for higher attainers and strategies for the lowest 20%
- Continue to build the leadership capacity of the school to support succession planning
- Ensure the curriculum at Swavesey Primary school ensures that the children are well prepared for life and their community is reflected within it.

For those parents that may be new to the school, alongside our Full Governing Body meetings, the Governing body is organised into two sub-committees through which most of our 'hands-on' governance and support is organised. These committees are the Curriculum, Learning and Achievement (CLA) and the Resources committee, and both committees focus their time and energy on ensuring that the programme of improvement outlined in the SDP is delivered.

I would like to thank all the Governors for their commitment and support but especially Clare Daniel who is stepping down as a Governor serving in various roles including CLA committee and safeguarding governor and many years of involvement with the school.

We currently have a vacancy for a co-opted Governor. If you think you might be interested, then please get in touch to find out more about the role.

<https://www.swavesey.cambs.sch.uk/page/?title=Governors&pid=37>



One of the rewards of being a Governor is coming into school for subject link and monitoring visits and witnessing first-hand the enthusiasm of the staff and the positive response from the pupils. We are extremely grateful for the dedication of the staff who work tirelessly to support the school, not just in their usual roles but in running clubs, volunteering to support events and covering staff shortages in their own free time. This has enabled us to continue to provide a range of enriching activities both during and outside the normal school day.

I would like to give a special mention to the team at the Pre-School and Kids club who provide a fantastic introduction to the school for younger children and wraparound care to support our children and families navigating busy lives.

A huge thank you also goes to the PTA for continuing to plan and organise a wealth of activities to entertain and raise much need funds for the school. From fireworks and the fete to baking and discos there is always something happening. None of this would be possible without the small but dedicated committee and crew of volunteers behind the scenes.

It is a privilege to be involved with the wider school community, staff, volunteers, pupils, families and friends who all come together to support the school in fostering an environment where our children can become happy and confident life long learners

One final **Reflection** channelling our 5 'R's in a year that finished with a flood in the year 1/2 classrooms. The staff team were **Resourceful** and **Resilient**, coming up with a plan to carry on with our end of term activities. The pupils were amazing, coping with the sudden change to routine and showing how **Responsible** they can be for themselves and each other. Work is already underway to ensure we are **Ready** to welcome everyone back at the start of the autumn term.

Hoping everyone had some time over the summer break for the 6th 'R', some much needed **Relaxation**.



Hannah Parish

Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Full Governing Body



Curriculum, Learning, and Achievement Committee Annual Report 2023/24

The work of the CLA Committee has been interesting and rewarding this year, as we have seen staff and pupils pushing the envelope of achievement. The commitment of the staff to be continually creative, coupled with enthusiasm for their vocation, has been a real inspiration and a real pleasure to be part of. (Bob Adams- Governor)

We have greatly appreciated hearing from subject leads during our meetings. They have provided valuable insights into classroom practices and shared examples of activities and children's work. In November, we learned about English, Geography, Early Years, and PSHE. In March, we received updates on Maths, Science, and SEND. Most recently, in July, we heard about Phonics, Music, and P.E. Each subject lead demonstrated the impact of their provision through pupil voice, staff feedback, lesson observations, or book reviews. This information is crucial for reviewing and evaluating current provisions, which will inform their plans for the upcoming year.

The committee has maintained regular communication with the school staff throughout the academic year via our committee meetings and by establishing various staff-governor links for different subject areas. The passion and experience of our staff subject leads were evident, and we are fortunate to have leads who support each other in ensuring that the range of subjects is engaging and relevant for children. This collaborative effort helps develop skills and knowledge essential for their future.

The committee has undertaken learning walks through the school, observing classrooms, admiring the wonderful work of students displayed on boards, and reviewing pupil work in books. Governors identified clear evidence of cohesion both within and across phases.

Summary of Core Subjects:

English

The focus was on developing strategies to engage the lowest 20% of readers (reluctant readers), which has improved their outcomes in both reading and writing. This year, Mrs Sprawson arranged a school visit from James Campbell, which was very well received by the children and inspired them to create their own stories. Additionally, well done to the Year 6 pupils who attended the LA English Challenge in January.

Maths

The focus has been on 'adaptation in maths' to challenge all pupils, raising attainment and improving progress. As part of this, the development of problem solving and reasoning activities has been key, alongside the re-mapping of the curriculum for KS1. KS2 staff have undertaken CPD focused on resources to provide adaptation and Reception and KS1 staff completed the Maths Hub 'Mastery with number' CPD to support adaptation and fluency of number for the younger children. Additionally, the school is now an 'Nrich problem solving school', which will support next steps for 2024/25.



These initiatives aim to make maths more engaging and accessible, ultimately enhancing students' mathematical skills and confidence.

Science

There has been a focus on accurately assessing "Working Scientifically" across the school to identify misconceptions and gaps, thereby informing teaching and learning. The feedback from pupils during Science Week was excellent. Parents participated by showcasing their science-based jobs, which greatly inspired the children.

Parent helpers are always greatly appreciated by both staff and pupils. If you have any skills or knowledge you would like to share to support the curriculum, please contact the school.

Special Congratulations:

- Congratulations to Mrs Turian and the pupils for receiving the Platinum School Games Award, the highest award available.
- Well done to all the pupils who participated in the Octagon Cluster and St. Ives Rotary writing competitions and attended the finals.
- Congratulations to Miss Cotton for her nomination for the National Early Years Teacher of the Year Award.

Finally, a huge congratulations to all the children who have taken both internally and externally assessed tests over the past year and faced them with resilience. A heartfelt thank you to the staff and parents for their unwavering support in preparing the children and helping them stay calm throughout the testing process.

The committee will continue to monitor attendance and review the impact of school finances on the curriculum.

With best wishes,

Nicola Griffiths

Acting Chair of the CLA Committee

Resources Committee Annual Report 2023/24

This year has been the most challenging year for the school financially for decades which has meant that there have been some very difficult decisions to make. As can be seen right across the region many schools are being squeezed financially, we are not alone. Cambridgeshire has a high cost of living, like London, but remains one of the lowest funded LAs in the country due to the considered low deprivation scores. This has resulted in a need to significantly cut costs/budget for a large proportion of schools across the region pushing them into deficit and setting a deficit budget for next year - this was nearly a reality for Swavesey. The financial challenge is evident to



all Governors and throughout this year, along with every other year, every member of staff is dedicated to ensuring that individually and collectively as a school they do everything that they can to provide the best environment and education for our children with the Resources available.

Our Resources Committee meetings have continued in the same format as last year with a mixture of face-to-face meetings and those via zoom, following the familiar pattern of meeting at least twice a term to consider the financial, premises, health and safety, safeguarding and personnel aspects of the school's operations and development. Our current objectives as a committee are:

Finance: Provide support and challenge to the Head teacher and Schools Business Manager in all areas relating to financial governance during the year.

Personnel: Work with the Head Teacher to ensure that the schools people resources are best utilised. In the short-term ensuring these are aligned to the Schools Development Plan, and longer- term considering options such as the potential sharing of resource or academisation.

Premises: To provide overview and guidance on all technical and hard services.

Health and Safety: To provide overview and checks to ensure all H&S matters conform to legislation, guidance, and safe practices.

Over the past year the Committee have continued to support the school with the reviewing and updating of many policies and risk assessments using the new streamlined review process that was adopted last year and is proving to be extremely productive. As always policies remain extremely important to the running, transparency and fairness of the school.

Resources committee attendance at meetings remains high, with new additions to the team – we welcomed new clerk Charlene Monk into the fold in September who will be working across both the Resources Committee and the full governing body meetings. We have also welcomed Marc Moore onto the Resource Committee as the Full Governing board back in the Spring. Stuart Nunn joined CLA Committee with a wealth of educational experience.

In order to ensure that we represent a full cross section of our community we welcome anyone interested in the development and future of our school to get in touch with any questions they may have relating to our specific Committee or Governing body objectives – we are currently looking for new Governing Body members so if you feel that you are able to commit and give up your time to the school, please get in touch so that we can continue to fully represent our community.

The depth of our committee knowledge grows still further with continued access to a broad range of educational and Governor specific training courses, allowing continual review and challenge of the school's development plan enabling the Committee to fully assist and challenge the Head Teacher. Each member of the Governing Body, not just in Resources but across all committees, is a subject link to the teaching subject leads within the school. Every subject lead teacher will engage with the Governing Body throughout the year through various discussions, visits and presentations providing Governors with greater knowledge into their specific subjects. This two-way exchange and greater understanding enables us to deliver the best educational environment for our children with the resources available.

Coming into this school year with a healthy carry forward we have seen the budget stretched from the start. Even before the start of the Autumn term various financial adjustments had been imposed over the summer with little additional funding support. This has meant that we started the year with some extremely tough decisions having to be made. The financial impact on our school from the start of the year has seen another review and reduction in the number of much valued Teaching Assistants hours this has happened not once but twice over the course of the



year. These decisions have been extremely hard to make and have impacted the whole school. Our Staff have been amazing and rallied round in support, making the transition as seamless as possible with minimal impact on our children.

The School Business Manager has done a fantastic job over the years ensuring that the school is in the best possible financial position at the start of every school year, and this year was no exception. However, this year has been one of the toughest financial challenges that the school has had to face in its recent history and for the first time we had to consider the real prospect that we might have to set a deficit budget going into next year. Needless to say, our finance team have worked tirelessly and as a result we have put forward a balanced budget. Mrs Norden and Mrs Whistler have been extremely transparent and clear with the whole school community through the various Governor Committee meetings, email communications and weekly newsletters making sure ensuring that we are all kept up to date and aware of the financial challenges that the school is and has been experiencing.

As you can imagine Resources Committee meetings have been dominated this year by the lack of available funding so much so that a letter to our local MP was drafted, and which I know many of you re-sent out to plead for additional school funding to be considered in the Spring budget. We saw very little funding changes in the spring budget and indeed very little mention of additional funding being made available in Education in the lead up to the 4th July General election. We will have to wait and see if our new Government will provide the necessary funding needed in schools nationally to allow them to continue to deliver and provide a safe, stimulating and healthy environment for our children.

It is now more than ever that we rely on the much-needed revenue that is bought in externally from areas such as the PTA. We say a big thank you - as without the work and money raised by the PTA we would not have been able to purchase much-needed items such as the interactive whiteboards, updated iPads and laptops, teaching resources and software packages that are needed to ensure that the children continue to get the best learning access, environment and experience possible. This year the PTA income will again assist the purchase of essential equipment. This work is invaluable to the school and the team are constantly in need of help and support from parents so please if you are able to provide any free time please get in contact.

This year has seen more challenges across the year than ever before impacting all staff and children, from the financial constraints to the tragic events of the end of the Autumn term right up until the end of the Summer term with the flood in key stage 1. Throughout our staff and children have continued to be resilient with every challenge and event – they have rallied together, supported each other and been there for each other every step of the way, which I know has been extremely difficult at times.

This year Miss McAuley has shown her full commitment and dedication to her new role as our SENCO lead and has already hit the ground running making it a very smooth transition for all especially for all the children that her role supports. We have seen additions to our teaching staff with our new key stage 2 teacher Miss Faiers going off on maternity leave and Mr Jiggins covering Swallow's Class, as well as Miss Butler stepping up into Kingfishers. Mrs Seaden has taken on the



additional Reception class Mice, whilst Mrs Ratcliffe has taken on a more permanent role in teaching our Squirrels class in key stage one. We have also said goodbye to one of our most dedicated teachers, Mrs Spevack, who has worked at the school for over 2 decades and been a beloved teacher to so many children over the years. We hope that she enjoys the retirement that she so richly deserves.

In my summary I feel that I could copy and paste the past previous few years report summaries as it continues to astound me at how fortunate and lucky we are, as a Governing Body and school, to have Mrs Norden and the whole school staff, from Mrs Whistler and the office and premises teams to teaching and support staff. Mrs. Norden continues to demonstrate exceptional leadership and along with the senior management team they have been at the forefront of tackling the challenges that have occurred this year. As ever with your support *We will continue to work with them towards a clear vision that ensures our school continues to develop and provide a safe, stimulating and healthy environment that develops our children to be happy, healthy, confident and independent lifelong learners.*

Catherine Cannon

Chair of Resources Committee

