



William Penn Governors' Newsletter – Summer 2020

This term's newsletter is an opportunity to reflect on a challenging and uncertain period for schools. Rather than sharing news of the governing body's work over the last term, instead I'd like to say some thank yous.

Thank you to ... the teaching and support staff

I think it's fair to say no one entering the teaching profession thought they would be expected to develop a remote teaching programme with no training and only a matter of days to master the necessary skills. The staff have responded brilliantly in putting together online teaching resources with many of them home schooling their own children at the same time. There is quite rightly a renewed appreciation for teachers/teaching assistants and their dedication to the profession. On the office front, Mrs Stephenson has had to juggle her many roles and master a whole new range of skills to ensure the smooth running of the school office.

Thank you to ... Mr Kear

It is important to remember that school leaders hear the latest guidance at exactly the same time as the rest of us. The challenge in interpreting and rapidly responding to guidance which changes regularly must not be underestimated. At William Penn, we are very fortunate in having a headteacher with a clear, calm and organised approach in ensuring we keep our whole school community safe whilst continuing to provide the best education possible in very difficult circumstances.

Thank you to ... parents and carers (aka home educators!)

Thank you for supporting your child's education and for your patience and understanding during the school's partial closure. In particular, I acknowledge the parents and carers who have been home schooling their children for almost 4 months now with no prospect of their children returning before September. As a fellow parent, I know these have been long, tiring and stressful months as you try to balance work commitments with the needs of your children.

Thank you to ... my fellow governors

The governors at William Penn have always been firmly committed to developing their skills and attending regular training but unsurprisingly there isn't a training course called 'governance during lockdown' and we have had to learn as we go too! None of us expected to be holding fortnightly meetings in a virtual landscape or checking the rigour and robustness of the return to school risk assessment. Every governor has been committed to ensuring the continued provision for pupils at William Penn in a safe environment and I thank them for their support of me, the school staff and the wider school community.

And finally, the biggest thank you to ... the pupils of William Penn school

Aren't they amazing! They have had to cope with the lack of routine and contact with their teachers or friends. Those who have returned to school have had to adapt to completely new rules - this is not the same schooling they are used to. Whether in school or at home, they have shown huge amounts of resilience and have acquired skills at a very young age which will stand them in good stead for the future. I have really enjoyed seeing the work submitted to their teachers, well done all of you.

On a final note, I refer to William Penn School's vision statement, "*At William Penn, we believe that every member of the school community is a 'teacher' and a 'learner'*". Never has this been more true!

With my very best wishes for a healthy and restful summer.

Nicola Waters
Chair of Governors

