



# St John's Highbury Vale C of E Primary School

Conewood Street, London N5 1DL

Tel: 020 7226 4906

E-mail: [admin@stjhv.islington.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stjhv.islington.sch.uk)

Interim Head of School: Mrs Lindsey Hodgson

Interim Executive Head: Mrs Tonnie Read

## Governors' Bulletin: April 2021

Dear parents and carers,

Welcome back! It is so nice to be able to write to you all knowing that for once the letter can make it into book bags rather than having to be read on screen.

The last time I wrote to you was last term, in December, at which point we were still very much in thrall to Covid. I am happy to say that I was in school yesterday, and the new normal feels increasingly like the old one. Everyone is still being careful and we are still observing all the necessary protocols, but as I walked round the school looking at all the improvements completed over the holidays - new paint, safety matting under the (finally open!) climbing frame, upstairs storage spaces and the like - it felt like we had our school back.

The purpose of this letter is to welcome Mrs Lindsey Hodgson back and share some future developments for our senior leadership structure.

As I wrote in December, thanks to prudent financial management, successful past fundraising drives and the management of our Executive Head Teacher Mrs Tonnie Read, we are in a stable operational position and that has allowed us to withstand the considerable pressure of the pandemic. I've spent a lot of time with Mrs Read and Mrs Hodgson recently talking about pupil assessment, the catch up curriculum, the attainment goals set by teachers, and the whole school drive for improvement and excellence. I know Mrs Read is planning another Head Teacher briefing soon, so I will leave it to her to provide more detail on the school's academic progress.

### **Our school leadership structure**

Two years ago we took the decision to move towards an Executive Head Teacher and Head of School model, but what with Covid, and then Mrs Hodgson and Mrs Shaw both going on maternity leave, until now we haven't really been able to fully embrace it!

As a recap, in this model, which is used by many schools (especially single-form entry primaries), a Head of School is responsible for the day-to-day running of a school, while the Executive Head Teacher sets the strategic direction.





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As the permanent Head of School, Mrs Hodgson is the face of the school, and is responsible for its daily management and operation, under the supervision of Mrs Read. Any questions and all day-to-day communication with the school should go through Mrs Hodgson. She is supported by two Assistant Head Teachers, Ms Lena Dalal and Ms Hayley Jones. This allows Mrs Read the freedom to operate at a more strategic level, to work across multiple schools in the collaborative structure for which the model was designed, and will allow us to reap the considerable pedagogical and financial benefits which can be gained by increasing our synergies with other schools.

As part of our ongoing commitment to collaboration, I am happy to tell you that from the next academic year, starting in September 2021, Mrs Read will take on St Stephen's Anglican school in the borough of Westminster, alongside her existing commitment to St John's and St Mary Magdalene primary in Paddington.

This will mean further synergies, including allowing Mrs Hodgson to collaborate with two other Heads of School, sharing advice and knowledge across a wider spectrum. Our staff will also benefit from being able to visit different schools and observe more and different practices. By further sharing the cost of our Executive Head Teacher and our school Business Manager, we also increase our economic flexibility and ensure we are at the heart of a robust network of schools, while stopping short of having to join a fixed federation.

It has always been the aim of the Governing Board to shore up the financial and operational stability of St John's so that we have a sustainable future. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me on the email below.

It only remains for me to say again how delighted we are to have the children back and learning, and to hope that it won't be too long before we can all meet up in person.

Best wishes,

**Harry Oulton**

Chair of Governors

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