

## GOVERNOR NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2013

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been another great year at the school and I would like to thank Kate and her team for making Eleanor Palmer the inspirational and happy school that it is.

This year's excellent SATs results are testament to the academic achievements of our pupils. We will let teachers tell parents individually at Parents' Evening this week and share the whole school data in September. Our attendance statistics (Average staff absence 0.6 days compared with a borough school average of 10.2; 97.1% attendance for pupils) also play out the excellence, commitment and professionalism that our school is recognised for.

As I informed you in the Spring term, the school was this year awarded Teaching School status. This means that we, in partnership with other schools, will be offering training opportunities to teachers from across the country and for the first time 'training our own' across a local cluster of schools. We will also have our staff engaged in research projects supported by the Institute of Education. So you and your children may see lots of trainee teachers and visitors around Eleanor Palmer as the projects and programmes bed in – this will only add to the vibrancy and innovation of the school! Our new building to accommodate some of this work, and to provide an additional teaching space for small groups of children across all years in the school, has begun and when we return after the Summer this very exciting eco-friendly space will be complete.

I attach to this letter the results of the parent questionnaire that was sent out last month and much of this energy, success and achievement is recognised in your comments – I hope you will find the results and accompanying governor comments of interest; we are always open to the views of parents and are always available on the e-mail below, via the school office and we will all be wanting to hear your views at the annual Governor parent meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November.

With great sadness, we say goodbye to Jenny Hansford, who is leaving us to start a new chapter in her life: setting up a local cinema in Crouch End! She will be missed sorely by Nursery families and all who know her! We send her best wishes for her new adventure. Thanks and best wishes too to leaving teaching assistants Robbie Eyles and Kate Barker and to Reception staff Dilek Mustafa and Zoe Macwhinnie who are starting maternity leave.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the PTA and all parents and carers for their support in making the school a great community to be part of and to wish you all a wonderful summer break!

**Sarah Hodgetts**

**Chair of Governors**

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## Parent Questionnaire 2013

The table below summarises the results of the closed questions, as percentages of the completed returns for the relevant year. The questions are the same as last year and are those that are recommended by OFSTED as part of a school's self-assessment.

There were 93 responses, compared with 79 in 2012, a response rate of 39%.

	2013			2012			2011		
	AGREE	DISAGREE	N/A	AGREE	DISAGREE	N/A	AGREE	DISAGREE	N/A
My child enjoys school	96	3	0	97	1	0	99	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	99	1	0	100	0	0	100	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	94	2	4	96	4	0	86	10	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	98	2	0	94	4	2	92	8	0
The teaching is good at this school	99	0	1	97	3	0	99	1	0
The school helps me support my child's learning	95	4	1	92	6	2	92	8	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	89	5	5	94	5	1	93	7	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future	91	4	4	86	1	10	85	7	8
The school meets my child's particular needs	88	6	6	89	8	3	85	14	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	84	10	6	88	10	2	78	14	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	87	10	3	90	6	4	85	9	6
The school takes account of pupil views	87	3	10	90	5	5	88	3	9
The range of extra curricular activities is good	86	10	4	88	10	2	81	18	1
The school is led and managed effectively	98	2	0	95	5	0	98	1	1
Overall I am happy with my child's experience	99	2	0	93	6	1	94	6	0

As in previous years there is an overwhelmingly positive view about the quality, energy and enthusiasm of the teaching staff and the atmosphere in the school as a whole:, and the very high scores for the key aspects of teaching at the school and its leadership are important to note.

Examples of positive comments that were made:

- raising academic achievement but at the same time, caring and creative
- engaging children to be individuals
- strong management and leadership and positive parents' support
- dedicated teachers
- school confident in its educational ethos
- Coach Martin and improved sports
- strong sense of an inclusive community
- curriculum variety
- lots of trips
- feels like a family, safe and nurturing
- buddy system
- physical environment
- continued play centre
- wonderful music
- text message updates

Where filled in (41 respondents left this space blank), suggestions for improvement that were made by more than one respondent are included below alongside a response from the Governors (in italics):

- school lunches (several comments, some non specific, one asked for more flexibility between school and packed lunch, another for halal, school manners, and some for more choice)

*Our usual cook is on maternity leave and until very recently we have not been satisfied by the replacement cooks we have been sent by Caterlink. But we think under our current cook, the quality is now back to what we have come to expect! Parents will understand that flexibility between school and packed lunch cannot be accommodated as the number of meals cooked in the school need to be known well in advance to avoid waste or under-catering.*

- more extra curricular activities, (several comments) not just football, but other sports/ art/ dance/ music/ drama, and after school language clubs, maths, science.

*This comes up regularly on the parent questionnaire. In terms of after school childcare the school has a well-established Playcentre and our local area has a huge choice of clubs and activities. All the teachers are offered payment to run clubs but it is their personal choice and with their workloads for their classrooms it is a real privilege that so many of them do take the time to put on an extra curricular activity. We are reluctant to open the school to outside providers on a number of grounds – we would not be able to control costs and the ethos of Eleanor Palmer is that everything should be available to all our families regardless of ability to pay; there is an additional administrative burden on dealing with outside providers; and we cannot guarantee their reliability or quality. We will however re-consider our provision at our governor meetings early next year and would welcome further thoughts at the*

*Governor-parent meeting on 3 November. Parent volunteers are another option we will consider. To note: staff are currently looking into setting up a computer Code Club for next year! We are also planning to use our new space to run more sessions for parents to help with supporting learning.*

- move on from X Factor

*We also interview the children about what they think of the school each year – and will put this question to them!*

- have a uniform

*Eleanor Palmer pupils already have a strong sense of identity which we feel would not be enhanced by them all wearing the same thing. The introduction of a uniform of course has many pros and cons and at present it is not something that the school plans to do. Again this is a subject that comes up every now and again, and is sometimes raised by the children, but it has never got a majority voice. We are however next year looking to again produce Eleanor Palmer branded hoodies and t-shirts.*

- Toilets

*We are aware that this has been an on-going concern specifically for Reception parents at the start of the year. The school is currently researching if it is possible to install automatic easier to use flushes without having to replace the entire system which you will appreciate, is expensive.*