



ACE ... In Touch

Newsletter from the Governors

April 2019

“I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die”

John 11v25



Thank you PTA

A big **thank you** to the PTA for all their work supporting the school once again this year. The additional funds they raise are greatly appreciated and provide valuable additional resources for our school.

Meet the Governor: Jenny Wilsher - LDBS Foundation Governor

Jenny is a director of a small design business she's helped run for the last 15 years. She is also a PA at a Christian children's ministry and is involved in children's work at her church. Jenny is actively supporting our Christian vision becoming more deeply embedded in the day to day life of our school. She has 2 teenage daughters.

Further details about all our Governors can be found on the school's website

www.ashford-primary.surrey.sch.uk/about/governors-info.php

Message from the Chair of Governors...

Our last newsletter was written as we were celebrating the season of Advent, and here we are already, almost at the end of lent and preparing for Easter. As governors we are immensely proud of Ashford CE and the wonderful community spirit that helps make our school what it is today. Governors have been in school observing some fantastic learning opportunities for the children this half term with the huge success of our writing week as well as visits from a variety of authors to coincide with World Book Day.

Our SIAMs inspection last month was extremely positive and I am pleased with the continued success of our partnership with Laleham CofE School.

The Children, as always, have been well prepared in school to celebrate Easter, the greatest and most important feast in the Christian calendar. So as we prepare for Easter, we remember the great sacrifice of Jesus dying on the cross to save us. Let us this Easter offer our welcome and support to the community and show the world that our faith is strong, alive and well.

On behalf of the Governing Body may I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very happy and Holy Easter.

Phil Wells, Chair of Governors

Attendance: 95.7%

Up to the end of March. Don't forget term time holidays and days out cannot be authorised.

Building and Maintenance Fund

Thank you to everyone who has contributed so far this year. If you haven't made a voluntary contribution yet this year there are several ways you can. Why not set up a Standing Order so you don't need to remember to pay each term/year.

- Standing Order - set up regular payments
- Tucasi - pay online using the payment system
- Cash or cheque in the school office

Survey Comments and Feedback

Thank you to everyone who completed the recent parent survey. It was great to hear all your comments and ideas. While we've tried to respond to as many as possible, there wasn't space here to respond to everything. If you'd like to discuss anything further or find out more please contact us via the school office.

About our Christian Ethos

The Christian ethos runs throughout the school from the moment you step into the school, to my child coming home singing songs she's learnt at school. She has learnt a lot about Christ and the Bible, and is comfortable with going to church.

Christian life is embedded within all of the children's learning and I love that this involves how to be a good Christian person whom thinks of others.

The school has a warm and welcoming feel, underpinned by the Christian ethos.

The children encourage each other to be kind to each other in the playground and sticking up for their friends.

It's made clear to the children how God loves each one of them.

It's a lovely school with a lovely Christian feel to it.

Clear Christian values are incorporated into the school day. There's a good application of Christian morals in everyday life. Very good distribution of general school information.

Demonstrating Christian values: love, respect, kindness, joy etc

The community spirit in the school shines through and is unlike any I've experienced in my children's previous non church school. My children have developed a real sense of togetherness and respect since attending the school.

You said you'd like...

- More explanation to the parents on what you teach the children so they can support/learn as well. Many parents do not understand what is being taught to their kids.
- Parents could be invited in to find out the current 'theme'.
- It would be lovely to see more of the Christian festivals celebrated within school and for parents to be involved in this.
- Memory Bible verse club.
- Lunchtime Christian union type club.
- Teachings and wall reminders of the Lords commandment.

What we're doing...

- Termly curriculum newsletters are being reviewed and will include more details. Our website contains further information about our RE curriculum as well as other information about our Christian vision and ethos.
- Our iShare themes for the whole year can be found on our website, the verse for our current theme is always on the homepage and in HIGHLIGHTS.
- Parents and carers are currently invited to Harvest and Christmas services, class worship often celebrate other festivals throughout the year.
- A Bible club was offered in the Spring Term Clubs, unfortunately there wasn't enough take up but we will keep offering it.
- Bible verses are displayed around the school and regularly taught in Collective Worship as well as being part of the daily life of our school.

About Collective Worship

My children are coming home excited and enthused by collective worship, teaching me the songs, and the Philippians 4 verse.

I love hearing my child come home singing worship songs and her thoughts on God that she has heard in collective worship.

The inclusion of parents and families in worship is fantastic. Seeing the children lead worship was extremely powerful.

About Collective Worship (continued)

You said you'd like...

- Regular family worship time.
- More opportunities for parents to be involved in collective worship
- Explore Open the Book for collective worship.
- Invite more churches and other faiths to collective worships and into the school.
- Invite pastors and youth workers from other Christian churches to the school, for example, the local Salvation Army and Congregational Church, to help children recognise the breadth and variety within the Christian church.

What we're doing...

- It's been great to see so many parents joining our class worship this year. We also now invite parents to our Gold Awards worship when their children receive a Gold Award.
- We have actually spoken to Open the Book about this. Unfortunately they don't currently have a church in this area to run it but if a local church would like to set it up we'd love to have them!
- We are working with 2 other local churches who are becoming more involved in our school, one has recently begun taking Collective Worship.

About RE

The school is clearly distinctively Christian with lovely displays and bible verses for everyone to see and read. Children's RE work is displayed and a lovely prayer tree with the most amazing heartfelt words written by the children.

My child often positively feeds back about worship and learning about Christianity.

Christian beliefs are taught alongside knowledge of other faiths and good links with the local churches.

You said you'd like...

- More projects in the children's theme homework, or perhaps as additional homework tasks.
- Religion homework on occasions.
- Home learning could include religious studies.
- Exploring other religions with guest speakers could help the children understand our diverse country.
- More Christian specific teaching in RE and less emphasis on other faiths.

What we're doing...

- RE homework will be set once each term.
- Children learn about other religions in RE, this has included visitors coming to speak to them as well as opportunities for children of those religions to share more about it with their year group.
- Our RE curriculum is 2/3 Christianity & 1/3 other faiths, as per the Church of England requirements. Children speak confidently about how learning about other faiths helps them to understand and respect people from different backgrounds to their own.

About Charity

The number of activities you do such as collections like at Christmas for the homeless, working together at the school fayres to raise money for the school.

Your charitable works within Ashford community.

You said you'd like...

- Encourage year 6 children to help with food banks.
- Links to Christianity in action through charities for the sick, vulnerable and poor.
- Links to charities parents work for or are involved in through their own churches.

What we're doing...

- We support several Christian charities throughout the year who work directly with those in need in different ways. As part of our 200th Anniversary celebrations we raised funds to help Compassion UK build classrooms for a school in Uganda. We now sponsor a child at the same school.

About Charity (continued)

You said you'd like...

- A partnership with a Christian school in another country to encourage the children to think about others less fortunate than themselves.
- Raise funds for specific Christian charities on a regular basis.
- Donations of toys or baby items at Christmas events.

What we're doing...

- We support Love in a Box every Christmas when we encourage families to donate a shoebox full of items which is sent to a child in Eastern Europe who otherwise wouldn't receive anything.
- We support Manna Foodbank through our harvest food collections.
- We are currently working on developing the children's understanding of the charities we support and involving them more in this.
- Would be great to know if parents work, or regularly volunteer, for specific charities and would be happy to come in and talk to the children about this or could help provide contacts or resources we could use.

About Prayer

Children are involved in daily prayers and collective worship.

Collective worship, prayer corners within classrooms and bible verses in newsletters.

School prayer group.

You said you'd like...

- A quiet prayer area for children to go to?
- More focus on prayer. Perhaps have a prayer box where children can post any prayer requests that they have and staff / Christian parents can pray for the children and situations.
- Teach the children how to pray and how to have a relationship with Jesus, so that they will have a strong faith in him throughout their lives. Learning to fully trust and to rely on God and become more like him each day would be a great focus. Showing all the children how to love like God loves us, would make a massive impact on the world they enter after this school.
- Perhaps an RE day looking at a topic eg prayer, heroes of the faith/Bible...walk through the bible type thing.... Prayer spaces, offering children a space to come, rest, explore and engage with God in an interactive, multisensory way.
- I am not sure if this is something that already happens but it would also be nice to know of specific prayer requests or general needs within the school that parents could support.

What we're doing...

- All classes have a Reflection Area, we have a prayer tree in the foyer and are launching an exciting new Prayer Space next term.
- All classes finish the day with a prayer, usually written by one of the children.
- The prayer tree in the foyer is always full of prayers from the children, each class also have a class prayer book that children are encouraged to write prayers for.
- We teach about prayer and our relationship with Jesus daily, particularly through Collective Worship and our iShare themes. As recognised in our SIAMS report, this is already having a very positive effect on our school community.
- We are planning a Prayer Spaces week next term to launch our new prayer space that will then be available all year round. More news to follow!
- Our Parent Prayer Group meets monthly and is open to all parents and carers, they pray for our school as well as specific prayer requests or needs.
- Our iShare themes feature a memory verse each half term, children are enjoying learning these and can repeat them confidently.