

Marion  
Stevens



Myra  
Johnson



Sara  
Thompson



Peter  
Luckham



Richard  
Rowe



Alice  
Jones



Mike  
Shorthose



Sonia  
Lay



# Welcome back to St John's



**On behalf of the full governing body, welcome back to the 2021 Autumn term at St John's.**

This year is a special year for St John's as we celebrate 150 years as a school within our community. You will see we have created a special logo to mark the event and the PTA have been busy organising events. We are all very much looking forward to coming together to celebrate.

We are also delighted this year, to welcome Reverend Debbie Smith to our governing board. Debbie has previously been a governor and brings with her a wealth of knowledge and joyful enthusiasm to our community.

In this newsletter we wanted to share with you what it means to be a school governor and the key areas of focus for the coming year. The role of the Governing Body is critical to the effectiveness of the school. We focus on core strategic functions, as set out by the Department for Education (DfE):

- Setting the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

The shared goal is to ensure delivery of the school's strategic objectives that include safeguarding, curriculum development and to oversee the financial performance of the school. Our focus is to ensure that every child reaches their full potential and develops skills that will allow them to be lifelong learners.

Whilst all governors have a whole school view, many take on specialisms such as monitoring the work done for pupils with special educational needs or a focus on emotional wellbeing. In this newsletter the Governor's discuss their priorities and goals for the coming academic year and what it means to them to be a governor at St John's.

*Clair Craven  
Chair of Governors*



If you have any questions or would like to know more about what being a governor involves, please email:  
[ccraven@stjohns-farnham.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:ccraven@stjohns-farnham.surrey.sch.uk)

Revd. Debbie Smith



Following a background as a nursing sister in Intensive Care, Anaesthetics followed by GP surgeries, I worked full-time as pastoral assistant in parishes in Southampton and London. This involved supporting people facing bereavement and other life issues and training teams in the pastoral and healing ministry. Eventually I went on to train and work as a psychotherapist for the NHS. I tutored in pastoral care and counselling in various Colleges, parishes and dioceses and was ordained in 2005. I emigrated to New Zealand with my husband Andrew in 2007 where we lived and worked for almost 11 years. Whilst in NZ I developed a significant informal congregation for young families in the community becoming National Team Leader for Messy Church NZ, together with a diocesan role in children & family ministry. These roles involved me training and mentoring churches in new expressions of church and exploring strengthening relationships between the church and the community it serves. I am trained in Godly Play and enjoy interactive creative storytelling to connect our story to God's story in a way that enables children to flourish. My role in the school will involve multi-sensory approaches to sharing stories and creating space for curiosity to promote wellbeing.

Sara Thompson



Literacy Lead

As a staff governor at St John's, I have several focal points of importance for the 2021/2022 academic year:

The prime focus is welcoming our new reception class to the St John's family. Alongside this, I shall be embracing the new EYFS framework and am particularly excited about language development being at the heart of the curriculum!

In addition, I will be assessing the priorities of literacy within our school, in line with my subject leadership role and continuing to strive to develop and enhance literacy teaching within St John's. Finally, I look forward to improving my abilities as a recently appointed staff governor and mastering new skills within the role.

Alice Jones



Safeguarding, mental health and wellbeing

Being a Governor at St. John's has given me the opportunity to be involved in the education of the next generation of local children. I enjoy using my skills as a business owner along with my experience as a parent of three grown-up sons to bring perspective to my role. Having the opportunity to take an active role in the strategic decisions and future direction of the school is exciting.

My main focus for the coming year is to ensure that each child is valued for their individual talents, whilst being mindful of their academic, emotional and wellbeing needs. I am enjoying working alongside a team of Governors who are equally as passionate and professional with a mutual goal of working in partnership to support our wonderful Head. I am very much looking forward to the exciting and challenging year ahead.

**Myra Johnson**



**Vice Chair**

One of the strengths of our school is its strong links to our village church and community and though the coming year, I shall continue to focus on further building those links. As the Councillor for the Environment on Churt Parish Council, I am delighted to see how outdoor learning and our Forest School sessions are fostering a lifelong passion and sense of responsibility for the natural environment and sustainability. It is great to have St John's School as such a very active partner in our 'Net Zero for Churt' climate change programme and I look forward to working with the children in all sorts of initiatives to improve the health of our planet.

My other areas of interest as a school governor this year will be on ensuring that our rich and well-rounded curriculum continues to foster creativity and that our processes and interventions enable every child to reach their full potential.

**Sonia Lay**



**SEND**

I am delighted to continue as a parent governor at St John's and, like everyone else, I am hoping for a less challenging year during which we can all reconnect in usual ways. We have all missed the wonderful events normally organised by the school and the conversations in the playground.

In my role this year, I will be looking at the SEN provision at the school, evaluating the strategies in place to meet the needs of all pupils including the ones who need additional help.

**Mike Shorthose**



**Resources**

Having spent last year getting my feet under the table as Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, my focus this year will be on maintaining and building on the strong financial position of the school. From a financial perspective, the school's response to COVID last year was impressive and the challenges were met without significant call on additional funds. However, the crisis has shown the importance of maintaining adequate contingency and to keep the focus on pupil recruitment and retention. I will provide a strong oversight on the school finances working with our excellent staff to secure both the day to day running and also to make appropriate investments to maintain the high quality of our school buildings. I will also look at particular projects including introducing a Governors' Trust to enable us to make best use of parent contributions and an initiative to build on the links between the school and the local communities to help us increase our pupil recruitment.