



Be nice, work hard, never give up

**Greenleas Primary School**  
Green Lane  
Wallasey  
Wirral  
CH45 8LZ

**Tel No: 0151 639 1225 / Fax No: 0151 639 4349**  
**Headteacher: Mrs Sharon Edwards**

**E-mail: [schooloffice@greenleas.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:schooloffice@greenleas.wirral.sch.uk)**  
**Website: [www.greenleasprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.greenleasprimaryschool.co.uk)**  
**Twitter: @greenleasps**

Dear Families & Staff,

The academic year 2016/17 has yet again proved to be busy and exciting for Greenleas Primary School. The Governing Body would like to share with you some of the work that has occurred during this time as well as plans for next year. We would like to share the vision and ethos of Greenleas Primary School. This is a set of values that we as members of the Governing Body take seriously as it reflects the standard demanded for children at our school.

### **Our Vision**

- \* The governors and staff of Greenleas Primary School work together to provide high quality care and education for all our children. We strive for high achievement in all that we do.
- \* We want our children to be confident, motivated, independent learners with a healthy self-image and respect for others.
- \* We are an inclusive school where every member of the Greenleas 'family' is valued and cared for.

### **Our Mission**

We aim to provide an environment:

- \* which is stimulating and welcoming.
- \* where every child feels safe, secure and equally valued.
- \* where parents are welcomed as valued partners in their child's education.
- \* where all members of our school community are respected and appreciated.

We aim to provide a rich and balanced curriculum which:

- \* enables children to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.
- \* is suited to the differing needs and abilities of all of our children.
- \* fosters the development of positive attitudes to learning and self-motivation.
- \* develops spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and understanding.
- \* provides opportunities for children to learn to work effectively both in collaboration with others and independently.
- \* prepares children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.



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## We want our children to be able to:

- \* communicate clearly and confidently in speech and in writing in ways appropriate to different occasions and purposes.
- \* read fluently and accurately with understanding and enjoyment.
- \* apply sound mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding to problems.
- \* know how to access information from various sources and record findings in a variety of ways.
- \* show a first-hand understanding of the application of technology in appropriate settings.
- \* know and understand basic scientific concepts and to observe, question, predict and interpret information with curiosity, perseverance and open-mindedness.
- \* express themselves creatively through art, music, movement and dance and to appreciate creativity in others.
- \* be confident participants in a range of physical activities and to value exercise as an essential part of a healthy lifestyle.
- \* know about geographical, historical and social aspects of the local environment and national heritage and have an awareness of other times and place.
- \* be morally and spiritually aware, having an understanding of the ways that faith, beliefs and experience can shape life and conduct.

## Our Core Values

- \* Promoting and teaching a set of school core values to our children that will educate them to become confident, responsible, and caring citizens. These values are embedded into the curriculum and Teaching and Learning in order to develop social and emotional skills and encourage the children to follow our 3 school rules -

‘Be nice, work hard, never give up!’

## Governing Body Activity

As within all aspects of education, school governance has witnessed many changes that we as a school adhere to. Examples such as training, statutory safeguarding certifications, understanding new school finance formulas, progress data methods (the list goes on!) all command time and commitment. The role of the governing board is absolutely key to the effectiveness of a school. The most effective schools demonstrate effective leadership and management - including that by the governing body. At Greenleas, the Governing Body in the acceptance of their roles, agree to this undertaking. We as a Governing Body want to ensure we are using best practice guidance to compliment the efforts we see throughout the school in supporting (and wanting) the best for our children and families.

By law, a school’s Governing Body must not be smaller than 7 members and must include:

- (at least) 2 parent governors
- the headteacher (unless they decline the seat)
- 1 staff governor
- 1 local authority governor
- co-opted governors (no limit)



Governors are appointed by the Governing Body. When vacancies arise for a certain category of governor, it's not as simple as 'filling' the space but must be based on the skills that the Governing Body seek. There is often some confusion around the category of governor e.g. parent governors provide a parental viewpoint; they are not representatives of parents, an LA Governor must be a political party representative; an LA Governor can be an employee of the Local Authority.

As well as regular, statutory duties a Governing Board must undertake, we constantly assess how best to conduct business and if anything needs to change. As stated in the previous Governors Report, initiatives introduced in the academic year 2015/16 have had another school year to be refined and become embedded as part of our practice. Main areas for our agenda items for this academic year 2016/17 have included:

- Attainment and progress of all groups
- Personal development and well-being
- Curriculum provision
- Attendance improvement
- HR provision
- Staffing structures
- Staff absences
- Service charges/agreements
- Updating/introducing policies
- Introduction of a Safeguarding audit & report
- Energy costs/efficiency
- Swimming/sport provision
- Budget setting/scrutiny
- Maintenance
- Educational equipment
- Learning walks
- Meeting pupils
- Outdoor space improvement
- Academy research & training
- Pre-Governor recruitment Induction
- Recruitment of Governors
- Development of a Wallasey Chair & Vice Chairs Group
- Embedding Link Governor roles and responsibilities
- Including pupils within the interview/appointment of new staff
- On-Line Governor training modules, including Prevent Duty
- All Governors qualified Safeguarding Level 2
- All Governors details registered with the Department of Education
- Increase in Governors attending school events

Whilst many of the examples listed above are operational in nature i.e. directed by the Head Teacher, the full Governing Body has to approve certain decisions. Or disagree as the case may be. We work towards the 'School Improvement Plan' (SIP) which is a yearly document showing clearly the priorities for the year. For 2016/17, one of the teaching, learning and assessment priorities has been on developing opportunities for children to be working at greater depth in the core subjects. An important priority for Personal Development and Welfare section has been to focus on improving pupil attendance by developing support for pupils (and families) health and well-being.



## Monitoring Visits

The Governing Body at Greenleas has a responsibility to keep in-touch with what is happening in the classroom. Although their role is strategic, it is important that they have some understanding of the practicalities of the job. Meeting children, talking to staff and seeing lessons underway helps members of the Governing Body to understand some of the issues they are required to discuss and make decisions about with greater clarity.

One of the key roles and responsibilities for the Governing Body is to monitor the progress and performance of the school. Undertaking monitoring visits demonstrates the Governors' role in the strategic management of the school by helping to hold the school to account and evaluate its progress. The Governors visiting programme is an integral part of the school's yearly monitoring calendar.

Each term we focus on an aspect of the School Improvement Plan or one of the Governors statutory duties e.g. Safeguarding. Each Governor is encouraged to make at least one visit a year during the school day. Over the year, visits are planned to cover the full extent of the school day and to cover a wide range of activities; each visit is agreed beforehand and has a clear purpose.

Visits enable Governors to:-

- See the school at work and observe the range of attitudes, behaviour and achievements
- Get to know the staff and demonstrate their commitment to the school
- Give active support to the staff and the activities of the school
- Be aware of the effect of change and different approaches to teaching and learning
- Evaluate resources and discuss with staff further requirements
- Gain first-hand information to assist with policy making and decision taking
- Work in partnership with the staff

Visits enable teachers to:-

- Ensure governors understand the reality of the classroom
- Get to know governors
- Understand governors' roles
- Share successes
- Share challenges

Following a school visit, the Governor completes a report that is circulated to the governing body (at the next Full Governing Body meeting) and relevant staff. Governors must report without giving opinions and where possible individuals are not able to be identified. It is important to remember that visits are a snapshot in time, and judgements are not to be made arbitrarily. The visit is not about Inspection.

It would be near on impossible to effectively be a school governor but not have the opportunity to see classes at work and be familiar with the life of the school during the working day. This enables governors to be good ambassadors of the school and increases their knowledge, so that they can make wise decisions and provide effective support and challenge at Governing Body meetings. School visits allows Governors to monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan, observe policies and schemes of learning in practice and importantly, to demonstrate that the governing body is contributing to the school's self-evaluation process.



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At Greenleas Primary School, our Governor Reports presented at Full Governing Body meetings contain much detail but in addition, commandments to the teaching staff for their dedication and inevitably, a huge amount of admiration given to our pupils. Your children consistently greet us with exemplary manners, impressive examples of work and without fail, always with happy, smiling faces. The opportunity to allow Governors to recognise and celebrate success in this way should not be taken for granted.

## Attendance

All maintained schools are required to provide two possible sessions per day, morning and afternoon, to all pupils. The length of each session, break and the school day is determined by the school's governing body. Schools must meet for at least 380 sessions or 190 days during any school year to educate their pupils. Schools are required to take attendance registers twice a day: once at the start of the first/morning session of each school day and once during the second/afternoon session. In their register, schools are required to record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Where a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, schools have a responsibility to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Indicate in their register whether the absence is authorised by the school or unauthorised
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is then used to download data to the school census.

*\* The School Census is a statutory data collection for all children registered in school. The School Census collects information about individual pupils and about the school themselves such as educational provision provided. The data is collected 3 times a year.*

The headteacher can authorise up to 10 school days absence during an academic year only in exceptional circumstances. This is not a right and is entirely at the discretion of the head, who will carefully consider the reason and the potential disruption to your child's education. If the head refuses permission and you go anyway, this will be an unauthorised absence. You may then risk a fine or prosecution for non-attendance. Amendments that were made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 make clear that Headteachers may no longer grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Exceptional circumstances will not allow leave for family holidays regardless of the circumstances for this.

Does absence really impact on a child's attainment? According to the UK's Department for Education (DfE), "missing the equivalent of just one week a year from school can mean a child is significantly less likely to achieve good grades". The DfE has made this claim for over a year in an effort to dissuade parents from taking their children on holiday during term-time, when flights and hotels are cheaper. The argument seems persuasive; parents will not want to gamble with the educational prospects of their children just to save some money on a holiday. But is that statement valid? Is it realistic?



Many argue that if a child has impeccable attendance, a term-time holiday/absence will not impact on that particular child. However, from a school point of view, children who are absent for avoidable reasons definitely impact on other pupils and teachers within the class or department, notably when additional time is needed upon return to 'catch-up' (if at all that is ever truly achievable for the pupil). The work covered in the absent week(s) cannot be recovered to the same depth, for the benefit of one child. Absences that can't be avoided such as illness, family needs, and emergencies should quite rightly receive additional support for that child and family. Time away from school whether for the luxury of a holiday or unfortunate illness, requires endless resources of time, energy and money upon return.

Time these days is so precious for everyone. It can be extremely difficult to have important family-time be this due to work commitments or simply the cost. None of these reasons can be denied and do make it extremely difficult when schools have to make clear decisions about authorised and unauthorised absences. Schools are tied to government guidelines regarding how permission is or isn't granted when requests are received for term-time absences. Every situation is different so headteachers have to take into account each request on an individual basis. Many parents do not have an opportunity to take their families on a term-time holiday e.g. perhaps lack of finances or parents work within an education setting. You can appreciate the complexities involved when reaching decisions regarding holiday absences. Ultimately, to demand *and deliver* a high standard of education provision requires everybody to work together; children, parents, carers, staff and Governors.

### Future Plans

Greenleas Governing Body is committed to supporting the work of the Senior Leadership Team and Staff to provide your children with superb care & learning environments. Striving for 'high achievement in all that we do' including emphasis on enabling pupils to become 'confident, responsible, and caring citizens' is at the core of how we work, often unseen. The investment and commitment needed to create a successful school is arduous but absolutely achievable. We want the best.

The term 'family' is regularly used by visitors to describe the 'feeling' within Greenleas Primary School. We believe a team-work approach is the only way to maintain such standards and reputation. Governors want to extend sincere appreciation for not only parent/carers who support our aims but for all the volunteers that give of their time and skills. Participation in after-school clubs, fundraising events, celebrations, trips, visits, guest reading sessions, homework etc. all contribute to making a positive difference. Thank you for improving experiences for our pupils.

A massive thank-you has to go to Ms. Chris Byrne who is due to retire at the end of term. Ms. Byrne has been an employee of the school for 22yrs. In addition and until recently, Ms. Byrne was the Clerk to Governors. We want to publicly thank Ms. Byrne for her dedication and commitment to Greenleas School past and present.

We wish you an enjoyable summer and look forward to the next school-year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Greenleas School Governing Body

