

Great Abington Primary School Governors Newsletter July 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the school year ends, we are writing to you with a brief reflection on some of the highlights of the academic year together with comments from five of our Governors and the areas that they are involved with.

Curriculum enrichment opportunities continue to be provided across the school including numerous outside trips, the outdoor area and forest school experiences, visits to various scientific establishments at Granta Park, swimming, sports, our partnership with the Leys School to name but a few have been outstanding in terms of the range and diversity of provision, not to say enjoyed and valued by pupils and the school community.

Governors have links with all areas of the curriculum and assist with various areas of school life including finance, safeguarding, SEND, Data, recruitment, property and health and safety.

This year we are sorry to say goodbye to Helen Colchester from Class 4 who takes on an exciting new venture with the University, Sue Beal from Class 2 who takes a well-deserved retirement and Emma Webb a much-valued Teaching Assistant. The school have therefore been busy with recruitment and are delighted to welcome to Class 2 Charlotte Baughan and to Class 4, Clare Chen.

The Growing Area:



Staff, pupils and community volunteers have worked really hard over the year to plan, care and harvest a variety of fresh produce. In the photo are children feeling proud of the bumper broad bean crop. We have held several plant sales for the local community and the feedback on the quality of the plants and flowers has been very positive. You might not be surprised to hear that the strawberries did not make it out of the garden area! Special thanks to Karen Johnson, Lead Staff member for the growing area.

Comments from Neil Larkin, a parent governor who was involved in the recruitment of Clare Chen: I was recently invited to be part of the interviewing panel for the new Class 4 teacher and thought it might be helpful to briefly outline the process for teacher appointments. Like other posts there is an application form and a deadline after which short-listing takes place. Candidates are then asked to attend an interview. On the day they are welcomed and their documentation is checked. Once that is completed, they are observed teaching an hour-long lesson on a pre-given topic. If the lesson is weak candidates can be asked to leave at this point. Assuming the lesson observation has gone well there is then a supervised interview with pupils to gauge the candidate's ability to build rapport quickly. This is then followed by an interview with a panel including the headteacher and at least one governor. The interview at this stage tends to last for about 50 minutes to an hour with a wide range of questions around things such as safeguarding, behaviour management, curriculum development and SEND support. After the interviews the panel meet and discuss their findings. In the case of the Class 4 teacher

the panel unanimously agreed that Clare Chen would be a fantastic appointment for the school, and I'm delighted to report that she accepted. Welcome Clare!

A similar process was adopted for the new Class 2 teacher, Charlotte Baughan who we also warmly welcome to the school community.

Comments from Will Earl, a community governor and Chair of the Learning, Teaching and Standards (LTS) Committee: Throughout the year, the LTS Committee has maintained a strong focus on supporting the school to ensure the highest quality of education and provision for all pupils. Meetings have included detailed discussion on **curriculum development**, ensuring that the curriculum remains broad, ambitious and responsive to the needs of pupils, while continuing to build knowledge and skills progressively across all subjects.

Governors carefully reviewed outcomes and preparations relating to **SATs**, alongside a thorough examination of attainment and progress data. Particular attention was given to **phonics and literacy development**, especially in light of the national focus on reading. Discussions explored strategies to promote a love of reading, strengthen early literacy skills and ensure pupils become confident and enthusiastic readers.

A significant area of focus throughout the year has been **SEND provision and emerging trends**. Governors scrutinised the effectiveness of support for pupils with additional needs, reviewed patterns in identification and provision, and considered how resources continue to be deployed to secure positive outcomes. Similarly, governors monitored the impact of **Pupil Premium funding**, ensuring that interventions are targeted effectively and contribute to improved achievement, wellbeing and engagement.

Regular updates on **teaching and learning** enabled governors to review progress against school improvement priorities and gain assurance regarding the quality of classroom practice. These discussions highlighted the commitment of staff to continual improvement and the positive progress being made across the school.

The committee greatly valued the range of **governor visits** undertaken throughout the year. These visits provided first-hand opportunities to observe provision, speak with staff and pupils, and deepen governors' understanding of the school's strengths, challenges and day-to-day operations. This enhanced knowledge has helped governors provide informed support and challenge.

Governors were particularly pleased to recognise the school's rich **wider curriculum offer**. Pupils continue to achieve notable success in sport, regularly competing and performing at a level that reflects the school's determination to "punch above its weight." Alongside this, the school has provided a wealth of opportunities through **drama, performances, clubs and societies**, enabling pupils to develop confidence, creativity, leadership and teamwork beyond the classroom.

Comments from Sue Blakeley, a community governor and SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) and Data lead: As SEND governor, I have made termly visits to discuss SEND support for children, speak to children and staff and understand the complex funding challenges for school. This year, parents of children receiving additional support were asked to complete a parent survey that will be used to further improve school SEND provision. It has been clearly evident during visits that Mr Underwood, Mrs Lungley, teachers and all support staff work together in a very focused environment, ensuring that all children make good progress in their learning, including those with additional needs. The school is fortunate to have space to provide outdoor learning experiences, forest school and inclusive sports that enrich their curriculum. In discussions with children who receive additional support, it was impressive to hear them confidently explain that their favourite things about school were friends, reading, art and break times. Each child felt well supported in class and they were able to describe work that they were proud of, including story writing. When new learning was challenging, they each explained how adults were there to help them.

Comments from Rob Aiano, a parent governor about the residential trip for Year 6: One of the many experiences my child has engaged in her time at Great Abington School was her recent Year 6 residential trip to Bawdsey Manor, Suffolk. During her week away she conquered her fear of heights, bonded with her friends, made new friends and learnt to be independent from us as parents. We feel this experience will help her adapt to secondary school with new confidence.

Comments from Alan Cook, a community governor and health and safety lead: The Year 6 Junior Travel Ambassadors had an active year warning their fellow pupils about the risks and benefits involved in walking and cycling to school. They also helped produce a PowerPoint presentation on the potholes

on the roads leading to the school. Please be aware that if you report a pothole online it is classified as nondangerous. For our young cyclists these are often very dangerous so please report them by phoning the council. I am pleased to see that our pupils are concerned about protecting our local environment. Will and Jake, Year 6 pupils are involved in building a working model of the chalk aquifer that exists under the school and village. This will be on show in the school next year.

Sports Squads

Through expert coaching from Mr Waterson and support from the rest of the staff team our pupils have once again excelled in their sporting endeavours. As a small school our performances have been truly amazing. Parents and carers have supported our children across many events to transport and support both the pupils and staff. We have also had excellent specialist coaching from The Leys sports staff. This year we won back the cluster run with style and achieved the largest winning margin highlighting the depth and quality of our running squad.



Sporting highlights from the academic year

- South Cambs Hockey - winners
- South Cambs Tag Rugby - winners
- Cluster 1 mile run - winners
- County Netball finals - fourth in the County (all schools) representing South Cambs region
- Football League - runners up by goal difference
- Cross Country at Milton Country Park - highest proportion of runners from key stage 2 and 3 medalists across the 4-year groups including a 4th year in 1st place for Darcie Y6 (4 years running)
- Cricket Y5/6 - on track to win but event abandoned due to risk of thunderstorms
- Cricket Y3/4 - third place

PTFA:

As always, we are grateful to the PTFA for its hard work and commitment to the School in running various fundraising and social events. Please continue to support the PTFA and also its Festival of Running which this year will be held on 4 October 2026.

Volunteers:

Thank you to all the volunteers who have supported the school staff and pupils in hearing readers, attending school trips, events in school, the growing area and as part of the Forest School sessions.

Finally

We would like to thank Guy Underwood, leaders, staff, volunteers, pupils and parents for their continued commitment and support, and look forward to building on these successes in the year ahead.

July 2026

Mark Carter and Rachel Clay
Co-Chairs of Governors