



SUMMER 2026

Word from the Chair

As this is my first 'Word from the Chair,' I thought I'd better have a look at previous Governor Newsletters to see how it's done! What stood out for me was the way in which Alban City School has continued to go from strength to strength in recent years and this would be a good point for me to thank Mrs Stray and her team for all their hard work. I'd also like to thank Paula Willoughby, my predecessor as Chair, for all her work for the school, for talking me through the role before I took it



on and for staying on as a governor.

I was elected as Chair of Governors in the Autumn and, as a former Headteacher, I've enjoyed getting involved in a range of issues from a different perspective and, I hope, providing the kind of support to Mrs Stray that I valued as a school leader.

This past year, my fellow governors and I have definitely been kept busy. As primary numbers locally continue to fall, we consulted on a potential reduction to our Published Admission Number. (con't)

Happily we are able to remain as a two-form entry school and look forward to younger brothers and sisters, as well as families new to our school, joining us in September. We also continued our discussions around joining a Multi-Academy Trust, met with several potential trusts and then carried out detailed



*Mrs Gilly Stray with Mr Alan Gray,
CEO, Ambition Education Trust*

due diligence on our preferred partner, [Ambition Education Trust](#). We were delighted when all the paperwork was recently signed off by Mrs Stray and AET and are very excited about the opportunities being part of AET will bring to us as a school community.

One of the many highlights of the year has been witnessing the continued development of the OPAL playscheme, culminating in the school being awarded the OPAL Platinum Award. I would like to echo Mrs Stray's thanks to everyone who



has made this possible, especially Mrs Carter who spearheaded this campaign and helped to make a real difference to the wellbeing of our pupils.

The end of the academic year brings two of our governors close to the end of their terms. Rob Crick and Lizzi Hodgkinson have both invested a significant amount of time into the governance of the school, with numerous school visits carried out over their four years, and a real



enthusiasm shown for helping our lovely school be the best it can possibly be. I would like to personally thank them both for all their (con't)

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who responded to the recent parent survey. The governors really appreciate receiving this feedback, as it helps us gain a better understanding of what the school is doing well and identify any areas for further improvement and it will be used in drawing up the school's priorities for the coming exciting year.

Mike Lovett, Chair of Governors



IN ACTION!



Year 6 Leavers

A spectrum of bright futures ahead!



Getting to know our Governors



*Sarah Wright, Vice Chair of Governors,
Parent Governor*

Favourite St Albans restaurant: A family favourite is The Prae Wood Arms, especially on a sunny day when the kids can run around whilst the adults enjoy a cold wine! On a rare date night, we love the food and vibe in Hazéls.

Favourite book: *Hamnet* is brilliant and beautifully written (I am yet to watch the film, see below). My favourite book so far this year is *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah, a powerful and moving story about a mother and daughter's relationship which brought me to tears.

Favourite film: I'm not someone who watches a lot of films (I can't sit still for long enough!). However, I do enjoy my annual tradition of watching *The Holiday*, with a glass of mulled wine whilst wrapping Christmas presents.

Why did you become a governor at ACS?: As a parent I wanted to do my bit and give back to the school. I care passionately about creating safe and fun environments for young people to develop and grow, and I also thought I had some skills and experience that could help shape the strategic direction of the school.

What areas do you focus on?: I am the Link Governor for OPAL (Outdoor Play & Learning), along with focusing on Sport. I also do a number of Governor visits linked to our School Development Plan.

What is your favourite thing about ACS?: The culture – as soon as you step foot inside the school you can sense the school values (happiness, well-being, high achievement), which has meant my girls have loved going to school every day. Not something I take for granted.

Describe yourself in three words: Driven, passionate, interfering (my husband contributed the last one!)

Spotlight on Spanish

Having loved learning languages as a child, and going on to study French and Spanish at university, I was keen to find out more about how ACS approaches the teaching of languages and to witness some lessons for myself. So earlier this term I arranged a visit with Mrs Collins, who is the Lead for Modern Foreign Languages and is a fluent Spanish speaker herself.

We spent some time talking about the recent changes to how Spanish is taught at our school. Previously all Year 3-6 children received weekly Spanish lessons from a Spanish teaching assistant, but since her

departure the class teachers have become responsible for delivering this part of the curriculum. From what I saw from the three classes I visited, and from what Mrs Collins told me, the teachers have enjoyed taking on the challenge and expanding their own knowledge of the Spanish language. All of the lessons were very interactive, with some impressive knowledge of Spanish words for fruit and vegetables – some of which exceeded my (slightly rusty) language skills!

Whilst obviously aiming to cover all of the basics in terms of grammar, phonics and vocabulary, the school's main aim is to ensure children enjoy learning a new language. Given all the benefits of learning languages in terms of skills acquired and cultural enrichment, it was lovely to see all of the children engaged with their Spanish lessons. I look forward to hearing about Mrs Collins' plans for 'Languages Day' next year, when all of the different languages spoken within our school community can be celebrated.

Lizzi Hodgkinson, Link Governor for Wellbeing, Pupil Premium/SEND and Modern Foreign Languages





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Happiness, well-being, high achievement

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