

Shadwell PTA Chairpersons Report 2017-18 AGM

Shadwell Primary School's PTA has a history of successful fundraising. Every year, the parents of the pupils give generously of their time and money to boost the School's funding, both for now and in the future.

This is my fourth and final Chairperson's report. Reflecting back, it has been wonderful to see how the PTA has continued to thrive and that the number of parents who are prepared to be involved has grown year on year.

Fundraising

We have once again had a very successful year in terms of money raised, well attended events and support from the parent body. As our Treasurers' report details we have raised a significant amount of money, with approximately £8000 profit over the course of the academic year. This is a figure we should be extremely proud of.

Last year we had the wonderful commemorative Shadwelly Fest, which was an event that will be remembered for many years to come. However, this year, the PTA has focused on populating the fundraising events calendar, in order to provide a wide breadth of activities throughout the year. The rationale was to try and introduce new ideas and events and spread the opportunities for involvement by parents throughout the year, rather than focusing on three main events, Bonfire Night, The Christmas Fair and Summer Fair. These new occasions would also provide additional fun for the children, as well as being effective fundraisers.

New and successful highlights included the film night, which raised £311, and the fun 'Smarties challenge' which raised £482. Both activities were particularly lucrative in view of the fact they required only a small initial outlay, which allowed the PTA to maximise profits.

The Summer and Christmas fairs were as successful as usual, and the wonderful summer meant that sales of ice lollies were more lucrative than we could have ever hoped making nearly £1000 over the summer term.

In relation to money spent, the school provided the PTA with a wish list at the start of the 2017 academic year. As schools become increasingly technology-centric, much of the money has been spent on IT equipment, which is now a necessity, rather than a luxury for children's learning. Using money raised from PTA events, we have reached approximately half of the financial target of £15k required to purchase the wishlist and pupils will now benefit from the use of new iPads, laptops and other IT equipment. We have also been able to replace the lockers in the KS2 area and have our school minibus painted.

Fundraising for the forthcoming academic year

The school continues to face financial difficulties, meaning the PTA's role is becoming increasingly important in allowing it to run as a properly financed organisation.

The PTA realises that although the traditional events are well supported, there is an acknowledgement that now funding may have to come from alternative avenues. To that end, the PTA will be working with the school on a 'Rocket Funding' Bid, specifically for IT equipment, and will be exploring both local and national financial grants for projects that will enrich our pupil's learning journey. We also hope to focus on the possibility of parents approaching their own employers for similar funding opportunities. This has been successful at Bramham and we hope to follow their lead in this regard.

Parent Involvement

As ever, the PTA would like to emphasise the importance of parent involvement with the school. We know that Shadwell parents are very much engaged with their children's education, but a recent report issued in September 2018 by the Sutton Trust (a UK educational charity which aims to improve social mobility and address educational disadvantage) entitled "Parent Power" underlines the importance of this.

The report, which follows on from the 2013 report of the same named examined the beneficial influence of parental engagement on a child's education as a whole. It specifically looked at the increasing financial assistance sought by schools from parents as a result of budget cuts, but also reiterated that all parents will have valuable skills to offer when getting involved at their child's school and that every parent, regardless of circumstance can provide assistance to their child's learning that will boost achievement and instill passion for acquiring knowledge. Schools should capitalise on this and through its many methods of communication, the PTA continually support this.

Most relevant to us in the report, is its emphasis on the invaluable role of PTAs and that as wide a range of parents should be involved in these organisations as possible. It recommends clear lines of communication and formal mechanisms between senior leadership and parents to allow them to bring parents further into decision making processes, particularly when schools are demonstrating increasing reliance on extra financial contributions from parents following recent budget cuts.

The PTA is a continually fluid organisation, with new parents joining the school as other parents move on. I am fully aware that the services and events that any PTA provides or organises need to change as the needs of a school, pupils and parents change. The new PTA committee and PTA should reflect this as they take on the baton of leading our PTA forward and we should continue encourage new and more parents to be involved, which is what the PTA is actually about. It is an opportunity for parents to get together, fundraise, socialise, share skills and be a part of their children's education. There is a role for everyone.

To end on a personal note, I would like to take this opportunity to say how much I have enjoyed being Chair of the PTA for the last three years. It has been very rewarding and has given me an opportunity to help and become involved with the school, but also to get to know lots of parents and teachers as a result. I hope to continue to be an active member and remain involved. I'd like particular thanks to go to Amy Paterson, Anna Winter, and Vidya Ventakesh who have been instrumental in the success of the PTA when personal circumstances have prevented me from being as involved as would I have liked.

I wish the new Committee the very best

Jenny Croston

Chairperson Shadwell PTA

