



St. Nicholas School Canterbury



Holm Oak Close
Canterbury
CT1 3JJ

Headteacher:

Dr Daniel Lewis BA (Hons) Med EdD

Chair of Governors:

Mr Nigel Wootton

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ST NICHOLAS SCHOOL

St Nicholas is a community day special school providing education for over 300 children and young people aged between 4 and 19 who have profound, severe and complex learning difficulties. Many of the pupils also have additional difficulties – physical disabilities, epilepsy, autism and sensory impairment. It is a specialist resource offering smaller class sizes, higher staff ratios and the delivery of a suitably modified curriculum by skilled teaching teams supported by a multi-disciplinary group of professionals including Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists. The care of pupil's with complex medical needs is over seen by the specialist nursing service. A wider team including a music therapist, an art therapist, a drama therapist, a play therapist and three counsellors supports the pupils' wellbeing. The pupils have individual programmes, which enable them to learn at the pace most appropriate for them. The school utilises the local community to facilitate the development of life and functional skills.

The school opened on it present main site in 1986. In 2006-2008 it underwent extensive redevelopment. The school building is fully modernised and offers an excellent learning environment including a hydrotherapy pool. The school has expanded its provision into satellite classes and buildings. The Specialist Observation and Assessment Pre-school *Caterpillars* is based at Parkside Community Primary School and there are primary satellite classes at St Johns Primary (1), Chartham Primary (2) and Canterbury Primary (2) schools. The school has its own accommodation for secondary satellite classes at Spires Academy (2) and Canterbury Academy (4). The sixth form is in its own building on the campus of Canterbury College. The school manages and is the base for the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service for the Canterbury District which supports children with special educational needs in mainstream schools.

St Nicholas is an innovative school dedicated to developing opportunities for children and young people with Special Educational Needs. It is always looking to improve what it does, share its resources and expertise and adapt new approaches whilst maintaining its partnership with its governors, parents and carers and the wider community.

We are a community of learners.



OUR SCHOOL EXISTS TO:

St Nicholas and its development is driven by the key aims for the school as shown below. The aims have been formulated and agreed by the staff and the governors.

- Support children and young people with Special Educational Needs to maximise their learning and social development within the school, home and the wider community
- Provide teaching and learning in the most inclusive environment
- Work in close partnership with parents, carers and families
- Raise educational standards by providing through Educational Health Care Plans clear targets for each pupil
- Ensure access to high quality teaching supported by a multi-disciplinary team work utilising a range of specialist resources and facilities



OUR SCHOOL AIMS TO:

- Support the professional development of all
- Give each child a sense of personal value, promoting self-confidence and self-esteem
- Provide a secure yet challenging and happy environment
- Prepare children and young people for an active life in society being as independent and autonomous as possible
- Provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum including National Curriculum with a focus on literacy and numeracy differentiated to meet the needs of the pupils
- Develop pupils abilities in Basic Life and Living Skills
- Work in partnership with the Local Authority in the introduction and development of national and local initiatives
- Ensure success, achievement and progression for all pupils
- Create the opportunities and the environment for the experience of childhood to reach all pupils whatever their degree of learning difficulty
- Address the needs of the whole child and support their social and emotional development

ADMISSIONS:

All of the children who come to St Nicholas School have special educational needs. All will have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), which identifies the child's needs and describes the appropriate provision to meet those needs.

Admissions are organised through a referral procedure co-ordinated by the Local Education Authority.

Most children will be seen and assessed by a range of professionals who will contribute to the Education and Health Care Plan. Many of the children who are admitted to the school come from either the Caterpillar Class or other pre-school provision. Caterpillar Class, previously known as the Mary Sheridan Centre (SEN Pre-School Unit), has, since September 2004, come under the management responsibility of St Nicholas School. The Headteacher is in constant communication with all relevant bodies and is therefore able to plan accordingly for admissions.

KCC ADMISSIONS INFORMATION:



As soon as parents are aware that St Nicholas might be an appropriate school, or a possible option, they are encouraged to make an appointment to meet the Headteacher and staff and to see the school in action.

The admission of children with an EHCP to schools is a matter for the LA who has statutory responsibility for arranging their provision. There are admissions criteria for each special school that are applied in order to determine if a particular special school would be a suitable placement. A link to the admissions criteria for Kent special schools can be found below:

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-places/admissions-criteria>

The named officer in the relevant Area Education Office explains the arrangements for admission to parents and carers as part of the statutory assessment process or as part of any school transition process but further advice is available directly from the Area Offices:

East Kent: 03000 421160 or 03000 418708

SENeast@kent.gov.uk

West Kent: 03000 420997 or 03000 414693

SENwest@kent.gov.uk

South Kent: 03000 420889 or 03000 415098

SENsouth@kent.gov.uk

PARENTS AS PARTNERS:

The school is fully committed to working in partnership with the parents, families and carers of the children and young people at St Nicholas School. The school has three Home-School Support Workers who can help parents with issues and problems as they arise and assist with referrals, offer support at meetings, organise services of an interpreter and signpost to other agencies or support groups. A range of information books, leaflets and other resources are also available to be borrowed.

Communication with parents and carers is a priority of the schools and a range of methods are used. There is a home-school contact book that travels from school to home and back again each day. There are also telephone calls, emails and letters. Visits to the school to discuss issues, complete the Annual Reviews or to attend other scheduled meetings take place as well as opportunities to visit the class for coffee mornings or for special events – performances and similar.

COVID-19 Restrictions

These are currently affected by the COVID-19 restrictions and many have moved to virtual platforms. A lot of parental communication takes place through the website which is kept up to date. There is a texting and emailing service to parents and carers to ensure urgent news is shared quickly.

Prospective parental/carer visits to the school are currently suspended due to the COVID-19 restrictions. This is being constantly reviewed and a virtual tour of the school is being prepared for the website.

COMPLAINTS:

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE		
STEPS	COMPLAINANT	PROCESS
STEPS 1	Make an appointment to talk with class teacher	Informal discussion with staff
STEPS 2	Letter or make appointment with the Senior Leadership Team	Formal or informal discussion with Senior Manager or Headteacher
STEPS 3	Letter or make appointment with Chair of Governors	Formal discussion with Chair of Governors
STEPS 4	Written complaint requesting consideration by Governing Body	Complaint considered by panel of Governors

The ethos of the school is to work in partnership with parents to meet their child's needs. However, if parents wish to make a complaint about any aspect of the school, including the curriculum, which cannot be resolved by the class teacher or secretary; contact should be made with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. The school has a full complaints procedure, which can be made available if necessary.

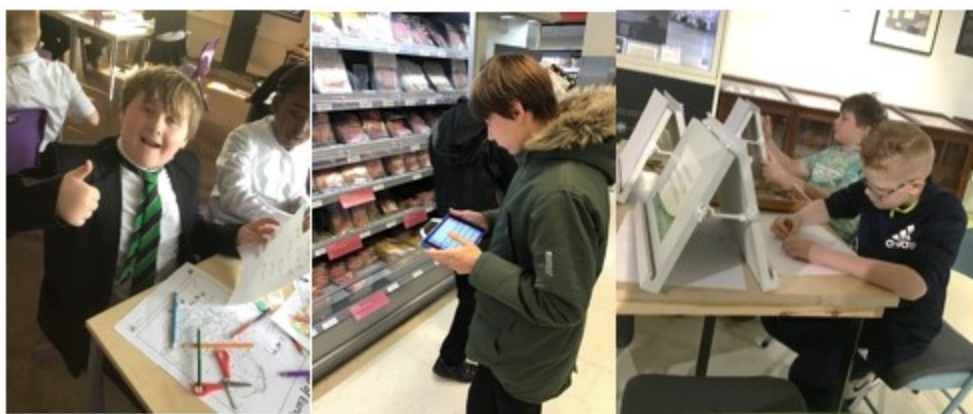
THE SCHOOL DAY:

The school day begins at 9 am and finishes at 3 pm (8.45 – 2.45 pm for the Post 16 Department) with a midday break allowing the children to have a meal followed by supervised play or in the case of senior pupils a choice of activities. The dates of school terms and half terms, and when the school is closed for staff development days vary from year to year and details can be found on the school website or in our termly newsletters. Term dates and sessions times for Caterpillar Class are available on request.

Covid-19 Restrictions

Whilst the Covid-19 restrictions are in place there are changes to the start and finish times of the day according to the site. Please check with the site for the timings.

At the main school the day begins at 8.45 am and finishes at 2.45 pm.



SCHOOL DINNERS:

The school kitchen is managed by the school with school dinners being cooked on the premises and arrangements can be made for special dietary needs. Meals are eaten *family style* and good table manners are encouraged as well as developing independence skills. Some pupils bring packed lunches and are included in the above mentioned arrangements. The school kitchen maintains high nutritional standards and achieved *Enhanced Healthy Schools Award* in Summer 2017 and achieved five stars in the *Scores on the Doors* administered by Canterbury City Council in 2016.

SCHOOL DRESS AND SPORTS CLOTHING:

Dress for all children should be appropriate and sensible. As the school playground can be rather cold and windy in winter, warm clothing and sturdy shoes, with plimsolls for indoor use are necessary. All pupils require a towel and costume for swimming, together with a bag to hold these items. Please mark all items with the child's name. Riding hats are loaned to children by the Riding for the Disabled helpers. Children should have sports wear to change into for PE.

School sweatshirts and polo shirts are available online via our website. Primary children wear royal blue and senior children wear navy blue.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Most children are brought to school by coach, minibus or taxi and returned home in the afternoon. The cost is met by the Local Education Authority. It is expected that they will be taken to and collected from the bus by a responsible adult. Each vehicle has a passenger assistant who is also able to carry messages to and from school. In the event of the school being temporarily inaccessible because of bad weather conditions such as heavy snow; details will appear on the KCC Website and announcements are broadcast on Heart Radio and Radio Kent as well as a text messaging service.



FIRST AID/MEDICATION:

Staff are able to attend to the occasional bruise, graze or superficial cut which may arise. Most staff have been trained in Emergency First Aid. If a child becomes ill whilst at school or has to go to hospital for treatment, parents are advised as soon as possible. It is therefore important that we have up to date emergency contacts and phone numbers in order that parents/carers can immediately be informed of any illness or incidents during school hours. If parents wish anybody from school to give medicines, then a medication form needs to be completed.

Children with complex medical needs will have a Health Care Plan coordinated by the School Nurse. We ask parents to ensure pupils are well enough to come to school and abide by the guidelines for staying off of school for certain illnesses such as measles, diarrhoea. All medication forms are available on the website

COVID-19 restrictions

During the Covid-19 pandemic there are additional measures in place. These are detailed on the school website.

SCHOOL ORGANISATION:

Primary Department

Rainbow Fish Class	EY Foundation	Ages 4—5
Puffin Class	EY—Key Stage 1	Ages 4—7
Bear Class	Key Stage 1	Ages 4—7
Owl Class	Key Stage 1	Ages 4—7
Mercury Class	Key Stage 1 –2	Ages 5—11
Orangutan Class	Key Stage 2	Ages 7 –11
Tiger Class	Key Stage 2	Ages 7 –11
Meerkat Class	Key Stage 2	Ages 7 –11
Lion Class	Key Stage 2	Ages 7 –11
Toucan Class	Key Stage 2	Ages 7 –11
Penguin Class	Key Stage 2	Ages 7 –11
Polar Bear Class	Key Stage 2	Ages 7 –11
Hawking Class	Key Stage 2	Ages 7 –11

Children spend much of their time with their own class, but groupings can be flexible to enable specific needs to be met (e.g. through hydrotherapy or the sensory curriculum).

Just as is any primary school there is a considerable focus on communication, play, interaction and early skills in other areas such as a number, reading and writing, but presented at an appropriate level for the child.

Secondary Department

Storey Class	Key Stage 3	Ages 11—14
Knox Class	Key Stage 3	Ages 11—14
Kahlo Class	Key Stage 3	Ages 11—14
Packham Class	Key Stage 3	Ages 11—14
Class S1A	Key Stage 3	Ages 11—12
Class S2A	Key Stage 3	Ages 12—13
Class S3A	Key Stage 3	Ages 13—14
Class S4	Key Stage 4	Ages 14—15
Class S5	Key Stage 4	Ages 15—16
Class S4A	Key Stage 4	Ages 14 – 15
Class S4B	Key Stage 4	Ages 14—15
Class S5A	Key Stage 4	Ages 15—16

The Senior Department, although small, reflects more the model of a secondary school. Pupils in years 7 –11 are taught the different subjects of the National Curriculum. They have a class base but also go to different teachers for some subjects. There is now a range of specialist classrooms to use. There are links through the satellite class programme with secondary schools and opportunities for shared learning experiences. Increased use is made of community facilities. The focus in the department is very much on preparation for adulthood and the outside world, growing up, assertiveness, independence skills, respect, dignity, choices and decision making.

SCHOOL ORGANISATION:

Post 16 Department

Form 1	Key Stage 12—14	Ages 16—19
Form 2	Key Stage 12—14	Ages 16—19
Form 3	Key Stage 12—14	Ages 16—19
Form 4	Key Stage 12—14	Ages 16—19
Form 5	Key Stage 12—14	Ages 16—19

The older students are based on the campus of Canterbury College and have opportunities to use the facilities of the College as well as access the Link Courses. There are increased opportunities for work experience and community based learning.

THE CURRICULUM:



The St Nicholas School curriculum is designed to engage the pupils in the development of key skills that are functional and equip them for life. There is on-going focus on communication skills, physical skills, emotional resilience, personal safety and independence skills.

The curriculum is personalised to the needs of the each pupil and is structured so that it provides three distinct pathways for children through the school and into adulthood. These pathways differentiate between the levels of independence the learner is working towards achieving.

- Students on the **Cedar pathway** are making choices, expressing feelings and exploring their environment with adult support. The curriculum enables students to build positive relationships with others and develop early communication skills, with a sensory-based approach. Students are supported to develop and maintain their mobility skills to promote personal independence
- Students on the **Willow pathway** are developing their communication, self-regulation and self-learning skills with adult support. This curriculum is carefully structured with a variety of approaches used to support access to learning to develop functional independence in their immediate environment and the wider community.

- Students on the **Oak pathway** are working towards achieving optimal independence in their lives. This subject based pathway is organised around the National curriculum areas, which are modified to meet the student's learning needs. Student's independence is promoted in all areas of academic and practical learning
- There is flexibility for pupils to experience opportunities from more than one pathway dependent on the individual's needs.

Our curriculum addresses the whole child and ensures therapeutic approaches combine with teaching strategies to support wellbeing and achievement. Creative arts (music, art, drama and dance) and sports activities are central to the curriculum. Learning is practical and where possible utilises the wider environment of the school and the community.

Each child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) contains the outcomes and targets towards which the learner is working and the curriculum activities are planned accordingly. Progress through the curriculum is gauged by the achievement of the targets and outcomes in the EHCP. These are co-constructed in the review meetings with the learner, the class teacher and other professionals involved in the plan.



SPORTS PROVISIONS

COVID-19 restrictions

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions these activities are not currently taking place. Normally there would be a full programme of swimming using the local public pools. There would be inter-school events for football, cricket and athletics as well.

Forest school activities are continuing during this period.

RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION

Relationship and sex education is recognised as being an essential and important element in a curriculum that prepares young people for life in society. However, it should not be seen in isolation, but more as a part of an overall strategy. All youngsters are involved in the PSHE curriculum in some

form, though some will be involved in individual or group sessions dealing with issues relevant to needs. Parents are invited to attend workshops and meetings and are always kept informed of work in this area. Parents and carers are entitled to withdraw their child from the sessions if they have particular concerns. Further details are available from the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The school is not affiliated to any religious denomination. RE attempts to address the spiritual needs of all the pupils and is largely taught through themes and practical activities often with visits. The curriculum is based around the Kent Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. We celebrate a range of festivals throughout the year and recognise the multi-faith nature and cultural diversity of our society.

Parents are able to withdraw their child from Religious Education; the Headteacher should be contacted.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The school has a programme of class, department and whole school assemblies based around themes such as sharing, community and celebration. Again parents are able to withdraw their child from this aspect of the school curriculum and should contact the Headteacher.

EDUCATION HEALTH CARE PLANS (EHCP)

All parents are invited to the EHCP meeting for their child. It is an opportunity to meet with the a member of the Senior Leadership Team, class teacher and other professionals in order to review the statement, set future targets, celebrate progress and achievements as well as discuss any concerns. The school has a policy and guidelines for the writing of the EHCP and for the conduct of the EHCP meeting.

COVID-19 restrictions

During the Covid-19 restrictions many of these meetings are taking place virtually.



ASSESSMENTS

Assessing how well the children are learning is a key part of the educational process and we have a number of different ways of doing this. We look at the development in literacy, numeracy and personal, social and health education as being central to progress in h school. We have assessment schedules based upon the National Curriculum but which recognise the smaller steps of learning children with Special Educational Needs take as well as the Engagement Model which is for those that do not work in the subject specific curriculum areas. All of this is recorded on the *Earwig* onLine platform and is available to parents to view. Older pupils in the secondary department work towards the accredited courses that we offer.

ACCREDITED COURSES

- ncfе Functional Skills (English/Maths/ICT)
- OCR - Life and Living Skills
- ASDAN - Employability
- City & Guilds - Entry 2 and 3 Level Skills for Working Life
- The Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- Sports Leaders Qualification
- Bronze and Silver Arts Award



TEACHING METHODS

Many pupils have opportunities for shared learning with children from other schools. Regular use of the community is made e.g. visits to the shops, restaurants, etc.

COVID-19 restrictions

This is currently suspended

Also much teaching takes place through topic work, which covers many areas of the curriculum. Often there will be educational visits to places of interest to support this.

COVID-19 restrictions

This may be currently suspended

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

St Nicholas school is committed to providing an education which promotes equality of opportunity for students and staff from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds and ensure freedom from discrimination on the basis of membership of any group, including gender, sexual orientation, family circumstances, ethnic or national origin, disability (physical or mental), religious or political beliefs.

EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2019- 2022 PRIORITY OUTCOME:

During the next three years St Nicholas School will:

Promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other people; eliminate discrimination and harassment; promote positive attitudes to disabled people; encourage participation by disabled people in public life and take steps to meet disabled people's needs, when this requires more favourable treatment.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Pupils participate in horse riding lessons and other activities. There are also visits to places of interest, shopping expeditions and invitations to parties. At Christmas time and on other occasions the pupils perform a play for parents and friends of the school.

COVID-19 restrictions

All activities are temporarily suspended

CHARGING POLICY

The cost of some activities such as swimming and riding together with transport expenditure has to be met by the school. Parents are asked for a voluntary contribution towards these costs and no child would be excluded from an activity, but parents are asked to contribute £5 per term (£30 a year) towards such costs, and are also requested by teachers to send in money for drinks, cooking, shopping trips and visits to cafés etc.

Contributions are also requested for residential trips, and theatre trips. If parents are unable to make a contribution but would like their child to be involved; they should discuss this with the Headteacher.

SPECIALIST FACILITIES

Contributions are also requested for residential trips, and theatre trips. If parents are unable to make a contribution but want their child to be involved they should discuss this with the Headteacher. The school is very fortunate in having a good range of resources and facilities to provide for the children who attend the school.

This includes:

- Food technology room
- Primary and Secondary sensory rooms
- Dining hall
- Minibuses and a people carrier
- Primary and Secondary Libraries
- Sports Hall with climbing wall
- Soft-Play Room and two Safe Space “pods”
- Outside play areas
- Sensory garden and gardening area
- Art Room
- Design Technology Room
- Considerable specialist equipment for pupils with PMLD
- Soundbeam
- Sensory Integration Room
- ICT Suite
- Music Room
- Hydrotherapy Pool

The school also has a good range of technological equipment, a wide range of communication aids, a large number of books, reading schemes and audio-visual equipment. Each class has an interactive whiteboard, which are used in a variety of ways: for instance through the use of special concept keyboards or touch screens.



PASTORAL CARE

Every teacher with the support of teaching assistants has the responsibility of ensuring appropriate pastoral care for each child. The Headteacher and Senior Staff are also very involved in this and will always be pleased to work with and support parents. Because of the relatively small number of children in the school it is possible for the staff to know each child very well and to be aware of their



individual needs and challenges. We aim to work closely with parents and at times their support and help may be enlisted. Also advice and involvement can be sought from a range of other professionals who work closely with the school. Advice from the Well Being Team can also be gained.

The school has a qualified Play Therapist and three counsellors as part of the team that support pupils to engage with learning and the curriculum.

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY WORK

The school is fully committed to working in partnership with other professionals. It has allocated rooms for therapists to work from, make phone calls and liaise with school staff. The input of therapists to the individual educational programme of the pupils is highly valued as are their skills in assessing and evaluating pupil learning and teaching sessions. Provision is made for the therapists to work in a variety of modes, directly with the pupils or groups of pupils, alongside the teacher and/or other members of staff, or advising on teaching programmes.

As many of our pupils have complex medical needs; close liaison with the school nurse and the doctors and consultants working with the pupil is essential.

A number of our pupils also have specific dietary needs and we work closely with the school cook and the kitchen staff to ensure that both these requirements are met and that mealtimes are successful and enjoyable educational experiences for all our pupils.

DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

We have high expectations for our pupils, valuing each child individually and treating all children with respect and dignity regardless of the degree of learning difficulties or behavioural challenges that they may present. To this end, we place central importance on the quality of the inter-personal

relationships that are made between all members of our school community.

We aim to promote socially appropriate behaviour, giving youngsters as much autonomy as possible. We provide a balance between expressing control and allowing freedom.

PROACT-SCIPr-UK®

All of our staff are trained in the PROACT-SCIPr-UK® approach to managing challenging behaviour. This is a positive approach that emphasises de-escalation and calming strategies to minimise the need for any physical interventions.

HOMEWORK/HOME SCHOOLING

We work in partnership with parents and carers and based upon the child's EHCP we would develop home-learning programmes that support the learning that goes on in school. This will cover a range of approaches from online teaching resources to suggestions for activities to carry out at home.

COVID-19 restrictions

Should there be any extended school closure period then this programme would then become the full support programme to ensure that child's education could still continue. The school's website contains many of these resources and is always available. Teachers would then add additional online support materials tailored to the child's needs.

INCLUSION

The satellite classes colocated on mainstream school sites enable inclusion opportunities for St Nicholas School pupils. These are mostly social but there may be appropriate shared learning opportunities at times.

The Specialist Teaching and Learning Service for the Canterbury District is based at St Nicholas School. This service supports children in mainstream schools who have special educational needs. Mainstream schools can access this support through the Local Inclusion Forum Team meetings.

SCHOOL LEAVING PROGRAMME

When youngsters enter the Senior Department, and especially by the time they reach the age of 14, the emphasis on the acquisition of skills for living is increased. These skills include the ability to travel about as independently as possible, shopping, cooking and other home skills, participation in recreational pursuit, personal hygiene and the development of interests.

Pupils during their last years at school follow a school-leaving programme, which will include attending courses at Canterbury College. Some will have the opportunity of work experience. School and other agencies will liaise closely with parents and pupils during the last years to plan future provision.

POST SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES



Although young people can leave school at the age of 16 most in fact remain at the school until they are 18 or 19. Following this there are a number of options:

An Extended Education Course at Canterbury College (main stream or supported learning courses)

A place at Day Opportunities Centre. Placement at a privately owned and run either day, or residential facility eg Greenbanks at Barham, Canterbury Oast Trust. Many such establishments are organised by charities (eg MENCAP).

STUDENT AND VOLUNTARY HELPERS

Students and pupils from local universities, colleges and schools help in the school as part of their studies. These visits are helpful in several ways, not the least of which is that the helpers become aware of the needs and problems encountered by children with learning difficulties. A number of volunteers provide valuable assistance in the school.

The Volunteer/Work Experience Policy is available to view on the website.

PTFA AND PARENT GOVERNORS

We have an active Parent, Teacher and Friends Association which supports the school in a variety of ways such as: school fairs, fundraising, quiz nights etc. For more details please see the PTFA section of the website or join our facebook page.

The Governors support the school and provide challenge and guidance to the Headteacher.

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Out of Hours Emergency Phone Line
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07758746522
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