



## **Chair of Governors' Term 1 update – October 2017**

First of all, on behalf of the governing body, I would like to offer a belated but warm welcome to the parents and carers of children who have joined school this term. We hope that your children have settled in well and that they are discovering the joys of being part of the St Stephen's family, as well as the St Stephen's Church community. Please do check the church notice board as well as the updates in the weekly newsletter from school regarding events for families. It is always so nice to see the new Reception class children joining the Harvest Festival service in St Stephen's church each year.

As Chair of Governors I aim to provide regular updates during the year on the activities of the governing body. The key areas of focus for the governing body are to ensure that the school has a robust development plan that challenges our children and staff to achieve high standards; that the implementation of this is continuously monitored and is achieved; and that revenue and capital funding is spent effectively. The three committees of the governing body (Pupil Support; Finance and Resources; and Standards) are aligned to ensure this overview and focus.

I am delighted to report that governor meeting attendance over the past year has been outstanding, with 91% attendance at full governor meetings and 90% overall for committee meetings. This is a huge indication of how committed our governing body is and how lucky our school is to have such a dedicated group of talented governors.

The start of Term 1 is always a busy one and for the governors our primary focus has been working with Andy Bowman in finalising the School Development plan, as well as developing our own action plan for the governing body. The School Development Plan was signed off by the governing body at our meeting on 16 October. Andy Bowman and Louise Flynn have again done an amazing job of producing a very comprehensive and detailed plan and will be sharing this with you in due course. The starting point for the plan is the Senior Leadership's Team self-evaluation of school's performance, together with the 5 year vision, any Diocesan or DfE initiatives, and statutory changes.

The governing body's own action plan was also agreed at the October meeting. We started by evaluating our own performance and contribution over the previous school year, as well as our collective skills and competences to meet the various challenges. We also considered various inputs to the plan including the DfE, the Diocese and statutory annual requirements of school governing bodies. Although there are a number of elements to the plan, a huge focus this year will be how we can best support Andy and school in transitioning to academy status and joining the Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust. We expect to have our application approved in the next month or so and to begin the transition shortly after this. Andy will be keeping you updated on any significant milestones.

One of the key ways that governors monitor the implementation of the School Development Plan is in partnering with school's curriculum leads to ensure that there is a robust plan in place for each subject across the whole school. The curriculum Link Governors have already started working with their Teacher Curriculum leads to review their plans for the year.

In Term 2 governors will be observing the Senior Leadership Team as they conduct detailed book inspections covering Maths and English throughout school. There will also be a Learning Walk focused on

the Maths curriculum across the school. The governor inputs from these exercises are then reviewed by the Senior Leadership team to ensure that suggested improvements are considered and implemented as appropriate.

Over the past few weeks Andy Bowman and myself have attended the strategic briefings provided by both Bath and Wells Diocese School Improvement Team and BaNES. These meetings cover key educational updates and initiatives; they are also an opportunity to share best practice; and are a great way to meet with other Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors. Governors will also be attending appropriate training programmes during the year to ensure that we stay abreast of educational developments.

Recently we have been very sorry to say goodbye to two governors who have found that their business demands no-longer permit them being able to devote sufficient time to being a governor. Siobhan Davies and Jonathan Derwent have both made excellent contributions to the governing body. We thank them sincerely for their valued leadership, support and commitment and will miss them.

With the departure of Siobhan and Jonathan and the advent of academisation we have been reviewing the structure of the governing body and how we cover all the roles on it. I will be sharing this with you in a future newsletter. In the meantime, we are looking to appoint a few more Foundation governors to help support our monitoring activities and I will be sending out more details on this shortly. The Clerk to the Governing Body role still remains unfilled and I will also re-send details of this.

Finally, all that remains is to once again thank Andy Bowman and staff, who are so professional and a pleasure to work with, as well as being receptive to the many challenges that the Board places on them.

Thank you also for your support. I wish you and your families and all the staff a restful and joyful mid-term break.

Best wishes,

*Kate*

Kate Seeley, Chair of Governors

October 2017