



## Chair of Governors' Term 1 update – October 2018

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 have 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 (Ethos; Finance and Resources; and Standards) are aligned to ensure this overview and focus. This year for the first time we will have the Year 6 School Council members joining the Ethos committee. This will enable them to contribute to discussions on our school's values and behaviours, pupil well-being and our school's Christian distinctiveness.

The three committees comprise the following governors:

**Ethos** – Johanna Fitzgerald (Chair), Rich Cooper (Vice-Chair), Andy Bowman (HT), the Revd Philip Hawthorn, Kate Seeley (Chair of Governors), Katie Warlow (staff) and Year 6 pupil representatives.

**Finance and Resources** – Karl Stringer (Chair), Pete Baxter (Vice-Chair), Andy Bowman (HT), Mark Collins (co-opted, Office Manager), Louise Flynn (Deputy HT), Oliver Lay and Kate Seeley (Chair of Governors).

**Standards** – Sarah Chave (Chair), Andy Bowman (HT), Jane Farrant, Louise Flynn (Deputy HT), Steve Reilly, Kate Seeley (Chair of Governors) and Katherine Slater.

I am delighted to report that governor meeting attendance over the past year has been outstanding, with 93% attendance at full governor meetings and 83% 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, willing to give their time and energy. This term we have welcomed Jane Farrant as a BWMAT appointed governor and this brings our governing body up to full strength. Jane comes from a secondary school background, where she has headed up Modern Foreign Languages. She will be joining the Standards committee and will be the Link governor for Languages, History and Geography.

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 15 October. Andy Bowman and Louise Flynn have again done an amazing job of producing a very comprehensive and detailed plan, aligned to the Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust (BWMAT) model for the first time. The starting point for the plan is the Senior Leadership Team's self-evaluation of school's performance together with the areas of focus determined by BWMAT for all its schools.

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. For the first time we are also adopting the BWMAT model and calendar for our areas of focus and meeting agendas.

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 learning environment throughout 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 BWMAT 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 in specific fields such as Safeguarding, Admissions, Finance, etc.

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 2018