



Chair of Governors' Term 4 update – April 2017

This term has been a very important one for the governing body with regard to the future of our school. As you will be aware, at an extraordinary meeting on 27 February the governors overwhelmingly voted that St Stephen's should become an academy and that we should join the Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Following this, a consultation period of four weeks occurred to enable parents and stakeholders to register any concerns or seek clarification. During this period only two parents sought answers to questions and no-one registered any objection. We have therefore started the application process and anticipate it taking around six months to complete. During this period, probably in the May timeframe, we will be holding two sessions for parents and carers to explain more about being part of the Bath and Wells MAT and to allow the opportunity for questions to be asked.

Currently two other schools have applied to join the Bath hub of Bath and Wells MAT and we are aware of several others who are seriously considering it. The position will become clearer after the Easter break, but we anticipate a strong hub being established.

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During this term the Finance and Resources committee and Standards committee have met and also the full governing body. The key areas of focus have been pupil assessment, finances, feedback from link governors who work with the curriculum teacher leads, and progress against the governors' action plan for the year.

The current financial position of school indicates that due to continued close management we will have been able to end the financial year more or less on target. However, this will be the first time in recent years that we will most likely be unable to carry forward any funds into the new school year. Finance remains a huge challenge for us and many of you will be aware from press coverage that this is true for most schools. Thanks to the hard work of the PTA, a small group of individual sponsors and the newly formed Friends of St Stephen's our children continue to benefit from enhancements to the indoor and outdoor learning and play environments.

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During this term governors have joined with members of the Senior Leadership team to conduct exercise book reviews for English and Maths throughout school. These occasions are valued opportunities for the governors to work with the Senior Leadership team, who focus on standards of marking, pupil feedback and consistency within year groups. The Senior Leadership Team then provides each class teacher with feedback on what is going well and where there are development opportunities.

A small group of governors also visited every classroom, as well as outside areas, looking for evidence of what makes our school distinctive as a church school. They also met with a delightful group of children across the age range to talk about their observations and feelings about being part of a church school.

Last week another meeting with children took place, to discuss a wider range of topics including collective worship, visiting the church, the school's core values and RE. The governors really appreciate having the opportunity to interact directly with pupils.

A small group of governors were delighted to join the staff at their last INSET day where the focus was preparation for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). This is scheduled to occur in early Summer.

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Over the past few weeks Andy Bowman and myself have attended scheduled briefing events held by both BaNES and the Bath and Wells Diocese. As well as providing educational updates these events are a useful way of keeping in touch with and sharing views with Head Teacher and Chair colleagues.

The role of Clerk to the governing body remains unfilled, even though it has been advertised through the usual channels. Please do consider who might be a suitable candidate, including people who are not currently linked to St Stephen's School. It is both an interesting and vital role that sits right at the heart of the governing body. Having no Clerk in place places more demands on the governing body, who give freely of their time to support school in a number of ways.

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As our own Admissions Authority, the governors recently met to review and decide on the applications for the September in-take. The ranked list has now been returned to BaNES who coordinate the offers and acceptances on our behalf. The ranking includes any children under LA care, siblings and geographic distance.

Thank you once again to pupils, staff, parents and my fellow governors for another busy and successful term.

On behalf of the governing body, may I wish you a happy, healthy and safe Easter break.

Best wishes,

Kate

Kate Seeley, Chair of Governors

April 2017

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