



Chair of Governors' Term 3 update

As the term comes to a close I want to provide you with a short update on some of the key activities under-taken by the Board of Governors over the past term.

School development plan – we continue to monitor the implementation of the plan. On the very first night of term a small group of us met with the senior leadership team to review homework books and the implementation of the homework policy throughout school. These review meetings are an excellent opportunity for us to see the team at work and the rigour that they deploy in book reviews and in providing each other and their colleagues with both positive feedback, as well as focused suggestions for improvement. They also welcome inputs and challenge from board members.

Next term there will be further book reviews on Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar, as well as Maths. There will also be another 'Learning Walk', focusing on the 'Golden Three' and the evidence of it in both the playground and classrooms.

Governors have also continued to meet with curriculum leads to review their plans for the year.

Committees of the Governing body – as I mentioned in my last update, we will spotlight each of the three committees during the year. The first one is **Pupil Support** – Chaired by Siobhan Davies, Parent Governor. She is supported by:

- Pat Prevatt, Deputy Chair
- The Rev Philip Hawthorn, Andy Bowman and Kate Seeley – ex-officio members
- Sarah Darch, Rachel Morcom and Rich Cooper



Siobhan has 3 children at school. She has been a Parent Governor for a year. She helped the PTA for several years and enjoyed working with the school orchestra for a year. Siobhan is a Clinical Risk consultant (lawyer). She is also a Musician, playing Bassoon and teaching both this and Musicianship privately and as a Senior Instrumental Tutor with Bath's Music Hub.

The Pupil Support Committee has a diverse and wide-ranging scope covering Church links, pastoral/ethos, attendance, punctuality, personal development and well-being, every child matters outcomes, safe guarding/ child protection, community cohesion and equalities. They ensure that the school has appropriate policies and systems supporting these areas, and monitor and challenge its aims and achievements to ensure the highest

possible standards and quality of care for our children. This is achieved through regular tracker meetings with teachers, learning walks, book scrutinies, listening to the school council and attending appropriate training. We contribute to the School's Development Plan and support it through audits, recently including Safeguarding & Child Protection and next year SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools). The PSC has a "softer" side too - pastoral care. This has become a vital aspect of schooling and our school takes great pride in nurturing its pupils' wellbeing. With a reported increase in anxiety in younger and younger children, the PSC see its next long term challenge to look at how to support our children in becoming happy, confident young adults.

Admissions policy – I described the proposed new Admissions policy for St Stephen's School in my last update. Following this we conducted a consultation period lasting from 18 December 2015 to 31 January 2016, inclusive. During this period we received c150 hits to our consultation website; plus one positive comment and one comment against the proposed change on removing the church attendance criterion. The Board of Governors met on 1 February 2016 and considered the results of the consultation. It was agreed that the proposed new policy should be adopted.

The change will take effect for children entering school in September 2017. The new policy will be available on both our own website as well as BaNES' Admissions website. St Stephen's church will no-longer be required to maintain a register of attendance between January and December 2016. The change has been fully supported by the Diocese and the Reverend Philip Hawthorn has been instrumental in leading and supporting the change. He will work with the PCC to identify additional opportunities for further engaging families with St Stephen's church.

The future of our school – as some of you may be aware from the national press, there is an expectation of central government that all schools will become academies by 2020 latest. We have obviously been keeping ourselves abreast of discussion and developments in this area. At the moment we are still identifying future possible options and what they would mean for St Stephen's School. We will of course update you at the appropriate time when we reach the point where a decision needs to be made. For the moment I just wanted you to be aware that this is a key area of focus for the Board currently.

New Governors and vacancies

We are delighted to welcome Justin O'Byrne, LA Governor.

Sarah Klein has joined the Board as Clerk to the Governors. Sarah is a parent and in addition to her Clerk duties she has taken on two important projects for the Board. I will provide an update on these in future newsletters.

There is still an open vacancy for a Foundation Governor, which I am working on.

We are very fortunate to have such a wealth of talent, skills and commitment on our governing body. I know from talking with other Chairs that this isn't always the case with other schools.

Finally, all that remains is to once again thank Andy Bowman and his 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 a restful mid-term break.

Best wishes,

Kate

Kate Seeley, Chair of Governors

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Kate_Seeley@st-stephens.bathnes.sch.uk