



Chair of Governors' Term 4 update

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

School development plan – we continue to monitor the implementation of the plan. There have recently been 'book looks' for Maths and Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar. These entail selecting exercise books at random for each class and reviewing the overall content, marking and feedback. These meetings are an excellent opportunity for the governors to see the Senior Leadership 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. In addition, there has been another 'Learning Walk' focusing on the deployment of the 'Golden Three' in classrooms and in the playground. The governors who attended this were delighted by the standards of behaviour that they observed across the school.

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

Committees of the Governing body – this term we turn the spotlight on the **Finance and Resources Committee** – Chaired by **Karl Stringer**, Foundation Governor.



Karl is supported by:

- Emma Elliott (Deputy chair)
- Andy Bowman, Kate Seeley (ex-officio members)
- Viv Alderson (Office Manager - co-opted),
- Louise Flynn (Deputy Head)
- Olly Lay, Peter Baxter, Johanna Fitzgerald.

Karl has been a Governor at St Stephen's for 6 years, he has two children at school, is a deputy warden at St Stephen's Church and is a British Airways Pilot. Karl also chairs the Disciplinary panel and is the Link Governor for IT.

The Finance and Resources committee is responsible for over-seeing the financial management of the school, staffing, management of the premises, third party contracts, health and safety and the school website. They meet at least three times per year and in addition monitor the budget on a regular basis. This includes benchmarking against other similar schools as well.

In a time of ever decreasing school budgets the Committee has a huge challenge, along with the Head Teacher, to make sure that the provision that the school can offer is not adversely affected by reductions. They are continually looking at ways to reduce expenditure and increase revenue. One of the current aims is to investigate partnering with local business and organisations to provide sponsorship for activities that will directly benefit our children in their daily lives at school; whether it be for IT, sport, music, drama, play

equipment or simply time. If you are aware of any such opportunities, maybe in your own organisation, please do get in touch and let us know.

After School Care Club – last Summer the Head Teacher polled parents on their potential interest in school setting up an After School Care Club. The feedback was very encouraging. However, we were unable to further progress the idea due to lack of resource to undertake the detailed feasibility study required. I'm now pleased to tell you that the Clerk to the Governors, Sarah Klein, has completed this work in parallel with her Clerk duties. The Board has now approved the next step, which entails the development of a detailed implementation plan. The current expectation is that Andy Bowman will be contacting you in Term 5 with details of the Club and requesting firm commitments for a September start, including a deposit. This will enable us to minimise any financial risk while the recruitment of staff and equipment occurs. The initial target is to provide a club for 30 children, Monday to Friday each week, during term time.

The future of our school – in the last newsletter, at the end of Term 3, I said that we have been keeping ourselves abreast of discussion and developments in the area of 'academisation'. Since then, you will probably have seen government announcements regarding the time frame for this to occur. It is undoubtedly quite a 'hot' topic nationally at the moment. We are still identifying future possible options and what they would mean for St Stephen's School. Several governors have attended information sessions and a representative from the Bath and Wells Diocese came to present to the Governing Body meeting on 21 March. We have also formed our own Steering Group so that we can actively focus on potential business models. We will of course update you at the appropriate time when we reach the point where a decision needs to be made.

New Governor

We are delighted to welcome Steve Reilly, new Foundation Governor. Steve is a parishioner at St Stephen's Church and he brings strong commercial skills to the board.

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. We begin each Governors' meeting with a short reflection or prayer led by our Rector Philip, as well as reminding ourselves of the school's core values of Love, Courage, Creativity and Joy. Last week Philip's reflection reminded us of all the unsung heroes and work that goes on in the background, and often unnoticed, to make our school the best it can be for our children. We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated team.

Thank you also for your support. I wish you and your families a restful Easter break.

Best wishes,

Kate

Kate Seeley, Chair of Governors

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