



Chair of Governors' Term 5 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 will be 'book looks' for Maths and Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar in Term 6, as well as another 'Learning Walk' which will again focus on the deployment of the 'Golden Three' throughout school. In addition, Governors are preparing to meet with their respective curriculum leads in Term 6 to review how well their plans have been implemented during the year.

Committees of the Governing body – this term we turn the spotlight on the **Standards Committee** – Chaired by **Rupert Stubbs**, Parent Governor.



Rupert is supported by:

- Jonathan Derwent (Deputy chair)
- Andy Bowman, Kate Seeley (ex-officio members)
- Louise Flynn (Deputy Head)
- Justin O'Byrne and Steve Reilly

Rupert has been a Governor at St Stephen's for several years, joining when his two, now teenage, children were pupils at school. He is also Chair of the Appeals Panel, Link Governor for Creative subjects and also for Health and Safety.

The Standards Committee is responsible for setting and monitoring realistic and sufficiently challenging targets for pupils, in conjunction with the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team; ensuring that the curriculum is balanced and complies with statutory requirements; setting priorities for improvement and monitoring and evaluating the impact of improvement plans; and developing and reviewing policies related to the curriculum. This year has been particularly challenging for school with the further implementation of the new national curriculum and changes in assessment frameworks. The Senior Leadership Team values the support and encouragement provided by the Standards Committee.

Governing Body Self-evaluation – at our last full governing body meeting on 16 May, the governors spent some time reviewing ourselves as a governing body. This included evaluating how well we are progressing against the plan for the year; ideas for next year's plan; reviewing ourselves against the National Governors' Association 20 questions; a review of our own professional development; and an evaluation of how the revised committee structure, that we introduced in Term 1, is working. While there are always opportunities for improvement and to do things differently or more effectively, the governors felt overall that we have made good progress during the past year. The session did generate a number of ideas though that will be incorporated going forwards.

The future of our school – in the last newsletter, at the end of Term 4, 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 fact that it will no longer be compulsory for schools to become academies after all. However, there are a number of caveats attached to this announcement with regard to school performance and progress, and the ability of a Local Authority to effectively support its schools, particularly where a number of schools have become academies and the remaining LA resources are insufficient.

We discussed the topic at the last full governors’ meeting and agreed that we should continue to actively engage in discussions and the development of a few potential Multi-Academy Trusts that would appear to be most appropriate for our school. This will enable us to influence the models being developed, as well as ensuring that we do not get left behind by other schools actively opting for academy status ahead of us. Our neighbouring Bath Primary Schools appear to be planning a similar approach.

We will of course update you at the appropriate time when we reach the point where a decision needs to be made.

Governor professional development

Governors have recently attended training in ‘Safeguarding and Child Protection’, ‘e.safety’, PREVENT (Radicalisation), School finances and New Governor training. These programmes are all provided by BaNES. In addition Andy Bowman and myself have attended the Strategic briefing session given by the Diocese of Bath and Wells; and four governors attended the presentation given by the Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust organisation in Wells.

Governor vacancy

Pat Prevatt, a Foundation Governor, will be standing down at the end of Term 6. She has given great service to school over a period of 8 years, particularly on the current Pupil Support and previous Pastoral Committees. Pat has also been the Link Governor for Religious Education, Personal and Social Development Education and Equality. I will be starting the process to replace Pat very soon and would welcome volunteers or nominations. Full details will be sent out early next term and will be posted on school and church notice boards.

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 break.

Best wishes,

Kate

Kate Seeley, Chair of Governors

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