



Chair of Governors' End of Year Newsletter 2015-2016

As we reach the end of another school year it is good to reflect on all the achievements, challenges and joys of being part of our lovely school, that sits at the heart of the Lansdown community along with St Stephen's Church. It is also a good opportunity to thank all those who contribute to the success of school and create a great learning environment for our children.

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 (Pupil Support; Finance and Resources; and Standards) are aligned to ensure this overview and focus.

During the school year governors have attended 7 detailed book inspections covering Maths, English and Homework. There have also been three Learning Walks focused on evidence of the Golden Three in classrooms and play areas. In addition, governors have met their curriculum lead teachers for each subject at least twice, to discuss plans at the start of the year and to review achievements at the end of the year. The governor inputs from these exercises are then reviewed by the Senior Leadership team to ensure that suggested improvements are properly considered and implemented as appropriate.

The governing body has also kept itself trained and developed by attending courses provided by BaNES and the Bath and Wells Diocese; and by attending briefing sessions on education developments and policy changes. Ensuring that the school's policies and practices are revised and updated is another key role for the governing body in ensuring that our policies are appropriate and meet statutory requirements.

During the past school year there have not been any major external inspections. However, the governors continue to use various sources of available data to assess school's progress and to inform future areas of focus. These data sources include SATs results, financial bench-marking, Ofsted inspections, SIAMS inspections, Investors in People inspections, the Parent Survey, the Pupil Survey and the Healthy Schools' survey.

As a school we want to achieve the very best for all our children and for them to have the best learning environment possible. Andy Bowman will be commenting on the latest SATs results in his weekly newsletter. These are based on the new national curriculum and provide wonderful evidence of the effectiveness and hard work of our teachers and children, as well as external comparisons. In addition to academic success, St Stephen's School is also recognised for some very notable sporting successes as well.

As we approach the end of the school year we are aware of our Year 6 children, and maybe some others at different stages in their school careers, moving on to new schools and learning environments. We hope that St Stephen's School has enabled them to benefit from our vision for them in having the skills and self-confidence required to thrive in their future. Specifically we hope that they have been nurtured, challenged and inspired to be:

- Excited about learning, with a positive self-story
- Responsible and respectful
- Emotionally, physically and spiritually aware

- An open-minded and creative thinker and learner, who can take risks and learn from experiences
- A literate and numerate person who is ready for secondary school and the wider world
- Someone who thrives with change, who can plan for the future and who is ready for the unknown
- Someone who takes opportunities to be all they can be

The Governors and Senior Leadership team have already started the process of reviewing the achievements of 2015-16 and planning for 2016-17. Early in Term 1 we will be finalising the new school development plan with Andy Bowman and he will be sharing this with you. The major areas of focus for the governing body will be the monitoring of the development plan, the SIAMS inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools), finances and academisation. With respect to the latter, we have continued to contribute to thinking and the development of potential models and hope to be able to share more detail on these early in the school year.

Finance continues to be a major challenge as revenues decrease year on year and costs increase. We are always grateful to the PTA, and also for any grants or sponsorship that we receive, as this really helps to enhance the learning and play environment for our children. Please do consider whether your own contacts would be prepared to help us in this regard.

In the new school year we look forwards to welcoming 60 new Reception children, as well as those who may be joining us at other stages in their schooling. We also look forwards to the launch of the After School Club and thank all those who have initiated and developed this.

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 and all the staff a restful and joyful Summer break.

Best wishes,

Kate

Kate Seeley, Chair of Governors

July 2016

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