



Curdridge Primary School's Governors' Newsletter - spring 2017

It's that stage of the term again for us as governors to update you, the parents of our school, as to what has been happening from a governors' perspective.

The first change you may be aware of is that James Hillyear our previous chair has had to stand down from the role due to increasing work commitments, and at our last Governing Body (GB) meeting in early March, I was elected to become the Chair of Governors. I would like to acknowledge the incredible amount of hard work that James put into the role over the past two years to help move the school forward. I was very pleased when I was able to persuade James to stay on the GB, as his knowledge and experience is invaluable and so we very much look forward to James's continued commitment and enthusiasm as part of the team. Mr Andy Sly our Local Education Authority (LEA) governor was elected as the new Vice Chair. Andy had previously been the chair of governors some years ago and we very much appreciate him coming back onto the GB and being able to use his experience at this important time for the school. Our final change was to welcome the Rev. Amy Webb onto the GB in a co-opted role. Amy is a familiar face as part of the Curdridge and Botley church and her links to the local area will be a great asset on the GB. If at any stage you would like full details of the GB and our terms of office, they are all located on the school website, and whilst we are now fortunate to have a full complement of members, if anyone is interested in becoming a governor at any stage, or would like to assist in the work we do, then please do get in touch either with myself directly or by contacting the school office and I would be happy to discuss how you could become involved.

As you will be aware much of our focus over the past term has been monitoring where we are now as a school and challenging the school leadership to continue to improve. The school is working really hard to ensure we are as ready as we can be when Ofsted come for their next inspection (which is due some point during the summer term.) For those of you who are new to school life you may not be aware that the school gets roughly half a day's notice of when the inspectors are due to arrive – a phone call one day, for an inspection the following two days, which means we always have to be in a state of readiness and the school has to be performing every day, and not try and put on a 'show' when the inspectors call. For those of you who were at the school at the time of the last inspection, you will remember it was a challenging period with a number of teachers having recently left which meant we weren't in a position to show the school in the positive light we believe we are now in, with stable quality teaching in all of the key areas of Early Years, Maths, English and SEND.

When the inspectors do come in one of the things they will do is ask for parents' views of the school, and in readiness for this, we will shortly be sending out our own survey as it is very important for us as governors to understand your perspective as parents and provide you with the opportunity to tell us how you are feeling about your child's education. We are looking to send this out electronically early in the new term and hope each family will be able to spare the ten minutes it will take to complete as it will provide us with invaluable input on where we still need to keep focussing on to keep improving the school.

As governors I am sure you see many of us on a regular basis in school, whether that's in the playground collecting our children, helping at CSA events or performing one of our key responsibilities in carrying out monitoring visits. Each governor has separate responsibilities, working in the key areas of Maths, English, Special Needs (SEND) and Early Years and during the term it's been really impressive to see how the changes in all of these areas are making a real difference to our children. It is a credit to the team in school that Ann Truman and Catherine Redgrave from Hampshire Education Authority say we are now a rapidly improving school and they have put us on a low support package; in Ann's words 'Curdridge – impressive!'

A few weeks ago I was undertaking my termly maths review with Mr Simpson (the school maths lead) with Jo Lees who is a county Inspector and Advisor for Maths; she was impressed with the quality of the maths books she reviewed and said that the standard of our books was good. We have also had a county English Advisor working with Mrs Wood to develop writing and reading at Curdridge. Again the improvements in what the school is doing have been so impressive that examples of the children's work are being used to train other staff across the county as it is now considered to be 'best practice.' As a result of this we now have other schools visiting Curdridge to see the work in action!

We also now have other schools coming in to view our provision for SEND pupils and to look at the way we provide for individuals and groups of children to ensure that needs are being met whilst still being 'inclusive.' In Early Years there has been a specific focus on the learning environment (both indoor and outdoor) and how these environments impact on the continuous provision for the pupils in order to support and challenge children in their learning. We appreciate that the past couple of years since the last Ofsted inspection has been a journey of improvement that we are far from completing, but there has been real significant progress within the school that has been endorsed by the outside agencies that have been assisting in our development.

As governors we get involved in many aspects of 'behind the scenes' activities of the school that may not initially be apparent. I was involved in interviewing for our new class 2 teacher, and we were delighted to be able to appoint Mrs Gammer, whose passion for teaching came across so strongly at her interview; I know she will be a real asset to the teaching and management team at Curdridge, and we very much wish her well when she joins us properly after Easter. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Mrs Alberti and Miss Stronach for managing the class 2 team so well over the past year and wish them well for the future.

We also undertake activities such as Health and Safety audits around the school and safeguarding checks to ensure our children are learning in a safe, happy environment and that everyone is aware of what to do if one of those unavoidable accidents were to happen and I am happy to report that everything was very much as it should be in these important areas. You will also no doubt have heard recently in the media about how tight the school budgets are and how unavoidable cuts are having to be made in some schools in certain areas of the country. Curdridge is no different in that the money we have to spend is very limited once the fixed essential costs of running a school of our size have been spent, that is why the work of the CSA in putting on the events they do are so important both for the enjoyment of our children and to generate that extra amount of money that makes such a difference to their education. We appreciate that all our parents lead busy lives and being a governor or helping on the CSA is not for everyone but everyone can help by supporting these events not just by helping at them but just supporting them and encouraging your child to take part it really does make a difference.

From everyone on the Governing body we wish you are happy and relaxing Easter break, and I would like to thank all of the staff for the efforts they put in day in day out to make our school the place it is, along with all of our volunteer helpers who also make such a difference to school life, whether that is helping a child read, going on a school trip or being a taxi service to help our children attend sporting events; every element and contribution is a key aspect of school life. I would also take this opportunity to wish our year 6 pupils well in their KS2 tests that are coming up in May, I know that Miss Tuckey and Mrs Pennington have been working with the group really hard to make sure they are as prepared as they can be at this important time for them.

Regards

Martin Horn

Chair Governors