

Governors News May 2015

Going for gold

One of the highlights of last term was the recognition of the fantastic quality of RE teaching and learning in school when we received a glowing report and a Gold Religious Education Quality Mark. The assessor stated that the 'pupils are marvelous ambassadors for the effectiveness of positive religious education'; he also said that 'the process for the day was one of welcome and a highly efficient interaction and presentation of wide ranging, clear evidence, that was a privilege to witness.'

A new look governing body

All school governing bodies were required by the Government to look at their constitutions and consider what size and membership would make their governing body most effective in its role to ensure the best education for our children. As a Church of England Aided school, our governing body has to have a specific proportion of Church or Foundation Governors. We had an extra meeting in February to discuss the constitution, having taken advice from both the Diocese and the Local Authority Governance Team.

The meeting proposed a new constitution which details 12 governors, this was agreed and adopted at our full governing body meeting in March. Further details can be found on the 'Governors' section of the school's website.

Committee focus

This is just a quick outline of the work of the Governing Body over the spring term, and what is planned for this term.

Our **Environment Committee** discussed the repairs to the school roof. The company who completed the repair was also asked to check the whole roof for any other remedial work, loose slates etc. This work was completed in January.

The annual health and safety review was completed and there were no issues or actions highlighted.

Mr. Lambert, as Chair of this committee, also ensures the regular checks of first aid boxes and our defibrillator are carried out, as well as the fire drills. Fire drills are carried out regularly to ensure all the children know exactly what to do in case the alarm sounds. The target, which is generally met, is to have the whole school evacuated and persons accounted for in just over two minutes.

Finally the school's recycled greenhouse was discussed, some repairs were needed, and Mr. Lambert was happy to tackle these over the school holidays. They have now been done and the gardening gang is looking forward to making good use of this new improved facility.

This term this committee will be looking at the re-decoration schedule to plan the work needed over the summer holidays. They will also discuss installing a path to the yurt and the possible building of a new eco-classroom to provide the extra space our school needs if the funding is available.

The **Teaching and Learning Committee** continued to look in detail at the progress and attainment data for all children. The governors scrutinised the data format used by staff to identify progress and attainment of the children in different categories (e.g. pupil premium, gender, special need etc.) and could see how this helped identify groups where progress may not be as expected. This enables staff to put action plans into place to address any issues. The key factor is teacher accountability and the requirement, linked into their performance management, that children's needs should be met.

The data indicates that we are expecting to see an improving picture in both key stages, with APS (average point scores) predicted to be higher across all subjects.

Phonics was discussed, with work needed to ensure that children were on track and that they were using the knowledge and skills learned in phonics sessions across the rest of the school day. The phonics lead teacher was increasing monitoring to ensure targets were met.

This close scrutiny of data will continue this term with pupils taking end of year assessments and of course the Standard Assessment Tests for Years 2 and 6. Governors shadowed Mrs. Magiera and Mrs. Parr as they organized the Standard Assessment Tests for year 6, ensuring that the clear procedures specified by the DFE were followed. Staff and governors were very impressed and proud of the children who behaved in a calm and mature way throughout SATs week.

The **Workforce and Community Committee** discussed a new software system, which would help ensure that all information on child protection and safeguarding issues is kept safe and secure. The software had been recommended by the head of a local special school. Governors agreed that the package would further strengthen our safeguarding procedures and should be purchased.

The committee reviewed the 'Sex and Relationships' Policy and made changes which were then confirmed when the policy was agreed at last term's full governing body meeting.

This committee also has a special role in ensuring that we continue to be an 'outstanding' church school. The preparations for our assessment for the RE Quality mark were discussed.

The proposed changes to the staffing structure from September 2015 were discussed, as well as the changes required to cover Mrs. Selby's maternity leave.

Staffing will continue to be a major focus this term as Miss Boulton moves to a new school, and Mrs. Westron will start her maternity leave in September.

The **Pay and Appraisal committee** will meet to update the pay policy, this is done every summer term.

Our **Finance Committee** updated and checked the Manual of Internal Financial Procedures, this is done annually as part of the work to complete the annual 'School's Financial Value Standard' (SFVS) documents which have to be sent to the Local Authority. The SFVS was completed and sent as required, with progress on last year's action points considered, and any new actions for this year highlighted. The committee will ensure these are completed over the coming year.

The committee had undertaken a check on the Government's 'benchmarking' website to see how the spending in different areas for our school compares with other similar schools. For the majority of areas our spending was in the middle of the range; however we do spend a higher than average amount on support staff and this will be considered at our next finance meeting.

The finance committee will also discuss the funding required for the possible addition of an eco-classroom to our school grounds and they will focus on the premises action plan, ensuring best value is achieved and relevant procedures are followed.

At our final full governing body meeting of this year we hope that James and Grace, our head boy and head girl will join us to let governors hear about how they have found their year in these important roles.

Plans for a 'back to school' day for governors in the autumn term will be on the agenda for this meeting too. We hope as many governors as possible will be able to spend the whole day in school, attending collective worship in Church, meeting subject leaders and teachers, having lunch with the children and much more besides, it should be a very busy and informative day!