

## **Governor News February 2017**

### **Governing Body Changes**

Autumn Term 2016 saw some changes on the Governing Body. Firstly: Mrs Tina Harris resigned as a Governor due to time constraint. Secondly: The Governors welcomed Mr Edd Williams as the newly elected Parent Governor. Thirdly: Mrs Sarah Merison's term as Parent Governor has expired but, not wishing to lose her knowledge and skill, she has been appointed as an Associate Member for a four-year term. Fourthly: The immediate consequence is that Mrs Merison can no longer act as Chair of the Governing Body and Mr Graham Sheen has taken on that role, initially on a one year basis. Mrs Merison and Mr Sheen are intending to work closely on school related issues. Certainly, Mr Graham Sheen is going to value the professional support of Mrs Merison – a steep learning curve.

### **Governors Back to School Day**

The Governors have now established an annual Autumn Term "Back to School Day" which is proving to be an effective way to meet the teaching and support staff and build up that important relationship between everyone who has an important role to play in the context of the school and in meeting the varied needs of the children in our joint care. It also enables staff to share their concerns and their aspirations. The Governors are always encouraged by the commitment and professionalism of the staff and it provides an opportunity to express our gratitude. The day includes briefings on how children are assessed and how pupil progress is monitored. Some time was spent on learning the importance of looking at children's books to evidence learning and progress. The Governors also spent time looking at the Governor Quality Mark materials as a basis for discussing how effective we are as a Governing Body, and to consider what we could be better at. There was also some discussion about the expectations from Governors in the event of an Ofsted Inspection and how prepared we are when the time comes. The Governors were also pleased to meet members of the PTA and parents. The day serves well as a means to demonstrate the importance of teamwork and communal responsibility.

### **Governor Responsibilities and Committees**

Every member of the Governing Body has an 'area of responsibility' covering everything from Budget to E-safety and this will involve at least once termly visits into school to meet the member of the staff responsible for that area. Governors will write up a resume of their visit which is fed back to the full Governing Body, sometimes via the sub-committees. The School website provides the details of Governor 'areas of responsibility' as well as detailing the membership of the following committees: Environment. Finance. Teaching and Curriculum. Workforce and Community. Pay and Appraisal. Strategic Leadership. Head Teacher's Performance Management. These committees meet termly and the minutes of the meetings are circulated to all Governors and raised at Full Governing Body Meetings where questions can be asked and any clarifications sought. This approach to School Governorship has several benefits: it means that Governors are significantly involved with the school and not just able to turn up for Full Governing Body meetings. It means that individual governor strengths can be directed to where they can have most impact. (In the Autumn Term, the Governors

conduct an audit to establish where governor strengths and professional expertise lie). It also means that the Full Governing Body can act as a check on sub-committee meetings and become fully informed. This can be evidenced in the minutes of the Full Governing Body meetings which now include the significant questions asked by individual governors seeking clarification on items in sub-committee minutes. Time is also given to group discussion on the head teacher's report and the questions raised. At our Autumn Term meeting the Governors identified the following strengths: the important early intervention in EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage). The excellent marking strategy and the rigorous approach towards presentation in children's books. The pupils' positive attitudes to learning. The high staff morale.

The National Government priorities and approach change all the time and one of the tasks of the Governing Body is to keep track of these changes and the impact they have on the school community. A focus of the Governing Body has been the significant changes to End of Key Stage assessment and the move from 'levels' to age related expectations. This year, the tests at the end of Key Stage Two presented significant challenges which the school has had to respond to. The strength of the school is the accelerated progress children make from their entry into school because the teaching is focussed and Pupil Premium funding is used to excellent effect to support pupils. The Governing Body also recognise the impact upon teaching and learning of an imaginative curriculum and the concentration on 'everyday excellence.' These are, indeed, things to celebrate, but it is an important duty of the Governing Body not to become complacent. The Governors have an important responsibility in supporting the head teacher, the senior leadership team and all the staff in the work they do to meet the educational and pastoral needs of all the children in our care.

### **The School Community**

At the Autumn Term Full Governing Body meeting on November 10<sup>th</sup> the Head Boy and Head Girl were in attendance and they gave an overview of why they had applied for the positions and what the process had been. They then asked some Governors how long they had been on the Governing Body and the reasons why they were involved. This has become an annual feature of the Autumn Meeting and is welcomed as a means of finding out from the children what their aspirations are. The Governors are encouraged by the positive roles children take in school, whether through the committees such as the School Council, the Ethos Group and the Eco-Committee, or through individual responsibilities either as curriculum links or through prefect roles. It develops that sense of communal responsibility and the importance of teamwork and collaboration.

Any feedback, comments or questions from parents and carers are always welcome so do please either contact the school or e-mail me 'chair@wittonwalk.cheshire.sch.uk

Graham Sheen

Chair of Governors