

Governor News February 2016

Governors go back to school

The beginning of the Autumn term saw governors go “back to school” for the day. Following morning worship governors had a chance to meet with teachers and teaching assistants. This was a great way of building the relationship between staff and governors and gave governors a greater insight into the roles and work life of our staff. Briefings on the latest Ofsted frame work, the way children are assessed, the new creative curriculum and an update on the new national safeguarding initiative ‘Prevent’, which aims to prevent extremism, followed. Governors with special responsibilities for monitoring specific subject areas had the opportunity to talk to their corresponding subject lead teacher. We also invited parents to come along for afternoon tea to meet the governors too. Governors concluded that this was a very useful and successful day which we hope to repeat next year.

Committee Update

The Autumn term saw the **Environment committee** discussing replacing light fittings and the potential of installing lights which would be more durable and save energy. Quotes for electrical work were to be sought to ensure we obtained best value for money from our school budget.

A bid for funding to help develop a new outside classroom had been submitted and we were now waiting for news of whether we had been successful.

Mr Lambert had been working on a new path to the yurt and the development of an early years forest schools area was discussed. Mrs Merison reported that we would need to re-apply for our ‘Green flag’ for Eco-school in the spring term.

Policies including ‘Health and Safety’ and ‘First Aid’ were checked and approved and standard health and safety items were reported including the regular checking of first aid boxes and the defibrillator we have in school.

The **Workforce and Community committee** looked at changes to the admissions criteria which had to be included in our admissions policy. This was then made available on our website for consultation before being approved at our full governing body meeting. New safeguarding procedures were discussed in detail, including the new signing in book and use of different coloured lanyards.

Reverend Alison reported that a regular programme of visits by reception children to church were being planned with Mrs Kimber our RE lead teacher. Children will explore the church and have a chance to play the organ, pull the tower bell, visit the lady chapel, the prayer tree, the font etc.

Mrs Magiera explained that following conversations with other schools it had been decided to change our school website provider to ‘School Spider’. This would be easier for staff to update and cheaper too.

Governors decided that at parents evening they would ask parents for feedback on how well they feel our school informs them about their child's progress. The feedback, which was generally positive, was discussed at our full governing body meeting in November.

The **Finance committee** looked at the results of a benchmarking exercise comparing our schools spending on stationery and energy with other similar schools. This is a way of identifying areas where we may be spending more than other schools and so prompting discussion of how costs could potentially be reduced. Benchmarking on specific areas of spending is now carried out termly.

One area that governors need to monitor closely is how the pupil premium money received by our school is used and the impact it is having on the progress and attainment of disadvantaged children. Mrs Kenyon, our pupil premium lead teacher joined the meeting and went through the data in great detail. Governors asked a number of questions including a question about the work of the pupil premium teaching assistants and their impact on increasing the progress made by our pupil premium children.

The **Teaching and Learning Committee** discussed the new way that attainment was judged not by 'levels' but by whether children reached or exceeded their age related expectation. Progress will now be measured from the point at which children enter school to when they leave, which should highlight the good progress our children make. The importance of getting an accurate picture of 'on entry' data and the most effective way of doing this was discussed. Mrs Kenyon had revised the 'assessment policy' and this was outlined in detail and agreed by governors.

Data provided a big focus for discussion at our **Full Governors meeting** on 25th November. 'RAISE online' data for our school was sent to all governors and we went through each element in detail with Mrs Magiera and Mrs Parr having providing information and notes for each section of data.

Meeting our school community

Our Head Boy and Head Girl joined governors for the first part of their **Full Governing Body Meeting** in November to talk about their roles. This has become a regular feature of this meeting over the last few years and is one of the ways governors find out what children think first hand. Talking to the children as well as parents and staff is important. We do this by being in school, attending parents' evenings and school events and being involved with committees such as the Eco-committee, School Council and Ethos Group.

Feedback, comments and questions from parents and carers are always welcome, please contact the school office or email me 'chair@wittonwalk.cheshire.sch.uk'.

Sarah Merison

Chair of Governors