

## **Governors Review of the School Year 2021-2022**

As we started back at school last September, we felt that we were finally able to get back to a more normal school life after such upheaval and disruption the year before.

As usual governors began their year with a '**Back to school day**', still virtual in 2021 but nevertheless a brilliant opportunity to hear updates from Mrs Magiera, talk to the Head Boy and Head Girl, and hear from Mrs Parr, Mrs Osborn and Mrs Selby about the use of Covid funding to support pupils, the development of our new curriculum and phonics. We also discussed and agreed our strategic school development plan

To work effectively our governing body has sub-committees which meet once each term. **Environment committee** is responsible for ensuring our school buildings and grounds are well maintained and that health and safety policies and practices are effective in keeping our children and staff safe. In the autumn term discussions included plans for repairing and replacing facias and guttering, roof repairs that were needed and classroom smart boards. In the spring meeting plans for the new trim trail featured whilst in the summer term the health and safety policy was updated and agreed and actions from the health and safety review were discussed. Regular checks of the accident book, first aid boxes and the defib are carried out by the chair of the committee prior to every meeting.

A priority over the year for this committee was to ensure that as a school we have done everything possible to avoid the school flooding again. We made sure we had carried out any necessary actions that were recommended to us and at the same time have continued to pressure CWAC as our maintaining authority to do all they can to work with the Environment Agency, United Utilities and British Waterways to resolve the problems with the towns drainage system which seems to have led to the devastation for our school and the wider town centre community.

In the autumn term the **teaching and curriculum committee** discussed the huge amount of work that had been carried out on our curriculum, Mrs Osborn, our curriculum lead had created a new curriculum book which includes detailed small steps, vocabulary and curriculum progression for all subjects and across all key stages.

Data on attainment and progress is always a focus for this committee, from reception baseline at the beginning of the year to Standard Assessment Tests in the summer term. In February all governors had the opportunity to have a detailed look at the data in a session led by Mrs Magiera. This allowed us all to improve our knowledge and skills and provided ample opportunity to ask questions. Governors were once again in school in SATs week monitoring that procedures were carried out as detailed in the DFE guidance, as always, the children demonstrated calmness and maturity which was impressive to see.

Phonics is a key focus area from our last Ofsted inspection, the introduction of the 'Little Wandle' scheme was discussed in the autumn meeting and the support that the English Hub was providing for Mrs Ball in her new role as phonics lead.

All subject leaders visited Early Years Foundation Stage in the spring term to see how their subject was taught in nursery and reception, this provided them with the information needed to

ensure that the transition to the Key Stage 1 curriculum is dovetailed and builds on the prior learning and knowledge the children have.

Link governors have an important role meeting with the lead teacher in their subject and discussing action plans and progress in detail. For example, as a link governor for maths I have discussions with Mrs Parr every term, in addition I was invited to the feedback meeting at the end of our maths review where we had invited a maths specialist to look at our teaching and learning and identify areas of strength and improvement. There was lots of positive feedback and some good practical suggestions which were taken on board and actioned swiftly. In April Mrs Parr provided a session after school for governors on the 'Mastery Approach' that forms the basis for our maths teaching, explaining why we feel the small steps approach works well for our children and the impact it is having.

The **workforce and community committee** have a remit for staffing and admissions as well as community and church links. In the autumn term they discussed and set up a working party of governors to ensure we were fully prepared for our Church School (SIAMs) inspection. In the spring term governors devised a survey for parents to help us reflect on our school's vision, Christian values and the distinctive Christian characteristics of our school. We were delighted that 69 families responded and that the results provided a very positive picture of our school as a church school.

Great news that Harvest festival was to take place in Church in the autumn term and parents were invited to attend albeit with some covid restrictions and precautions still in place.

Our 'wrap around care' provision opened in November, with staff employed directly by school as our pre-pandemic provider had decided not to continue.

In the spring term several governors completed the NSPCC's 'safer recruitment' training, a requirement to ensure safeguarding procedures are adhered to. Safeguarding is a priority for governors and is an agenda item at every governor meeting. We were also pleased to welcome Michael Roberts as our new Foundation Governor in February.

In the summer term a definite highlight was the Queens Jubilee celebrations, in particular the Community Picnic. We were delighted to welcome parents, the town mayor and many other members of our local community.

The **finance committee** must ensure that the money in our budget is well managed and spent in the most effective way to impact on the priorities in our school development plan. Our termly meeting includes a detailed line by line look at our school budget with our CWAC budget officer, and includes looking at pupil numbers, staffing and Special Educational Needs and Disability funding as well looking ahead at forecasts for the next 3 years for all budget areas. We also discuss the completion of the Schools Financial Value Standards, a self-assessment that governing bodies of all council funded schools must undertake and submit annually in the spring term and ensure any actions or areas for improvement are followed up.

An area of focus over the autumn and spring terms was ensuring that the insurance income and associated expenditure from the flooding had all been detailed correctly in the budget papers and could be differentiated from our usual school budget income and outgoings.

Whilst governors work hard in their committees and link roles as detailed above, many also enjoy spending time in school helping with reading, gardening, worship and much more. They attend worship, celebration assemblies, nativity performances, events such as the Jubilee picnic, charity events and coffee mornings. It was fantastic to see many of the regular events which had stopped due to the pandemic re-starting, in particular fundraising for a whole host of charities including Macmillan Cancer Care, Christian Aid, Mid-Cheshire Food bank, Save the Children, St Luke's Hospice, NSPCC and Comic Relief. Year 2 invited the whole school to wear blue and yellow on 22<sup>nd</sup> March to help raise funds and show support for the children of Ukraine. The day raised over £300 and the children took donated supplies to a collection centre for UNICEF at Barons Quay. The generosity of our school community and the way our school lives out its Christian Values, 'Loving your neighbour as yourself', is remarkable.

Governors were also delighted to see children enjoying school trips and residential once again, these are invaluable learning opportunities for children which enhance and extend the exciting curriculum we offer in our classrooms. Visitors were welcomed back in school too with AmaSing working with all children in December, families were invited to see an exhibition of the 'Knitted Bible' in January and Thomas the Gorilla inspired and educated children about the impact of deforestation in June.

My term of office as Chair of Governors came to an end at the summer Full Governing Body Meeting, it has been a great privilege to hold this position for the second time and work with Mrs Magiera and all the team in school as well as our Governing Body who work so hard to ensure we provide the support and challenge that is central to our role. I was delighted that Ruth Cannon was elected to succeed me – she will be a fantastic Chair.

Sarah Merison

Foundation Governor

When Sarah announced that she was planning on stepping down as Chair of Governors we were all very aware that she was leaving very big shoes for the next Chair to fill. Sarah has been an outstanding Chair and has guided the Governing Body with wisdom, knowledge, understanding and empathy. We were all very relieved that we will not be losing her from the Governing Body, just as Chair. Although we had succession planning in place it was still a big decision to take to step up into the role of Chair. After much thought and consideration, I agreed to take on the role, subject to the other Governors agreement. At our Full Governing Body meeting in June, I was elected as the new Chair of Governors for our school. I am looking forward to taking on the challenge and helping to guide our school. I would like to thank all the governors for putting their trust in me and promise that I will always work for the benefit of the school and its pupils.

Ruth Cannon

Chair of Governors