



St Mary's CE (Aided) Primary School, Horsham

Governor Newsletter

SUMMER 2018 - IN THIS ISSUE

View from the Chair

By Claire Swarbrick

It is a year since our last newsletter, and what a year it's been! Last summer term we had already appointed Mr Bird to join us as Head Teacher in September, and were preparing to say 'farewell' to Mrs Dutton.

There have also been a number of changes in the Governing Body. I was elected Chair in October, having shared responsibility with Celia Hurren since the start of the year. We were very sorry to lose both Celia and Jimmy Young from our team in the Autumn term, both hard working and active members. As you will know Jimmy has moved onto pastures new, but fortunately Celia is still actively involved in lots of other aspects of the school. We have since been delighted to welcome Alex Bird, Matt Ayres, Dan Humphreys and Paul Muggeridge as full governors, and three Associate members*, Dan Perrett, Emma Peterson and Ruth Summerfield. We are very fortunate to have a strong team with an excellent skillset and range of expertise, putting us in a really good position to carry out our core functions, and provide support and challenge.

The Governing Body comprises a number of sub-committees and more about what all these different committees has been doing can be found in the following reports.

Those of you who attended Mr Bird's 'State of Play' presentation early last term will be aware of how much of a journey we have had since September. Two and a bit terms in from Mr Bird's

arrival we are able to reflect on just what an impact the work he has done is having and the progress the school is making. It is looking good and has been a real team effort. The governors would like to thank all the staff who have worked relentlessly and shown such commitment to making the children of St Mary's 'be the best they can be in the love of Christ.' Of course there is still a way to go, and the Governors recognise there is no room for complacency. Our aim is to be an outstanding leadership team and we will continue to strive towards this goal.

Finally, I couldn't finish this without mention of our recent SIAMS report. We are thrilled to have been awarded Outstanding, a real acknowledgement of just how great our school community is, and of a Christian culture which has become embedded over many years. There are so many wonderful things in the report but I think this sums up what St Mary's is about:

'The work of St Mary's School is underpinned by the words from John's gospel to have 'Life in all its fullness', as an outworking of its vision for every child to have a 'real childhood'. Pupils enjoy their learning and flourish through its broad curriculum, including Forest School approaches, which ensure they have the time, resources and the learning support they need'.

* See pg 2 Premises and Finance Committee for a definition of 'Associate Members'

Quality and Standards Committee

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Quality and Standards Committee

By Anne Hossack /Helen Johnson

I took over at the Chair of the Quality and Standards Committee in September 2017 and am supported by Helen Johnson as the Vice Chair. Since September, the Governors have been involved in a number of initiatives to ensure effective governance. It has also been a time to review our skills and ensure we have the right skills in the Governing Body. I am pleased to say that, according to the National Governance Association's Skills Audit, we have the right skills needed on the Governing Body.

The Governors have introduced a robust monitoring plan aligned with the schools development plan and several monitoring visits have taken place to date with several more planned. One of the priorities included involving more governors reviewing the school's performance, both annually and within year. I can report that we now have a core group of governors working closely with Mr Bird and Mr Ellis and that in year progress is promising.

Governors are responsible for engagement with all those involved with the school. In the Autumn and Spring term we sought feedback from parents. Mr Bird has responded to many of the issues raised and governors continue to monitor outstanding points. In the Summer term we will be gaining feedback from pupils by means of a survey. Whilst pupil feedback is gained as part of any governor visit to the school, we really would like to gain feedback from as many pupils as possible using the survey. We will be making full use of our IT capabilities to do this.

Jenny Holden, our SEND Governor, has worked closely with Miss Fandrejewski in developing her new role as SENCo with a comprehensive review of SEND provision and processes within the school.

Q&S are continuing to monitor the school curriculum to ensure a board and balanced education is provided to the children of St Marys' whilst balancing this with what we can offer with budgetary constraints.

Whilst not the most exciting news to report, governors have also been involved in reviewing various policies (particularly statutory policies) to ensure the school is compliant and monitoring the school's website too. Several systems have been put in place to ensure compliance is maintained in relation to policies.

Premises and Finance Committee

By Liam Clark/Matt Ayres

By far one of the biggest challenges facing our school at the moment is finance, or rather lack of it. The Premises and Finance (P&F) Committee, along with Mr Bird and the School Business Manager Mrs Fisher, work hard to balance the budget and this is currently being finalised for the coming 2018/19 year. You will not be surprised to hear that there is more that we would like to do than our allocated funds allow (for the coming year, the amount of work put on hold due to lack of funds is around £30,000). The committee continues to look at how to save costs within the school and generate income streams in order to ensure our financial sustainability.

Since the start of the school year, P&F has welcomed two new governors, Matt Ayres and Dan Humphreys, both of whom bring with them valuable skills and capacity to support the school and wider Governing Body. Given the importance of financial sustainability for the school, the Governing Body recognised that the committee would benefit from more support from those with expertise in finance. As a result, we have also appointed three new Associate Members, Daniel Perrett, Emma Peterson and Ruth Summerfield; all of whom bring the specific experience and expertise needed. Associate Members are appointed by the Governing Body to serve on one (or more) committees because of the specific expertise and experience they can contribute to that committee. The new Associate Members are already making a valuable contribution and the committee is now adequately resourced.

With finance being our greatest challenge, we are grateful to those who run the Home School Association (HSA) and those who support it. Over the coming weeks, the committee will be working closely with the HSA to ensure we maintain a cohesive and collaborative approach to fundraising for the school and we look forward to being able to talk to you more about this in due course. A heartfelt thank you to those who have already explored new ways of giving to the school through ParentPay, Virgin Giving and Easyfundraising.

As always, new and exciting ideas of raising funds for the school are always welcome, please do get in touch with the HSA with any suggestions. In the meantime, any contribution you feel you could make, regardless of the amount, will be gratefully received - it all helps.

Staffing Committee

By Jenny Holden

I took over as the Chair of this Committee from Claire Swarbrick since December 2017. We have sadly said goodbye to some familiar faces, particularly amongst the support staff which has necessitated some restructuring. I have made full use of my training in safer recruitment and with Mr Bird have interviewed and appointed new staff. Our priority is to ensure the best provision for all the children.

Other News

Strategic Priorities



The Governing Body, school leadership team and staff at St Marys have a shared vision – a vision that puts children at the heart of all we do: shaping their lives and providing them with the very best foundations in life to live life in all its fullness. By creating a culture that facilitates our vision, we aim to provide excellent education at the heart of our community and beyond, ensuring our children can be the best they can be in the love of Christ. In order to ensure we realise this vision, we need to have a clear strategy in place. The Governors and Senior Leadership Team are planning to meet in the Summer term to set this strategy, which will focus on the next 3-5 years.

Governor Vacancies



We anticipate having a vacancy within the Governing Body for a Foundation Governor. In order to be eligible, please check the Diocese website <http://www.jointeducationteam.org/role-of-foundation-governors.html>. As well as a Foundation Governor, we will have a parent governor role opening up later this year. If you are interested in becoming a governor, please speak to any member of the governing body and they'll happily give you an idea of what it is like. If you are unsure whether governance is for you, have a look at the 'Becoming a School Governor' document here to help you decide: <http://schools.westsussex.gov.uk/Page/1354>.

Governors are expected to attend Full Governing Body meetings (usually once a term, after school hours) and join at least one sub-committee. Sub-committees meet once a term. There is some work outside of these meetings (such as monitoring the School Development Plan, signing off the budget, INSET days etc). This will depend on what has been agreed at the relevant sub-committee and also the time you have available. Governors should aim to visit the school at least once a term, during the school day. A comprehensive induction pack for Governors is available and new governors should attend the induction courses provided by WSCC (2 courses lasting 2 hours each).

ParentView

Giving your opinion

Feedback is collected from parents/carers as part of parent consultation evenings. In addition to this, governors will be sending out a **parent survey** near the end of the Summer term. The survey will be quick to complete and is an opportunity for all parents to have their say. The more responders we have, the better.



You can also give your view on the school by completing Ofsted's questionnaire. You will need to create an account, but this is a straightforward process. Access ParentView here: <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/parent-view-results/survey/result/19461/current>.

New Appointments (since September 2017)

Clerk of Governors: Mrs Delahunt, supported by Mrs Sawyer, took over as the Clerks to Governors in September 2017. There has been a remarkable improvement in the clerking of meetings and the governors would like to extend their sincere thanks for their work. Moving forward Mrs Delahunt will perform this role on her own.

Governors: Alex Bird joined in September 2017 and is a member of all sub-committees. Daniel Humphreys joined in November 2017 and is a member of the Premises and Finance Committee, the Quality and Standards Committee, as well as our P.E Governor. Matt Ayres joined in January 2018 and has joined the Premises and Finance Committee. Paul Muggerridge joined at the same time as Matt and has joined the Quality and Standards Committee and the Staffing Committee. Paul has also taken over as the R.E and Christian Effectiveness Governor from Jimmy Young.

Associate Members: Daniel Perrett, Emma Peterson and Ruth Summerfield have joined as associate members on the Premises and Finance Committee.

Next Newsletter

Moving forward, the Governor Newsletter will be published in the Autumn term and will look back at the previous academic year. The newsletter will continue to be published on an annual basis.