

Governors' Newsletter

December 2017

It has been a steep learning curve over the past term, adapting to the new responsibilities of being the Chair of Governors, especially when the prior Chair did such a great job over many years of service. This is the first of what I intend will be a termly update.

There have been a number of changes to the Governing Body with the appointment of 4 new Governors: Zoe King, Rob Philpott, Steve Partridge and Mark Larwood, all of whom will bring further breadth and experience. You can find out more about the Governors and their responsibilities in the Governors section of the Bishop William Ward website.

Over the summer, a tremendous amount of work was put in to refurbish the heating system, to have working thermostats and provide drinking water throughout the school. We also made significant improvements to the reception area of the school and undertook a series of planned maintenance, repair and decoration. All of this makes for a much better environment for everyone in the school.

The school has hosted a significant number of visitors in support of various learning and development activities, including NSPCC; Stone Age, Greeks and Viking Days; Roman River Workshop; Road Safety and Bikeability sessions.

A variety of trips have also been organised, including day trips and the Year 6 residential at Kingswood. It's worth mentioning that we feel that the trips scheduled are an important part of the pupils' educational and personal growth. However, they can only happen with the support of the parents and the financial backing that this provides. It would be a shame to have to cancel any of these trips, but that is a real consideration should any of the trips not be financially viable.

Two parents' forums have been held. Attendance at these was a little low, but I appreciate that committing to events during the day can be a challenge for those who work. We will consider whether something at a different time would enable more of you to feel able to participate.

Another element of improving communication regarding what the children have been learning has been the introduction of Class Dojo in Years 1 to 6. Feedback to this has been really positive.

The Friends of Bishop William Ward continue to contribute significantly to the school with their fundraising activities and events, which combined with National Lottery funding to provide the brilliant outdoor gym equipment that was recently installed.

The last parent survey indicated that there was insufficient information for people to know whether the Governors were doing a good job or not. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but I thought it would be worthwhile giving you a very brief overview.

The primary roles of the governors are to:

- hold the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure its money is well spent
- ensure a clear vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school.

In practice, this means:

- Being involved in setting and monitoring the school's aims and policies.
- Determining how the school's budget is spent.
- Forming policy on the school's curriculum and collective worship.
- Setting standards for pupils' behaviour and discipline.
- Making sure school buildings are welcoming and safe.

We do not do this in isolation and are pleased to work alongside all of the teaching and support staff, parents, guardians, carers, children and everybody who works hard to ensure the continued success of the school.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas,

Dave Kinzett
Chair of Governors