

Governor's Newsletter. Spring Term 2017



Hello! I'm Peter Falconbridge, Chair of Governors at St. Catherine's School. I thought it would be useful to introduce the Spring 2017 Newsletter with a picture of myself to help you recognise me. Also, I want to talk to you about the recent parent survey I sent out and your responses. First of all, I want to say thank you to all those parents who completed the survey. When I compiled the responses into a report for governors 70 parents had completed the SurveyMonkey. Governors met on 16th March for a special planning day at High Leigh Conference Centre and one of our sessions focussed specifically on the parent survey and what we could learn about our communication with you and how to improve it.

Parent Survey

I have summarised your answers to the survey below: -

Q1. How many of the governors do you know?

Know all	know some	Don't know any
2	37	31

Q2. How often have you spoken to a governor?

Frequently	Occasionally	Infrequently	Never
7	8	5	40

Q3. Where do you find out who your governors are?

Photo board	Web site	Newsletter	None of these
6	27	9	19

Do you read the termly governor newsletter?

Yes	No
51	19

How useful do you find the governor newsletter?

Very useful	Useful	Not very useful
6	33	10
Don't read it	Don't know	
6	12	

There is a clear message from the survey that governors need to review how they can become better known by more parents. We also need to think about how we can provide more opportunities for formal and informal conversations with parents. It is encouraging to see the majority of parents read the newsletter and find it useful. As governors, we have considered how we should respond to the survey results and feel strongly that we need to raise our profile amongst parents. In the written survey responses parents provided some very good ideas about improving information in the governor newsletter, and how governors and parents could get to know each other better. I have included some of your responses below: -

Q6. What other information would it be helpful for the newsletter to include?

- Brief reports when governors visit the school so parents get to know what they do,
- Information about plans for the school's development and how governors take a lead,
- Information about how governors liaise with others, e.g. PTA, LPPA,

Q7. Do you have ideas of your own about how parents could get to know governors better?

- Attending parents' evenings and being available for informal chats,
- Attending class-led assemblies so parents and pupils can meet them,
- Add pictures of governors to their information on the web site,
- It would help if governors wore official I.D. badges, like the staff, when on site,
- Governors could be in the playground more often or attend 'walk-in Wednesdays'.

What we will do now?

There are things we can do very quickly to get ourselves better known amongst the

parents. We will be putting pictures of governors on the web site, next to their personal information. We will be having governor I.D. badges made up, so we can wear them on site. We like the ideas about attending parents' evenings and walk-in Wednesdays, and being available for assemblies. We will be looking into how we can incorporate some of these activities to improve our 'presence' in the school. We were also interested in parents' ideas about making the termly governor newsletter more helpful, particularly around reporting visits to school and being more specific about how we lead on certain activities.

We also sensed, from the survey responses and elsewhere, that parents want a governor newsletter which focusses primarily on governor's roles and responsibilities and their activities in school. I am conscious that in some of my newsletters I have probably repeated information that parents already get via the school's weekly newsletter. I agree that the governor newsletter needs to be more focussed and specifically governor related.

What have we been up to recently?

I have talked about the parent survey and our discussions around improving communication. I will keep parents up-dated on how we are putting things in place to make our presence in school more obvious.

I have mentioned our 'link governor roles' before. During a link visit governors examine an area of the school with the staff member responsible, e.g. safeguarding and ensure the correct policies and procedures are in place, and pupils' education and welfare are being managed successfully. Link governors report to the Full Governing Body and written records are kept of all visits. These records can be viewed by Ofsted Inspectors when they visit the school. Since January the following link visits have taken place: -

17th January. Jay Raynham. As Health and Safety Link Governor Jay visited the site to carry out a termly health and safety review of the premises with the Site Officer.

25th January. Cathy Irons. As Safeguarding Link Governor Cathy met with the Head teachers to ensure that all appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures were in place. That included a specific review of the

school's personnel records to ensure all staff employees had undergone the appropriate legal and LA checks.

2nd February. Rachel Pennant. As RE/Collective Worship Link Governor Rachel met with the RE coordinator in school to monitor the ongoing work of reviewing and up-dating policies on Collective Worship and RE. Rachel also monitors how the school is implementing recommendations from its SIAMS Inspection in 2016.

1st March. Peter Falconbridge. As Literacy and Performance Management Link Governor I met with the Head teachers to review the implementation of the recent programmes to develop children's vocabulary, spelling and reading. I also reviewed the systems in place to monitor standards of teaching in the classroom.

8th March. Peter Falconbridge. As Numeracy Link Governor, I met with the Maths Coordinator in school to discuss the impact of the new Maths no Problem (MNP) Scheme. I was also able to observe children learning fractions using the scheme.

8th March. Cathy Irons. As Safeguarding Link Governor Cathy met with the Head teachers to discuss pupil attendance and ensure all appropriate recording, reporting and monitoring systems were in place. The Head teachers also up-dated Cathy on recent safeguarding training for staff.

2016-2017 Budget. Governors are currently meeting with the Head teachers and Bursar to review the Schools Allocated Budget for the next year. You will have seen the news reports about the impact of the government's proposed new Funding Formula. This and other constraints will make budget setting particularly challenging over the next 2-3 years! We need to ensure resources are appropriately allocated to secure delivery of high quality teaching and appropriate maintenance of the site and buildings.

Mr P Falconbridge,
Chair of Governors
St. Catherine's School
Haslewood Avenue
Hoddesdon

☎ 01992 463214

Email : admin@stcaths.herts.sch.uk