

Governor's Newsletter. Summer Term 2017



Hello! I'm Peter Falconbridge, Chair of Governors at St. Catherine's School. Welcome to the summer term newsletter.

I am pleased to announce that we have two new governors joining our team. They will take up their positions, officially, at the next full governing body meeting on 13th July. Our current governors are: -

Peter Falconbridge	Chair/Co-opted governor
Cathy Irons	Vice Chair/Co-opted governor
Vacancy	Co-opted governor
Mrs Staiano	Co-opted governor
Julia Thurlow	Co-opted governor
Jean Legg	LA governor
Mrs Wallis	Head teacher governor
Vicky Burt	Staff governor
Denise Barrows	Parent governor
Jay Raynham	Parent governor
Gemma Wilkinson	Parent governor
Rachel Pennant	Foundation governor
Mike Marsh	Foundation governor
Andrew Davies	Foundation governor
James Harvey	Associate governor

As you can see our new governors are Jean Legg, LA governor and Andrew Davies, Foundation governor. Jean is a retired teacher who lives in Broxbourne. She has a good understanding of current educational issues and valuable experience of management, having served as an Acting Head Teacher in a previous school. Andrew may well be known to some of you as Dr. Davies from the Amwell Street Surgery. Andrew is now retired, but brings wealth of business management to the governors and is familiar with school issues having a wife a daughter as primary school teachers.

You will see that we still have a vacancy for a co-opted governor. If you are interested, or know of anyone who may be interested in joining the governing body as a co-opted governor, please get in touch with me and I will provide further details?

What have we been up to recently?

Since our Spring Newsletter governors have been active in training and meeting with the Head teachers and staff to monitor the effectiveness of the School and its efficient use of resources. Here are some of the activities we have been involved in on your behalf: -

Full Governing Body Meeting on 14th March.

Governors met to receive a report from the Head teachers on progress in key aspects of school life, including pupil attainment and progress and quality of teaching. We also discussed the School's 2016-2017 Development Plan and Self-Evaluation Form, received Committee Reports, reviewed recent safeguarding arrangements and agreed curriculum policies.

Governor Away Day on 16th March.

Governors had an away day at a High Leigh Christian Conference Centre. This was a strategic planning day, which focussed on the role of a school governor, pupil progress and attainment, reviewing our parent questionnaire and developing a better communication strategy, safeguarding roles and responsibilities and the school budget planning cycle for 2017-2018.

Budget Planning Meetings.

The Chair of Governors, Chair of the Resources Committee, Bursar and Head teachers met on 20th/29th March and 4th May to plan the 2017-2018 Budget. The recommended budget was presented to the full governing body on 17th May.

Health & Safety Link Visit.

Jay Raynham carried out his termly Health & Safety visit on 28th April, paying particular attention to the swimming pool area and associated documentation. He walked the site with the Site Officer, Chris Hale, to review the condition of playgrounds and buildings. Jay reports his findings to the Resources Committee who monitor health & safety matters in school.

Diocesan Training on RE and Worship.

Peter Falconbridge and Rachel Pennant attended training from the Diocese on 4th May. The focus of the training was on 'Developing a Christian Ethos' in a Church School, and reviewing provision for Collective Worship and RE. Rachel is our SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) governor and monitors how well the school is prepared for a SIAMS Inspection. The training provided useful guidance for our governors as we look at enhancing and developing our Christian Ethos as a School.

Safer Recruitment Training. As Chair of Governors I attended safer recruitment training on 5th May. The training was provided by Herts for Learning (HfL) and enabled me to qualify as a 'safer recruitment governor' and support the School with staff interviews and vetting procedures.

Staff Interviews. As Chair of Governors I joined an interview panel with the Head teachers and SENCO to interview prospective candidates for a Teaching Assistant position on 16th and 17th May. I was able to utilise my recent safer recruitment training to support the interview process.

PRC Meeting. The PRC is the Performance Review Committee and is responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching in the School, including the Annual Appraisal of the Head teachers. Currently the committee is Peter Falconbridge, Denise Barrows and Mike Marsh. We last met on the 19th June, with the Head teachers to review evidence of their performance against targets set for their 2016-2017 Appraisals.

Catch-up. Catch-up is a monthly, informal, meeting between the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors and the Head teachers. Our last catch up was on 22nd June. At these meetings, the Head teachers keep the Chair/Vice Chair of Governors apprised of any information regarding pupils and staff, e.g. child protection concerns, staff vacancies and recruitment. It also enables vital updates on current site and building projects, Ofsted related developments and key educational and financial policy.

Improving communication with parents

I briefly mentioned our governor away day earlier. I wanted to pick up on one aspect of that day in particular and up-date you on progress towards improving our governor profile with parents and developing a more effective communication policy. This is in response to observations and concerns raised by you, as parents, in our SurveyMonkey Questionnaire sent out in March.

An immediate response has been to change the format of this newsletter so that it reflects solely the work and responsibilities of governors and does not repeat information which is already sent being out to parents by the school. You asked specifically for more reports on governor activity so you could read about what governors actually do? I hope our *'What have we been up to recently'* section is useful for you?

We are also currently working on getting governor photos, to sit alongside our personal bios, on the website governor page. We are hoping these will be complete by the end of term so you can see who we are as well as just reading about us.

You are also keen to find out more information about plans for the school's development and how governors take a lead. I know the school has kept you up-to-date with current projects like the boiler refurbishment and improved heating system. The work is progressing well and governors have been and are monitoring the various stages of planning and implementation. We are hoping that by the autumn we will have a fantastic new and reliable heating system which will keep the school comfortable and warm for pupils and staff, even in the coldest conditions.

Governors are also involved with monitoring the planning of the Schools Expansion programme. The school has now received plans for the proposed developments, including two brand new classrooms. Building work is due to start in March 2018. Governors will keep you informed of progress.

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