



Bishop Wood C of E Junior School

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Mr G Stanley, Headteacher

19th July 2018

Message from the Chair

After four years on the governing body and two years as Chair of Governors, I will be stepping down from the governing body when my term of office finishes at the end of August. The last two years have been busy ones for the governing body which have included two statutory inspections as well as the appointment of a new Headteacher. This newsletter gives you an overview of what the governing body has been doing during my time as Chair.

The role of Chair has been rewarding, fascinating and challenging in equal measure! I would like to thank all the staff at Bishop Wood for the work that they do, but in particular, Headteachers Linda Hardman and Gary Stanley, who I have worked particularly closely with and also all my fellow governors for their teamwork and support.

Headteacher appointment and acting arrangements

Appointing a new Headteacher is one of the most important responsibilities of a governing body. I hope that I kept you fully informed as we went through the rigorous recruitment process last summer. We were delighted with Gary Stanley's appointment. Since joining the school in January, Gary has settled in well as the new Headteacher and has already brought lots of energy and ideas to the school. We look forward to seeing those come to fruition in the months and years ahead. We were also pleased to be able to appoint a Headteacher successfully at our first attempt and that acting arrangements were only in place for a term. I would like once again to thank Jon Hall for taking on the role of Acting Headteacher during the Autumn Term and also to Ruth McGhee, Elaine Clark and Paula Birley for taking on the roles of Acting Assistant Headteachers during this period.

Multi-academy Trusts

In 2016, we were invited to join a multi-academy trust with Tring School and a number of other local primary schools. We gave extensive consideration to this offer over a six-month period from September 2016 to February 2017, but in the end, decided not to go down this route. We were not convinced that this change would bring significant benefit either financially or to the teaching and learning at our school at the present time. However, we will keep this issue under consideration as part of our efforts to ensure that the school uses its resources as wisely as possible for the benefit of both current and future pupils.

School Inspections

Two statutory inspections took place within the school in 2017 and in both governors were interviewed as part of the assessment process. The Ofsted inspector concluded that

"Governors have an accurate view of what is working well and what could be better still. Although many are new to their positions, over this year governors have ensured that they have clear roles and responsibilities. They regularly visit the school and hold school leaders to account increasingly well for the progress that pupils make in all aspects of their education". Ofsted February 2017

We were pleased with this assessment of the governing body and with the overall verdict that the school "continues to be good" which we felt was accurate and fair.

The SIAMS inspection concluded that the school was a "good" church school whereas previously it had been judged "outstanding". Several factors contributed to this and the report included some clear actions for the governing body. In particular, we have been asked to

"Develop a systematic, formalized process for monitoring and evaluating collective worship"



and to

“Revisit the school’s vision ensuring it is theologically underpinned and takes account of the Church of England and diocesan visions for education”.

SIAMS December 2017

Both these areas of work have been underway since the start of the year. Governors have been taking an increasingly vigilant role during their visits to collective worship so if you see governors making notes or talking to pupils after class assemblies or church services, this is what they are doing! Work on reshaping the school vision has been a thorough and detailed process which has included consultations with staff, pupils and parents. The new vision will be launched in Autumn 2018 so look out for more information from the school on this.

Complaints

There have been two formal complaints to the governing body over the last two years. One complaint was upheld and the other complaint was partially upheld.

Admissions

As a voluntary-aided school, the governing body is the admissions authority for Bishop Wood School and we are able to set our own admissions policy. Over the last few years, we have undertaken two consultations and made major revisions to our admissions policy. We have brought our oversubscription criteria more in line with the County Council’s, introducing a new category for children with a specific medical or social need to attend Bishop Wood and also prioritizing children transferring from Goldfield ahead of children who have siblings at Bishop Wood at the time of admission. We hope that these changes will ensure that we fulfill our responsibilities as set out in the school’s deeds to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children in our community whilst also giving every possible chance for children in the same cohort at Goldfield to stay together when transferring to junior school.

The school has a published admission number of sixty per year group. In exceptional circumstances, children can be admitted over this number at the discretion of the governing body. However, in most cases, the governing body will seek to maintain a maximum of sixty children in each year in order to ensure that the needs of each child in the school can be met. Responding to admissions requests and appeals is an ongoing part of the work of the governing body.

Committee re-organisation

The governing body has three key responsibilities;

- to establish the strategic direction for the school
- to hold the school to account
- to oversee financial performance

The Full Governing Body meets six times a year. However, most of the work takes place in committees, which also meet six times a year. In order to increase our efficiency and effectiveness, we have recently reduced the number of our committees from three to two and rewritten the committees’ terms of reference. We now have a Resources Committee which considers matters related to Premises, Finance and Personnel. We also have a Teaching and Learning Committee that considers matters related to the curriculum, progress and attainment and the specific needs of vulnerable groups of pupils. Safeguarding and the school’s Christian ethos are considered by all governors at Full Governing Body level. Workplans for Full Governing Body and both committees can be found on the school website. However, please be aware that they are working documents and subject to change!

Full Governing Body membership

There have been several changes to the governing body over the last two years. We were extremely saddened by the death of Rev Val Rockall in Feb 2017 after a short illness, whilst a serving governor. We have also said goodbye to the following governors;

Mary Adams (staff governor)
Linda Hardman (Headteacher)
Gaby Brooks (parent governor)
Vicki Gentle (foundation governor)
Mel Matthews (staff governor)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of these individuals for the work that they have done on the governing body for Bishop Wood School during their terms of office.

We currently have 12 governors on our governing body and 3 vacancies;

Beth Townsend (Chair, foundation governor)

Hayley Abel (Vice-Chair, foundation governor)

Rev Huw Bellis (ex-officio as Rector of Tring Team Parish)

Gary Stanley (ex-officio as Headteacher)

Edmund Booth (foundation governor)

Gerry Miller (foundation governor)

Mary Haywood (foundation governor)

Jon Reynolds (foundation governor)

Simon Gilbert (local authority governor)

Ian Graham (parent governor)

Paula Birley (staff governor)

Jon Hall (associate governor)

We have a vacancy for a parent governor and we will be running an election for a new parent governor at the beginning of the new term in September. We also have vacancies for a co-opted governor and for one foundation governor. There will be a further three foundation governor vacancies in September as Hayley Abel, Mary Haywood and myself have all reached the end of our term office and are standing down from the governing body. Foundation governors are appointed by the church. The process of appointing new governors is already underway and we look forward to welcoming several new governors to the governing body in September!

On behalf of the governing body, I'd like to wish all the best to all our parents and carers. I hope you have a good summer break with some time for rest and refreshment.

Beth Townsend - Chair of Governors