

Governors' Report – Summer Term 2016

We are just completing our first year as a 'new' governing body, and the new arrangements seem to be working really well. We all agree that we have a much better understanding of what goes on in school, through our visits to the classrooms, and having more time to ask how staff and pupils feel about the school. We are also very pleased to have been able to meet more of you at various events during the past year.

The first meeting this term dealt with our statutory duties. Every term, a governor does a Health and Safety walk around the school with the site manager. Any issues are raised with senior leaders and work agreed by all governors. Mrs Codling constantly updates the Central Record of all the people who work at our school. This is checked regularly by the chair of governors. Policies about behavioural issues and how staff should deal with them have been updated and agreed by all staff and governors. Section 11 (safeguarding) business will be rolled on into the Autumn term to include new members of staff. Recently, we have helped to appoint a new teacher for KS2, who will start in September.

We have signed off last year's Budget and carried some money over to the new Budget for 2016/17. The Finance committee delegated money to finish the extension to the car park to provide better access for emergency vehicles. The complicated repairs to the drains for the KS2 toilets will be done during the holiday as will an update to the school's alarm system which will be linked to a police response. Curtain tracks in the hall have been replaced and we have bought 6 new tablets, now being used in classrooms, with a program called ClassTrack for staff to store evidence of pupil progress instantly in lessons. Teachers can print out personalised data for each pupil very quickly and TAs feel more able to help pupils take the next step forward. They all consider it money well spent.

Pupil Premium money has been carefully spent throughout the year. Most of it is spent on salaries for some staff who do valuable work with small groups or individuals to improve their learning. We have recently employed another TA to work with years 1, 2 and 3 to improve their language skills and social interaction, because we can see how much it helps the pupils. Other money has been used for family support, crossbar coaching and a wide range of activities to enthuse and build confidence. You can see the full list on the school's new website (www.johnrandallprimary.co.uk)

As "critical friends" we challenge and support the Head teacher. Governors have done a mid-year review of her performance targets and found very positive actions which are well on track for success at the annual meeting in December. We have continued to support the Head and senior management team in their efforts to create the best environment that will produce the high standards and good progress that we want for all our pupils. In our regular review sessions with the Local Authority this year, they have been quick to recognise and approve of the good progress we have made. For example, attendance has been a niggling problem for the school for some time, despite the creative ideas and efforts of our EWO and all our staff. However, this year we have received an award for the "Most improved Primary school in Telford for Attendance". But we do not rest. Getting into school on time is a big issue for some of our pupils and we need to focus on that now.

All the information gathered through meetings and classroom visits helps us to make informed judgements about how well the annual plan of priorities (SDP) and the termly plan (RAP) are working. The second meeting of this term focused on assessment as this is how we can judge our pupils' progress. The new ClassTrack system is helping TAs and teachers to have a better understanding of how to help pupils do better. They are very positive about it and consider it money well spent. We have looked at the data about our new pupils in reception, who join us from other nurseries. Its accuracy makes a big difference to a good start to school and to each child's progress. We have all agreed that the Early Years team will carry on doing its own baseline assessments for the time being. We have also looked at the marking in Reception and Year 6 in English, Maths and Science. The pupils said that they found the comments helpful to take the next step. A progress meeting about year 3 and 4 English showed us how the teachers used their really good knowledge of their pupils to move them onwards. Classroom visits showed us how teachers work with Year 2 and 4 pupils to develop persistence, more independent thought and ways of learning. We have also looked at the opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of maths through improving their skills of reasoning and problem solving. These are all crucial skills needed to achieve higher levels of learning and the very effective deployment of all the staff helped the pupils to focus on their work. The behaviour of the children was excellent.

Another activity was to take part in the handover meeting where the SENCo was going through the SEND offer with her successor who will take over at the end of term. The school's SEND offer is very important. It explains how we plan the specialised help given to some of our pupils' who have specific problems for learning and need extra or different equipment or support. The SENCo and the governors have discussed the details, listened to pupils who have been involved, and the document has been updated.

There is one more area that needs to be assessed – the way that the governors work! We have had a good discussion about where we think we are as a governing body and we have tried to identify the areas where we could do better. This is part of our preparation for the external review of governors next term.

Our Year 3 teacher Ms Wakely has decided to step down this term and we want to thank for all her hard work over the 22 years she has given to the school and wish her a happy and well deserved retirement. We also want to thank Mr Jarvis, our inclusion assistant for all his work this year. We are also saying goodbye and thanks to Miss Skelton who is taking up a new post in September.

If you have any advice for us, you can reach any of us through the school office or speak to us when you see us at the end of term events. Mean while, enjoy the summer!