



Billingshurst Primary School Governors

Newsletter

Edition 15 – Autumn 2016

Chair's Welcome

Can it nearly be Christmas already? Where has the autumn term gone? This is the first governor's newsletter this term and the governors and I would like to welcome you to the new academic year. For new parents, we are a governing body of 14 members. We meet collectively once a term and in smaller groups in several different committees throughout the year to ensure that we have a good knowledge and strategic overview of the school.

We hope you took the opportunity to meet the governors at the beginning of December and put some names to faces.

This is my first year as the Chair of Governors, having previously been vice chair. I would like to thank Alison Sutton for her many years of dedication to the school, and for chairing the governing body in the years since the amalgamation of the Billingshurst Junior and Infant schools. I am delighted to say that she is staying as vice chair of governors to share her expertise with us a little while longer.

As we work to become an outstanding school, my thanks go to Miss Williamson and all the staff who strive so hard to achieve the best for all our children. I hope that you have been supporting the Worthless Campaign; as a large school we face more financial burden than other smaller schools in the area. It is not too late to sign up and to be part of the campaign to ensure that our children receive fairer funding.

I am usually around in the morning chatting to Miss Williamson or Miss Nicholls at the gate, so please come and say hello. Often parents think of governors as the last point of contact and usually it is to do with complaints, but we like to hear when things have gone well too. We have our own email govs@billingshurstprimary.org.uk and would love to hear from you even if it just a hello!

On behalf of the Governing body we wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you in 2017!

Bik-kay Talbot, Chair of Governors

If you would like to contact the Governors, you can do so via the school office, or you can find us on the BPS website:

<http://www.billingshurstprimary.org.uk>

Contact details can be found at: <http://www.billingshurstprimary.org.uk/About Us/Governors>

News

You may have seen the head of the Weald School on national media recently, highlighting funding issues faced by Sussex schools. The recent change in government has resulted in a delay to additional funding coming to Sussex schools. We urge you to continue to support the Worthless Campaign to ensure that Sussex schools get the funding we deserve.

You may have heard about the possibility of there being a new primary school being built in Billingshurst. Whilst this is many years in the future (and the go ahead has yet to be given) you can rest assured that Miss Williamson, supported by Governors, is putting strategies in place to ensure that the two schools work together rather than in competition.

Billingshurst Primary continues to take students on exciting school trips. The National Maritime museum in Greenwich one week, backstage at the Hawth theatre another week... The list of exciting school excursions that pupils have been enjoying quite rightly deserves a mention! We believe such trips really extend the pupils love of learning for their topic, not to mention the excitement of leaving school with your classmates on an adventure. Activities at Lodge Hill, brisk walking round Chanctonbury Ring, star gazing at the Planetarium and not forgetting the whole school excursion to see the Christmas pantomime, these are just some of the other amazing opportunities on offer to children. Just one question.... Where is our invite?!

We have appointed governors to some new roles this academic year in order to ensure that specific areas of school life are given their due attention. Alex Newbert is lead for the Healthy Child Programme which works well with her duties as Intervention Teacher. Abi Smith, with Chris Evans in support, is the new safeguarding Governor and has undertaken specific Safeguarding and Child Protection training and is working closely with the safeguarding lead at the school.

Committee updates

We govern the school through three committees covering standards, finance & resources and curriculum and pupil support. Here's a brief update from each committee.

Standards Committee

The Summer results were once again very pleasing in Early Years. However, as many of you know, the SATS at the end of last year changed significantly, and schools were not given adequate time to prepare. Last year our good Ofsted inspection result identified the progress pupils are making across year groups and the many great things that staff at BPS are doing. Despite this, the end of Key Stage results for Year 2 and 6 were disappointing. Staff are addressing this by teaching pupils further techniques and strategies in approaching the tests. The Writing results were the greatest area of disappointment, partly due to inconsistencies nationally in how criteria for assessing Writing are applied. Miss Williamson expressed her concerns about the way in which the tests were introduced, at several points in the Spring and Summer terms with her letter to parents 'going viral'.

The abilities of the staff at BPS are recognised in that several staff are leading on assessment in our locality: Sarah Doran is a KS1 moderator; James Collinson (Maths lead) and Claire Wilson (English lead) are sharing their expertise in assessment at Key Stage 2.

Curriculum and Pupil Support Committee

The good behaviour of pupils has always been something that the school is proud of and it continues to be exceptional. The Curriculum and Pupil Support Committee are pleased to report that there have not been any exclusions for the past year, which means that the relationship between the good behaviour of pupils and the high standard of teaching that is in place is both effective and sustaining.

It was brought to the committee's attention that the Government had announced that parents would be given the right to ask for childcare from the school, in the form of breakfast club and after-school clubs.

We offer various before school clubs which use the KS1 hall and the KS2 halls every morning and afterschool clubs are offered until 4.30pm each day. We effectively are doing all we can to help with the extra time outside of school hours but we have no space to be able to offer any more.

The facilities we have that are used for before school and after school clubs are being used to give pupils the best chance to experience a range of activities.

We therefore do not have any other viable options to assist with extra child care, but would like to remind parents who want to explore this idea further of the facilities that are on offer nearby, such as Wakoos Centre4Children on Station Road.

Finance Committee

The renovation work on the SCOLA block (the classrooms at the top of the bank) has been delayed until the Summer term to reduce the impact on pupils. The work will begin after May half term starting in the Year 6 classrooms as they'll all be on camp at Blacklands (well we hope so, it's always great fun!).

The Worthless Campaign continues to draw attention to the wholly unfair way that funding is distributed to schools around the country. The latest letter from the Minister of Schools, Nick Gibb, to a local headteacher effectively amounted to a possible increase of just £10 per pupil (per year) across West Sussex. Local headteachers are meeting this month in order to maintain pressure on the Department for Education; local MP's will be involved and it is likely that parent support will again be asked for in the coming months. Census day was a great success with the vast majority of those eligible for free schools meals taking up the option. This sets our meals funding allocation for the next financial year and prevents further strain on our budget by us having to pay for extra meals that have not been funded. School meals are funded based on the census day hence if a small number of pupils have a hot meal on census day but more pupils regularly have them (and are entitled to a free meal) then the school has to pay the difference.

More good news: the School Management Team is keeping within the deficit budget that was set earlier in 2016 and barring unforeseen circumstances, the budgets could be balanced within the set timeframe.

If you have any questions regarding the work of the F&R Committee, we are always happy to hear them.

We have been asking you, parents and carers, what you would like reported in our newsletter so I hope that you find these articles informative. If you have further suggestions of what you would like included please let us know via email:
govs@billingshurstprimary.org.uk

Governing Body Membership

Staff:	Miss Helen Williamson Miss Lucy Andrews Mrs Alex Newbert
LA:	Mr David Lowe
Parent:	Mrs Abi Smith Mr Christopher Evans Mr John Fraher Mr Dave Hairs
Co-opted:	Mrs Rachel Chambers Mr Ben Martin Ms Alison Sutton Mrs Bik-kay Talbot Mr Jon Williamson Mrs Jo Newton-Smith
Associate Member:	Miss Serena Nicholls