



Billingshurst Primary School Governors

Newsletter

Edition 17 – Summer 2017

Chair's Welcome

It seems like it was only yesterday when I was welcoming you to a new academic year and here we are saying goodbye to our Year 6 children and several members of staff as another academic year passes by.

It has been a busy year with many concerns faced, including issues around funding, academies, testing and that was just the first term!

I believe we are a very fortunate school: we have very dedicated staff and a strong leadership team who ensure that the utmost is done for our children; we have a hard working BPSCA who fundraise tirelessly so the children can have the extras that many school can no longer afford; and, of course, we have the children! Visitors often comment on how well behaved and polite our children are and what a lovely atmosphere we have at this school.

It is very easy to focus on the concerns and 'problems' that face all schools now, but when I see all the awards and achievements that we have accomplished this year, including the Eco-Schools Green Flag Award, Primary Science Quality Mark Silver Award and the Dyslexia Award to mention just a few, I am very proud that my child goes to such an inclusive school knowing that we will strive to achieve the best that we can for every child.

I'd like to thank Miss Williamson and all the staff for their dedication and commitment, the pupils for their hard work and enthusiasm and you, our parents and carers, for your continued support.

I wish you all a very relaxing summer holiday.

Bik-kay Talbot, Chair of Governors

News

Summer Fun Day

We are pleased to report that the juggernaut fundraising Summer Fun Day was another spectacular success! Each year it gets bigger and better: the tombola prizes more tempting, the burgers juicier, the inflatables more popular and the gauntlet run between Miss Williamson and Miss Nicholls even more nail-biting! The popularity of the day shows how much the school is supported in the community and, it goes without saying, the work of the BPSCA in organising the event never fails to amaze all of us. The Governors enjoy being part of the event and seeing what an efficient team the school has with parent helpers, grand-parent helpers, staff, teachers and of course, students, all coming together to raise money for the school. Thank you to everyone involved who helped the school kick off the summer in style!

Governor Visits

Our joint Governor visits are always good ways of meeting pupils and having a good look around the school at what is happening in the different year groups. With a particular focus for each visit, we get to chat to pupils and look at work or listen to children read or take part in lessons – the recent art week was particularly fascinating. We always come away having learnt something about the school and impressed with the level of enthusiasm and confidence that children display when we chat to them.

Blackland Farm

The visit to Blackland Farm is equally exciting for Governors who join Miss Williamson and other staff in their week-long camp trip. Who knew that the Governors could sing so well around the camp-fire?

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>

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

This term we have reviewed several policies including the 'Learning at Home' policy. Many students enjoy completing the optional homework tasks and bringing these in to share with their class; the sharing of these homeworks often encourages additional skills, such as presenting to peers, and so is valuable in many ways. However, the most important work that you can be supporting your child with at home, and indeed doing together, is encouraging their reading; progress in their reading supports all areas of the curriculum.

The pupils' progress continues to be further supported by the different staff who are becoming recognised as experts in their field. For example, Claire Wilson is involved in locality literacy projects and Sarah Doran is a KS1 moderator. James Collinson continues with his training and application of the Mastery approach to Mathematics – an approach which is creating real progress. The principles of this approach advocate consistent understanding of concepts before moving on to the next step. The use of the Mastery approach in Maths at BPS is resulting in better understanding and pupils who are increasingly confident in their mathematical abilities.

Staff are continuing to ensure students are challenged and that expectations are high in order to support students' achievement. Interventions are in place to support those pupils who are not yet achieving their potential; these interventions are frequently classroom based in order to ensure that pupils do not miss out on other areas of the curriculum through withdrawal.

Pupil and Curriculum Support Committee

We had the privilege of meeting a group of Peer Mentors at our May committee meeting, who were all brave enough to answer questions from a scary-looking bunch of governors! They told us about their roles as PM's during play times and lunch breaks and how they, and a team of 30 volunteers in Year 6, were timetabled across the week. As well as enlightening us into what it practically involved - wearing a yellow bib and being easily visible to those who might need help - they told us what sort of issues they deal with during play times. If they see children on their own they will

help initiate games with other children, if they spot a child upset they will go and 'talk calmly' about a solution and will often be able to distract the child. And a lot of their time was helping supervising football games too and they reported that they had not had to deal with any incidents of bullying on any occasion.

The enthusiasm and pride that this group of children showed about their roles was evident and they talked about the training they had received and how they were now training a new group of Peer Mentors from Year 5 to take over next term. These pupils were confident, caring and proud of what they did - as were we, listening to their playtime stories. 'We just want everyone to be happy,' was the overriding memorable quote from the group.

We were shown a substantial amount of reports and data which reflected the quantity of teacher assessment and monitoring that takes place by the Senior Leadership team. As well as week-long visits to the year teams and day-to-day drop in observations, there were more formal monitoring activities which provided a detailed look at the quality of teaching. The recording of such observations allowed for precise feedback as areas of strength and areas for development were broken down into specific categories. It was clear to the committee that a large amount of time had gone into performing these teacher assessments which were meticulous and unambiguous and therefore there were no sweeping generalisations about the quality of teaching without the data backing up every conclusion.

In line with the Peer Mentors motto, as Governors we certainly left that meeting happy.

Finance Committee

It may seem as though it's all gone quiet on the funding front since the national consultation; we are waiting to hear the results and what the new government will decide to do. Miss Williamson is keeping you abreast of the situation and she will update you as things develop. The governors would like to thank you for supporting FUND Us and to everyone who took the time to complete the consultation. With over 22,000 views on the internet of the FUND.US video, radio interviews and newspaper coverage we know you'll agree we have certainly tried to make a bit of an impact. Please keep supporting this issue as it will have a big impact on your child's education.

Further to this, through the efforts of our Business Manager Susie Clitheroe and all of the staff at the school in watching the pennies over the past year; the school budget is now out of a deficit position earlier than originally predicted; we're not out of the woods

yet and it wouldn't take much to put us in a difficult position again.

Things did fall in our favour during March when, with the support of West Sussex County Council, we were able to have both halls re-roofed. These improvements, combined with the new façade to the Scola block and various other new exterior doors and windows being fitted over the summer, will help to keep our buildings in good order for many years to come. Work is due to start shortly on these improvements and are scheduled to finish during the summer holidays.

The Finance and Resources team are always happy to receive questions from parents and you can do this through the governors email address.

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
LA:	Mr David Lowe
Parent:	Mrs Abi Smith Mr Christopher Evans Mr John Fraher Mr Dave Hairs
Co-opted:	Mrs Rachel Chambers Mrs Carol Hagland Mr Ben Martin Ms Alison Sutton Mrs Bik-kay Talbot Mrs Jo Newton-Smith Mr Zane Sturt
Associate Member:	Miss Serena Nicholls