



Billingshurst Primary School Governors Newsletter Edition 19 – Spring 2018

Chair's Welcome

BPS has had another busy Spring with staff and children cramming many activities – both academic and other – into such a short term: the cold, snowy Welly Walk involving the whole school; the creative costumes for World Book Day; the Maths times tables challenges in assembly; the continued hard work of all the pupils in their classrooms every day. The governors would like to thank Miss Williamson and the staff for the preparation and effort that goes into ensuring that school life is always full and varied for our pupils. Further thanks for keeping the school open even when there was the promise of snow.

The theme of the February INSET day was 'Teachers as Writers'. Governors were represented at the day and it was great to see the staff excited, enthused and reminiscing about their school days and rediscovering their passion for writing.

Congratulations to Mrs Wattam on her appointment as Deputy Headteacher. The creativity and commitment, which she demonstrates on a daily basis for our school and children, made her the best candidate for the job. Budget permitting, we are hoping to be recruiting for KS1 and KS2 assistant heads for September, in order to bring the leadership team back to full capacity. Thank you to the staff who are all working hard to support the school in the current situation.

A happy Easter holidays to you all – let's hope that it's a sunny one!

Bik-Kay Talbot, Chair of Governors

News

Congratulations to all the welly walkers who managed to brave the freezing temperatures and snow flurries to take part in the sponsored Welly Walk. It was inspiring to see all the children and staff taking part in such a worthy cause and raising money for Chestnut Tree House, Alzheimer's Society as well as the school. Thank You to BPSGA for organising.

The merriment of World Book Day was in no way dampened by the threat of snow or bitter temperatures and was another huge success. The celebration of books was observed throughout the week and the photos on Twitter and the website, from the actual day, were wonderful. It was fantastic to see characters from such a wide range of books represented, and demonstrated the love of reading that our pupils have.

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 way in which the school data is now recorded and analysed has changed since last year. This term the governors received training in ASP (Analyse School Performance) in order to help ensure we understand the new system.

A responsibility of the Standards Committee is to review the outcomes generated by the pupils, in order to monitor to what extent the school is achieving appropriate standards. Analysis of the data suggests promising progress across both KS1 and KS2, and this is supported by monitoring of books by the school leaders and also in the moderation of pupil work – both within school and by external moderators. Progress seen in Maths reflects the benefits of the Mastery programme which was introduced.

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>

Pupil and Curriculum Support Committee

Standing in front of a group of governors who are trying - and failing - to look unimposing, didn't seem to deter the School Council pupils who came into our meeting in February. They had been asked to come in and tell us about their new Safeguarding project and they told us they had come up with a 'worry box' for children to use at the school. 'You can write down your worries and put it in the box which will make you feel better,' was the idea. They also told us what they had learnt about keeping safe on the internet and how they would be demonstrating that knowledge to the rest of the school with posters, a leaflet which would have a safety code and an assembly. Everyone in that School Council group was confident, proud of what they were doing and clearly took their responsibilities very seriously.

Mrs Wattam explained to the Governors about the revision to curriculum planning that is coming into effect across the school. The new planning formats will allow the curriculum links to be clearer and allow the development of even stronger links across the subjects. The curriculum's creativity and capacity to engage all learners is at the heart of our inclusive approach to learning and this will further enhance the experience for the children whilst reducing paperwork for the teachers.

Finance Committee

Sometimes it may seem that we are repeating the same message over and over to try and gain fair funding for schools. A new funding formula is being implemented this year and, as recent letters to parents show, there is little change. This school is one of the few to benefit from an increase in funding of nearly 13% but the impact of delayed implementation by West Sussex, increased employment costs, additional costs from the Local Authority and inflation, our budget remains the approximately the same. This is disappointing as our school is one of the lowest funded in the Local Authority and therefore in the country. If this school was in Hackney it would have £1 million more in the budget – that cannot be reasonable or fair to have two schools with such unequal funding.

Within the constraints of the funding, the school will be investigating how most effectively to build a new leadership team to offer the best in terms of value and to help us on our Journey to Excellence.

We are looking at projects and resources that were put on hold to relieve the budget and we hope to start making progress with some of these as our financial position becomes clearer.

However we must continue to be cautious, even a small increase in staff costs (especially National Insurance or Pension Contributions over which we have no say or control) could see our reserves depleted once again.

So please keep up the good work, follow the WorthLess Campaign and help us to support fair funding for the future.

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

Would you be interested in being a school governor? You don't need a background in education, but do have to be keen to learn about current statutory and legal requirements, be able to attend meetings during the working day (some employers allow time off to attend meetings as part of their corporate responsibility) and you will also need to attend County training. The governing body is not here to manage the senior leadership team and its decisions, rather its role is to set the strategic vision for the school. If you have children at the school you have to be able to be impartial to your child's needs and view the needs of the school as a whole. If you are interested, we have parent/co-opted governor role descriptions which tell you more about what is expected from you as a governor and what the role isn't. These can be obtained from Mrs Johncock, clerk to the governing body. It is a role which can be hard work at times but is also incredibly rewarding.

Governing Body Membership

Staff:	Miss Helen Williamson Lucy Andrews
LA:	Mr David Lowe
Parent:	Mrs Abi Smith Mr Christopher Evans

Co-opted: Mr John Fraher
Mr Dave Hairs
Mrs Rachel Chambers
Mr Ben Martin
Ms Alison Sutton
Mrs Bik-kay Talbot
Mrs Jo Newton-Smith

Associate Member: Mrs Jacquie Wattam