



GOVERNOR UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2019

This school year is flying by, we have reached the half way point already. February half term is a well-earned break for all of us.

Recruitment

It has been a busy few months for governors. Penny's announcement towards the end of last term that she would be leaving has meant we have focussed a lot of energy and time on recruiting her replacement. Penny leaves big shoes to fill so the task was never going to be easy and we know that many local primaries are finding it difficult to fill vacancies at a senior level – the fact we are in an affluent area and an outstanding school doesn't necessarily work in our favour. Thank you to parents, staff and pupils who told us what they wanted in a new headteacher, as we now embark on our second round of advertising, you can rest assured will strive to find the right person.

New governors

Gerry Stride stood down as Chair before Christmas and I was elected to take the reins alongside our new vicar at Holy Trinity Church, Dan Wells, who was elected Vice Chair. I have been a governor here at HT for 8 years and many will know me from having started the Kingfisher Frenzy newspaper for the Year 6 children, championing the pedestrian crossing on the Upper Richmond Road or serving mulled wine or Pimms at the school fairs.

Several new faces have joined the governing body since September each of whom brings important skills and experience to the task of ensuring the strategic direction of HT and overseeing the financial management of our school.

- Dan Wells, as the vicar is an ex-officio governor, as well as strengthening our links with HT church brings a background in education as a maths and IT teacher in a former life
- Lydia Flower, familiar as the teacher of Eagle class, joins as a staff governor and brings her understanding of education as well as strong local and community knowledge to the post
- Jane Nicholls was elected as a parent governor, has a daughter in Otter class and brings both legal and financial skills to the governing body as well as a passion for education
- Uel Barclay, joins as a foundation governor, and brings HR management skills and financial knowledge to the board. He has 2 children at HT and his wife is a class rep so the family is very committed to the school
- Colin Smith, also joins as a foundation governor, is a long-time Richmond resident and has a background in property and construction-related projects, bringing skills that are much-needed for maintaining our school and ensuring high standards of health and safety.

Sub-committees

Our governing body operates with 3 sub-committees that meet twice a term in addition to the 2 full governing body meetings per term.

The focus of the **Teaching & Learning** committee is on how teachers are meeting the improvement objectives for pupils. A key priority this year is to accelerate the progress of pupils in writing, including disadvantaged pupils, and enable more children to achieve 'Greater Depth' at both Key Stage 1 and 2. The two English subject leaders, Alex Auton and Hollie Morgan, recently presented to the full governing body some of the strategies they are employing to this end. Encouraging pupils to read more for pleasure is an essential part of this and it was wonderful to hear how PTA funding to enhance the library has impacted on this in a measurable way, demonstrating the importance of a joined-up strategy in our school community.

The **Resources** committee is responsible for ensuring good financial management of our school and rigorously monitors the school budget. Lack of funding in schools is a hot topic as overall education budgets are reduced and funding for areas such as Special Education Needs is eroded year after year. HT has a higher proportion of pupils with SEN and Education and health care plans than most local schools but governors are nevertheless committed to maintaining the same levels of support for these pupils. Through prudent management, HT maintains a healthy budget with a positive balance for the time being.

The **Pupils Parents & Community** committee has safeguarding and child protection as one of its areas of focus. The governors question practical matters like staff training, DBS checks, risk assessments for school trips and monitoring visitors. They also discuss wider issues that affect the safety of children such as internet and mobile phone usage, bullying and behaviour. Governors will soon take part in an annual safeguarding audit by an external advisor to ensure that we are compliant with all that our policies dictate and not simply paying lip service to this important aspect of pupil wellbeing.

Applications

Finally, I am pleased to report that we continue to attract a high number of applicants for places in Reception next September. We have had 263 applications this year for 60 places, of which 55 have stated Holy Trinity as their first choice of school.

Wishing our school community a happy and restful half term.

Michèle Marcus
Chair of Governors