



Welcome to the last Governors' newsletter of the year.

It's been one of the busiest ever years for the governing body, for a variety of reasons, all of them good ones, but which make for a long newsletter!

Firstly, we have over the past year been implementing a new governor monitoring system. In previous years, monitoring has been delegated to a group of governors, and taken the form of classroom observations. However, this has limited us only to what can be observed in the classroom, when there is a raft of planning and process behind what happens in the classroom. Visits now follow a range of formats, including pupil voice, questionnaires, classroom learning walks and discussion with subject leaders, and are undertaken by all governors. Furthermore, as discussed in previous newsletters, all schools have a School Development Plan, and over the past year we have been aligning our governor monitoring much more closely with our Plan. Governor visits now scrutinise each individual element of the School Development Plan. This is not only a more rigorous way of working, but the biggest difference it has made to me as a governor is that I appreciate more fully teachers' commitment to the subject areas they are leading, and how much they have achieved over the past year, and I feel that I can offer more well informed support.

Governors have also attended three Parent Forums over the year. It was good to meet with so many of you, and to hear your thoughts and concerns. Notable outcomes of the Parent Forums have been governors' realisation that we need to give regard to pupils' consistency of experience regarding staff. For example, staff need to have established systems of communication about pupils so that they all have consistent expectations of the same pupils. We will also be focusing on parental engagement next year, recognising that past events have been well received, and that parents and carers frequently ask how they can best support their children, commenting on how complex parts of the curriculum can be, and it was good to hear everyone's ideas of the types of events you would like to attend.

It has of course been a particularly busy past three terms for staff, due to our involvement in the Executive Partnership with Fletching, which is due to come to an end in August. We have reviewed the experience and one of governors, Suki Stokes, has summarised the findings in a document which will be sent out in September. We would like to thank Ms Blood for performing the role of Head of School and to Mrs Brown for performing the role of Safeguarding lead and joining the SLT during this time. We would also like to thank the staff for bringing back fresh ideas from their time working closely with our partners in Fletching. We also congratulate Ms Blood on her secondment as Deputy Head to Saltdean Primary School.

We have a new Co-opted Governor, Christine McNamara. Christine is a resident of Ripe and her now grown up daughter was once a pupil at Laughton. Christine's professional specialism is in dyslexia liaison and training, and we are very pleased to have her expertise in the field of Special Educational Needs.

Another of Christine's roles will be in strengthening our links with other schools and governors in East Sussex. We have recently played a leading role in co-ordinating school-to-school networking and our outward facing attitude means that we have been well placed to observe best practice across schools and make well informed decisions about which available options are best for our school, and this has contributed to our strong leadership culture. The fact that Mrs West was asked to provide support to Fletching School shows that the County Council has confidence in the capability of our leadership team. Furthermore, the County Council has been asked by Ringmer Community College to recommend a governor to chair Ringmer's governing body, due to the wish of the current Chair of Governors to step down, and they have recommended me.

Some of you may be aware that Kings Group, a Multi-Academy Trust, is due to take over the running of Ringmer Community College in September. The appointment of Kings Group was precipitated by concerns by the Regional Schools Commissioner that the previous administration of Ringmer Community College was unable to manage its finances adequately, and unable to raise its academic standards.

I am really pleased to accept the request to chair Ringmer's governing body and to have the opportunity to be working with Kings Group and Ringmer's new senior leadership team from September. I will be chairing governing bodies at both Ringmer and Laughton and am very excited by the opportunity to bring the same open, rigorous and supportive style of governance to Ringmer that I believe we have all developed together at Laughton over the past few years. Chairing two governing bodies will be a big commitment, and I could not do it without the fantastic support and teamwork of the governing body at Laughton.

Finally, I would like to mention our Year 6 National Curriculum test results.

Government test results from this year onwards are being reported as “At expected standard” and “Not at expected standard”.

Our “expected standard” test results for Year 6 were:

Reading 73% (National average 66%)

Maths 73% (National average 70%)

Writing 73% (National average 74%)

Grammar/Spelling/Punctuation 53% (National average 72%)

We are now busy addressing some issues in spelling, which we think will lead to rapid improvements in future results. However, it has been a fantastic achievement for our school to have achieved above average results in Reading, Writing and Maths, at the end of a year when teachers and senior leaders on a national scale have had to cope with uncertainty and anxiety regarding how pupils' results would match up to the completely new and much more difficult tests. Furthermore, on the metric of pupils achieving “expected standard” in Reading, Maths and Writing, **67% of our pupils have achieved this, against a national average of 53%**. This is even more remarkable when taking into account the fact that 31% of this year group have SEND and that this cohort of pupils started from a lower than average baseline, with only 40% being assessed as reaching the equivalent of “expected standard” across the subjects when in the Reception year.

This success is of course due to the hard work of pupils and teachers, and to the support of parents and carers. We also feel that this progress is a result of the school's Vision, underpinned by the Growth Mindset, which has been in development for the past three years, and which we have properly embedded over the last year. While we welcome our great results, and recognise that there has been enormous input from staff, pupils and parents, it is important to us that these results are based on pupils having developed a genuine love of learning and openness towards learning, habits which we hope will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Wishing you all the best for the Summer.

Denise Kong

Chair of Governors