



**Taking care of each other  
Always trying our best  
Everyone learning together**

## **Horndon-on-the-Hill C. of E. Primary School**

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**Headteacher :** Mr. T.R. Martinson

**Chair of Governors :** Mrs. L. Fergus

## **Governor Newsletter**

**Issue 10, December 2015**

Welcome to the first Governor Newsletter of the new academic year. In this edition we would like to introduce you to our new Co-opted Governor – Mary Saunders, discuss Pupil Premium funding, the work of the Governing Board and Academisation.

### **New Co-opted Governor – Mary Saunders**



As 'Mum' to two sons in Key Stages 1 and 2, I have a vested interest in the school and the quality of education it provides to the pupils. I was prompted to put myself forward and apply for the Co-opted Governor role when the school asked for volunteers, ideally with HR experience. Having worked in HR both in public and private sector roles since leaving school (a long time ago now...) I hope to complement the existing team and support Horndon school as it works towards achieving its short, medium and longer-term aims and ambitions. I am sure there will be lots to learn and plenty of challenges along the way, but with an enquiring mind and 'can do' attitude, I will endeavour to contribute fully to discussions and share insights that support and inform good decision making.

For those parents who don't know me and wonder who I am, I am the 'quirky' mum with a funny sense of humour who either looks smart and professional (on working days) or dressed down for a run or swim! I have lived in Orsett for 20 years now and can often be seen running around Orsett and Horndon or swimming in Corringham pool in a vain attempt to keep fit!

### **Pupil Premium**

Introduced in April 2011, Pupil Premium is additional government funding allocated to schools to help raise the attainment of disadvantaged children. Funding ranges from £500 to £1,900 per child and we want to make sure that our school receives all the additional funding our children are eligible for. Pupil Premium is allocated to children:

- Who have been eligible for free school meals (FSM) at any time in the last six years,
- Whose parents are currently serving in the armed forces,
- Currently cared for by a local authority,
- Previously cared for at any time by a local authority (including adopted children).

Research has shown that nationally 14% of pupils entitled to FSM are not claiming them and in the South East and East of England nearly one quarter of entitled children are not claiming FSM. Historically there may have been a stigma attached to free school meals, but we want to reassure you that registration is completely confidential and that it is not compulsory for your child to have cooked school meals, although they are very good.

As school meals are currently free for all children in KS1 (Reception, Year 1 and 2) parents may not realise that they need to apply for Pupil Premium. Family circumstances also change and families with children in KS2 (Year 3 and above) who were not eligible in the past may be eligible now.

If you receive any of the following support payments your child may be entitled to receive free school meals:

- Income Support,
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance,
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance,
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999,
- the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit,
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190),
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit,
- Universal Credit.

Children who get any of the above benefits in their own right (i.e. they get benefits payments directly, instead of through a parent or guardian) can also get free school meals.

Every year a national school census takes place and based on the information collected Pupil Premium funding is allocated for the next year. By bringing this subject to your attention we hope you will consider if you should register. If you think your child is entitled to free school meals, the school office can make a quick and confidential on-line check via Thurrock Council. If your child is eligible, you will then need to complete an [application form](#) and return it to the school office or direct to Thurrock Council.

Children receiving Pupil Premium funding will receive additional help, for example help with the cost of music lessons and school trips. You can see how the school spends its Pupil Premium funding on the [school website](#).

### **The work of the Governing Board**

Via Parent Voice, it was suggested that many parents didn't know who or what the Governing Board did so some governors attended the Curriculum Evenings earlier this term to provide some more information. Here is a brief summary for those of you that were unable to attend.

The Governing Board is made up of 12 volunteers:

Three appointed by the church;

Two elected by parents;

One appointed by the Local Authority;

One member if staff elected by the staff;  
Headteacher;  
Four Co-opted Governors appointed by the Governing Board.

All Governors are recruited based on their skills and each governor takes on specific responsibilities based on their skills and the time they have available to support the school e.g. Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Health and Safety.

Full details of current governors and their responsibilities can be found on the [school website](#).

The main functions of the Governing Board are to:

- Ensure a clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school;
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the performance of the school and it's pupils;
- Oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure money is well spent.

The Governing Board meets formally six times a year, but most work in undertaken outside these meetings e.g. visits to school.

The Governing Board does not get involved in the day to running of the school this is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) e.g. recruitment of staff (except the Headteacher); individual issues/concerns/complaints and deciding non-pupil days.

As the education landscape continues to change and evolve, the Governing Board's key focus over the coming months will be to look at the options available to the school now we have been rated Good by Ofsted. The current government would like all schools to convert to Academies, but there are other options and we will be exploring these and consulting with all stakeholders, including parents in the New Year.

### **Feedback**

We continue to welcome your feedback and any areas of concern that you feel should be brought to our attention. You can either e-mail: [governors@horndon-on-the-hill.thurrock.sch.uk](mailto:governors@horndon-on-the-hill.thurrock.sch.uk) or write to the Chair of Governors c/o the School Office.

**Finally the Governor Board would like to wish you and your families a very happy and peaceful Christmas.**

