



GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 | December 2016

Dear parents and carers,

Welcome to the first edition of our termly Governors' Newsletter. One of our aims as governors is to improve our contact with parents and carers and to raise awareness of the role we play within the school. It's a huge privilege to serve the school and to play our part in ensuring all children at Gurnard Primary receive the education they deserve within a happy and safe environment.

With this being our first newsletter we thought it would be useful to start off by letting you know about what we do and who we are. In future editions we will be sharing with you information about our current work within the school.

What does the governing body do?

All state funded schools are required by law to have a governing body. The head teacher is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, whereas the role of the governing body is to provide strategic management, and to act as a 'critical friend', supporting and challenging the work of the head teacher and other staff.

As school governors, we play a key role in the life of Gurnard Primary School. We are all volunteers and come from all walks of life, bringing to the school a wide range of skills and experience. We work to ensure high standards of achievement for all children and contribute to the effectiveness of the school by:

- Setting the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Our governing body is made up of 4 parent governors (elected by school parents), 4 co-opted governors (appointed by the governing body), 1 staff governor and the head teacher who is always a member of the governing body by virtue of their office.

We are currently awaiting the appointment of a new local authority governor.

The governing body elects a chair and vice-chair and is supported by a trained clerk who provides advice and support as well as the administration. Our clerk is Angie Selle.

We meet at least once a term as a full governing body. Additionally we have two sub-committees which meet termly, each concerned with a key area of the school's operations and performance.

The Standards and Achievement Committee oversees aspects relating to teaching and learning, such as pupil progress and special educational needs.

The Leadership and Management Committee considers issues relating to finance, personnel and pay, health and safety, the school premises and how the school deploys its resources to educational ends.

The focus of our activities each year is on the progress made towards specific strategic goals as laid out in the School Development Plan – a summary of which is attached and also available to view on the school website.



Meet the Governors

Darren Claydon. Co-opted Governor, Leadership and Management Committee. I currently work as the interim Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recover manager for the Isle of Wight NHS Trust as well as the Ambulance Service where I remain a senior ambulance tactical commander. I have three daughters, two of them currently attend Gurnard Primary School and the youngest will hopefully follow in a few years.

Reverend Amanda Collinson. Vice-Chair, Co-opted Governor, Standards and Achievement Committee. I moved to the Island in Jan 2013, to become Priest in Charge to the parishes of Northwood, Gurnard and Cowes St Faith's. I have been ordained 7 years, before that I was a Logistics Officer in the Royal Navy. I am married to James and we have two boys - Jacob, in Year 2 and Samuel, in Year R. As a priest the community is naturally very important to me and I am keen to strengthen relationships between the community and school so each can benefit from the others' strengths and support each others' weaknesses.

Mrs Joan Finch. Co-opted Governor, LINK Governor, Standards and Achievement Committee. I have been a governor at Gurnard Primary school for nearly seven years. My latest role is co-ordinating training for all Gurnard School Governors. I was born on the Island, then left to join the Royal Air Force as a radar operator. On leaving the Air Force I married and had two sons. On returning to the Island I trained as an advisor in the Women's Institute before becoming the Island's chairman. I ran a WI Tea Tent at the Bestival for 12 years before finally hanging up my pinny last year.

Rebecca Gilhooly. Co-opted Governor, Leadership and Management Committee. I work as a television producer/director, making programmes and documentaries for a number of broadcasters including BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Discovery Channels. I have a daughter in Year 1 and my son is currently at Gurnard pre-school.

Vanessa Hicks. Head teacher. I have worked in education for over 20 years, including 7 years working as a Local Authority Education Advisor. I was previously Deputy Head at All Saints Primary and Newchurch Primary Schools and Head of School at Newchurch Primary. I joined Gurnard Primary as Headteacher in September 2015.

Mrs Josephine Hinson. Co-opted Governor, Chair of the Leadership and Management Committee. I have lived on the IOW for just over ten years after finishing work. I was a Therapy Radiographer both here and in the United States where I was involved in conducting several areas of clinical research. I worked further in the UK and latterly was the clinical manager for the Care group of oncology and medical physics at St Luke's Cancer Centre in Surrey.

Mrs Alison Jenkinson. Parent Governor, Health and Safety Governor, Chair of the Standards and Achievement Committee. I have 2 children at Gurnard Primary, a son in Year 2 and a daughter in Reception. I previously worked as a solicitor and now visit the school regularly to help out in class.

Emma Meek. Chair of Governors, Parent Governor, Safeguarding Governor, Standards and Achievement Committee. I work as a Children's Service Manager for Barnardo's on the Isle of Wight and Hampshire. My current role involves managing services that support vulnerable children and young people whose life chances and opportunities are lessened by their circumstances, my focus is to improve outcomes for these children. I have three sons that attend Gurnard Primary School who keep me busy, being active and engaging in clubs and activities across the Island.

Mark Mullan. Parent Governor, Leadership and Management Committee. I am currently an Area Manager with Booker Wholesale and prior to this, an Area Manger with the Southern Co-operative. Previous to my current career I spent 12 years with the Metropolitan Police Service and during this time held roles that allowed me to gain experience in working with a range of external agencies and non-government organisations.

Mrs Liz Smith. Parent Governor, SEND Governor, Standards and Achievement Committee. I look forward as a parent governor to sharing my experience in education. During my teaching career I worked in both Primary and Middle schools holding a variety of posts of responsibility. These included Head of an Infant Department, Special Needs Co-ordinator, teacher with responsibility for the More Able Child, Literacy Co-ordinator and Year 5 Leader at Solent Middle School. I was also a staff liaison governor between an infant and junior school in Bristol.

Training

A good governing body is key to the effectiveness of a school and is now held accountable, as part of school leadership, during Ofsted inspection. At Gurnard Primary School it's a commitment we all take seriously, giving our time and using skills from other areas of our lives to help raise school standards. We have recently carried out an audit to review the skills members have and to identify any gaps to inform training and development plans as well as future recruitment.

This year has seen a big change within the governing body with the appointment of six new governors, including a new Chair. All new members have attended a New Governor Induction Training Course in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Other courses attended by governors this year, have included Life After Levels – examining the new national curriculum; Safeguarding – to ensure that the school meets its statutory responsibilities in keeping children safe within the school; and the Governors Role in Promoting Fundamental British Values – how schools should be encouraging mutual respect and tolerance, democracy and the rule of law in order to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. Further details on how the school fulfils these principles through the curriculum can be seen on the school website.

Governor visits

As governors it's important we visit the school to help fulfil our responsibilities of monitoring and evaluation. It helps us get to know the school, the staff and pupils and enables us to get an independent view on how well it all works and what progress is being made.

Emma Meek recently visited the school to monitor a Year 2 , Key Stage 1 progress meeting. This is her report. *'The objective of the visit was to observe and monitor Year 2 teachers and a family liaison officer discuss with the headteacher pupil progression in reading, writing, and maths. The teachers identified pupils who would benefit from further intervention in order to achieve the levels as set under new curriculum criteria for SAT tests, and to identify areas of strength and weakness in each of the subjects. The Head teacher, teachers, and family liaison officer commented, contributed and made decisions with the information and facts presented and agreed the most appropriate interventions and how to implement them within the classroom.'*

The governor visit planned for next term will look at how Talk4Writing is being used across the different year groups to try to raise attainment in reading and writing. This fits in with the school's development plan priorities to improve progress in writing.

Ofsted visit

It seems a long time ago that Ofsted inspected the school in May 2016. We were delighted with the "good" judgement from the Ofsted inspection which reflected the hard work and commitment of Gurnard's staff, governors and school community. Ofsted recognised the many strengths of the school and the rapid progress we are making towards being rated as outstanding. We would like to share a few of the comments that they made...

Effectiveness of Leadership and Management – Ofsted said:

- "Leaders, including governors, communicate a clear strategy for continuing improvement. They have worked together to lead the school through a difficult but necessary change with determination and resilience..."
- "Governors recognise that the vibrancy of the school has changed under [the head teacher's] leadership and that it is moving forward rapidly."
- "The majority [of parents] are positive about the difference the school is making to their child's achievement."

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment – Ofsted said:

- “Leaders’ actions ensure that all teaching is good and improving strongly.”
- “..all pupils benefit from daily high-quality teaching in class in reading, writing and mathematics..”
- “New systems to capture and track performance information are used routinely by teachers when planning activities so that activities start at a high enough point.”

Personal development, behaviour and welfare – Ofsted said:

- “Pupil attendance is high and well above the national average. No pupils are persistently absent.”
- “Pupils carefully follow the rules set out by adults.”
- “Pupils want to learn and show courteous behaviour in lessons.”
- “The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders’ work to ensure the safety of vulnerable pupils... is exemplary.”

Early Years Provision

- Local authority advisers have rated our Early Years provision as outstanding and we have been proud to host several visits to share our effective practice with other Island schools.
- In 2016, 91% of pupils achieved a Good Level of Development (significantly above the national average of 69%).

Ofsted said:

- “Children in the early years make a strong start to key stage 1.”

Outcomes for children in 2016

- Early Years – significantly above the national average
- Year 1 phonics - above the national average
- Year 2 SATs – significantly above national averages for reading, writing and maths.
- Year 6 SATs –above the national averages for reading, SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) and maths.
- 60% of pupils achieved the expected level of development in reading, writing and maths – 7% above the national average.
- Pupils made sufficient progress from key stage 1 to 2 in reading, writing and maths.

Ofsted said:

- “..Leaders check the progress of pupils regularly and use a wide range of information about pupils’ learning to help shape programmes of support so that they are bespoke for each pupil.”
- “Leaders know which pupils are at risk of not meeting the expected standards for their age and have prioritised support appropriately.”

Next steps for the school:

Ofsted said that school leaders and governors should ensure that:

1. the effectiveness of the school’s communication with parents and carers is developed further to ensure better understanding and raise confidence in the work of the school.
2. teaching focuses precisely on gaps in pupils’ technical accuracy when writing so that they secure the expected standard in writing for their age.

Both of these actions have been included as areas for development in our School Development Plan and we will provide an update on our progress in the next Governor Newsletter. We look forward to building on our success and continuing to work together to ensure the best possible education for the children at our school.

Thank you PTA

The PTA team has worked really hard and members have dedicated many hours of their own time over the past year to organise and arrange events to raise funds for the school and its pupils. The children have enjoyed wonderful fairs, creative challenges, discos and cake stalls that have all been planned and coordinated by the PTA team. All of the money raised from these events has enabled the school to benefit in so many positive ways, most recently supporting the school library. We thank you all for volunteering your valuable time and helping to support the pupils and the school in so many ways.

How to contact us

The governing body will be pleased to hear from you about any aspects of the school you'd like to raise with us. Concerns about your child should be addressed to their teacher and any initial complaints about the day to day running of the school should be referred to the Headteacher in the first instance. If you would like to contact us please email governors@gurnardprimaryschool.co.uk or leave a letter marked for our attention with the school office. You will also see some of us dropping off and picking up our children in the playground and we'll be more than happy to receive your comments and feedback.

Questionnaire

This week the school is sending home a questionnaire for parents and carers. Your views are very important to us and will help us to understand what we are doing well and how we can improve further. We would be grateful if you could complete this questionnaire and return it to the school office by Friday 6th January 2017.

**Finally, huge
congratulations to all the
children and staff involved
in this year's wonderful
Christmas performances.
We wish everyone a very
Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year and look
forward to seeing you all in
2017.**

