

# Governor update

## Spring Term 2017

### Chair of Governors

As always it's been a busy term. As I wrote in my recent letter to parents, we've reviewed our visit from the LLP, Year 2 & 6 children are completing their final preparations for their SAT's and in the last week, we have received the sad news that Mrs McCarthy will be leaving us at the end of this school year.



The Governors & I have thoroughly enjoyed partnering with Mrs McCarthy over the last 3 years. I shared a number of her successes in my recent letter. I'm also grateful for Lindsay's support in ensuring Sparsholt is a welcoming place for Governors – we've had the opportunity to visit classrooms, observe the teaching practices, attend staff meetings, paint the school to name a few highlights. For 3 years, Lindsay & I have met every fortnight and she has played a key part in my enjoyment of this voluntary role.

We will start the process of recruiting for a new Head Teacher after the Easter break. I can assure you the Governing Body is working incredibly hard to organise itself effectively and set ourselves up for success.

I look forward to a closer working relationship with Mrs Laver in the future and once again, thank her for her leadership during this time.

*Victoria*

### Outstanding Governance

The Governing Body has focused on "outstanding governance" this term. As our school works hard to maintain it's outstanding teaching and learning status, I felt it important for our governance to reflect the same high standards.

Governors were asked to complete 3 documents in order to assess where we are. The first was a 360degree feedback on their Chair of Governors. The second was a review of the skills and experience on our Governing Body to ensure we were equipped with all the skills we need. The third document was a review of our practice against the Ofsted criteria for Outstanding Governance.

We held an additional meeting to review the feedback in mid March and concluded: i) the Chair of Governors is doing a good job ii) we have an incredibly experienced, professional Governing Body iii) we have a plan in place to ensure the Sparsholt Governing Body is practicing outstanding governance in every one of our school interactions.

This plan will continue to evolve and we will update you as we make progress.

### Parent Governor Vacancies

During this term we have had to say goodbye to two of our Governors.

Margaret Blakemore has been our Foundation Governor for 3 years. As Foundation Governor, Margaret has played a key role in connecting our Church Of England school with the Diocese and the Parish. As a result, our Mosaic values flow through every classroom, every worship, resulting in Sparsholts Outstanding award following our Diocese Inspection 18 months ago. Margaret regularly visits the school, putting her teaching experience to great use in Beech class by offering one to one reading support. Fortunately Margaret will continue to support in this role.

Andrew Fernando has been a Parent Governor for 18 months. Andrew's focus has been our Early Years; spending time in Willow Class, understanding how we transition children from Reception to Year 1 and ensuring our Year 1 learners have the same opportunities to learn regardless of what class room they're in.

Margaret, Andrew, thank you very much for your support, contribution, energy and humour over the last couple of years. We will miss you.

Under Rev Jax's leadership, the Diocese is working hard to replace Margaret. We will advertise our Parent Governor vacancies after the Easter break.



# Finance

## Funding Formula

Dan Parsons, Chair of the Finance & Staffing Committee explains the potential implications of the new funding formula on the schools finances.

The Department for Education (DfE) is looking to change the way state run ('maintained') schools such as ours are funded.

At present, the DfE allocates a budget for maintained schools to each local authority. The local authority then decides how it wants to spread these funds over the schools it manages.

In our case, Hampshire County Council (HCC) allocates this school budget to the 486 maintained schools via a lump sum, a small amount per pupil and then a supplement. The supplement is based on various factors such as; the number of looked after children in the specific school, the business rates the school building attracts, whether the school is split over a number of sites and the number of children deemed as 'deprived'.

The DfE has decided that the involvement of the local council leads to a lack of transparency, unfairness and unpredictability and has suggested the process needs re-balancing.

To do this, the DfE has proposed a National Funding Formula (NFF) which will mean that going forward, school funds will be allocated directly from central government (the DfE) and not via local councils.

The DfE has modeled how this new National Funding Formula will potentially impact each school. Some schools will benefit, others will lose out.

Overall, Hampshire is a net winner. It stands to gain several million more £'s than it gets currently, largely at the expense of inner-city London schools. 237 of Hampshire's 486 schools will get more money based on this new formula.

We at Sparsholt however stand to lose. If the proposal goes through, we are likely to get £13,000 less each year than we currently do.

Balancing the schools budget is always hard. We've largely been able to do so through shrewd financial discipline by Mrs McCarthy and her senior team, supported by Carol Sheppeck. FOSS has also given time and money to support various key initiatives. It's a constant balancing act but one that we've largely mastered.

If we were to receive £13,000 less each year, things would have to change. Our pupils will be impacted. It's too soon to specify how but as a Board of Governors, we're starting to look at various options.

It should be reiterated that at this point the NFF is just a proposal.

The Department for Education is going through a consultation period and has asked for feedback.

Debbie Caldwell has written to Steve Brine our local MP. I have done the same on behalf of the Board of Governors. Councillors from Hampshire have written to the Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening.

Headteachers throughout the county have done likewise, as the theme behind these changes are that small primary schools with less than 160 pupils are all losing out (incl St Faiths, Twyford St Mary's, Compton All Saints, Micheldever CoE).

The view is that the DfE wants to steer smaller primary schools such as ours towards multi-academy trusts. The tampering with the budget is hugely disruptive and divisive.

The results of the consultation should be announced in the coming months. We will keep you informed.

*Dan*

