

Chair of Governors Blog October 2017

This is the first blog for the new academic year and will touch on:

- Governor meetings and visits
- Governor Vacancies
- Priorities for the term
- Joining the Crofty Multi-Academy Trust
- Safeguarding & health and safety

Meetings and recruitment

The first full governing board meeting was last week. We attended to the agenda in the first hour and in the second the head teacher's report gave us a wide-ranging picture of the current priorities and work of the school enabling us to ask questions and get a good focus for future visits and monitoring. The meeting finished promptly as always!

We have lost several governors this year through a number of causes. Several have had to give up because of pressure of their own work and others because of the needs of their families. We are grateful to all of them for the time given. It does mean that we have a number of vacancies for parent and co-opted governors as well as a staff governor. The important thing is to recruit people with knowledge and skills relevant to the needs of the governing board rather than just filling spaces. If you are interested there are more details in the annual governance report that can be found on the school website.

Questions from governors considered and answered by the head's report:

- **Curriculum:**
 - Have we moved out of the coasting schools category and how secure is our position looking towards results for next year?
 - What major topics are being covered by year groups this term to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum?
 - What are the key areas of the school development plan that need governor monitoring especially in core subjects?
- **Safeguarding:**
 - What changes in practice have there been to tighten up health and safety and safeguarding issues in the last 6 months?
 - How many families are the cause of major concern in terms of safeguarding?
 - What is being done this year to improve our statistics for attendance and exclusions?
- **Staffing:**
 - With staff returning from maternity leave and some new staff settling in, how do you think the team is settling /gelling?

- What are the priorities to ensure teaching standards are kept at a high level?
- **Pupil Premium**
 - What are the key areas for PP spending that need to be monitored by governors for value?
- **Sports Funding**
 - How is spending on sport changing from last academic year to ensure efficacy?
- **Numbers**
 - How many places are available in the school?
 - On a recent visit I was told that 10 members of last year's nursery class were not granted places at Pennoweth by the LA – with the move to Academy status is it time to look at our admission criteria?

Minutes of the meeting will be available on request.

The Crofty Multi-Academy Trust

In line with government policy and at the suggestion of the School Commissioner's office we decided to seek academy status some time ago. Consultations were carried out and finally late last term the School Commissioner's office gave the go-ahead to join the Crofty Group of Schools. This is now in the hands of the solicitors but there will have to be further consultations in the coming months before things are finalised.

Safeguarding & Health and Safety

Early in the term I watched a fire alarm response in action right at the end of the school day which was a tricky time. It was managed efficiently and effectively and evacuation procedures worked well.

Some new instructions for Fire Procedures have been printed and published for groups who use the school outside of the school day.

Rob Cooper, one of our parent governors, is our safeguarding governor who liaises with school to check paperwork, training and practice.

Governors have had training in preventing radicalisation and know what to look out for in visits and conversations.

In visits with other governors we have watched examples of the excellent behaviour in and around the school and experienced the friendly, calm atmosphere which is testament to the ethos developed by Mr Adams and his team.

Vandalism

There was security camera footage of boys breaking into the nursery playground and carrying out a good deal of damage. This meant a good deal of extra work for staff and no little inconvenience for early-years children! Governors will review security precautions at a premises meeting as a result.

Pictures of the perpetrators have been circulated to local schools and the rugby club for identification- none were Pennoweth students!

Buildings

In the summer holidays more work has been done on the school buildings and the surrounding area to make the best learning environment for the children and staff. Parents will already have noticed that the dangerous and untidy flagstones have been removed from around the building and a new tarmac laid, making a much safer and useful surface. Inside the school there has been decorating, work on alarms and other tasks.

Best wishes

Jim Seth

Chair of Governors