



Cusgarne Primary School
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Executive Headteacher: Karen Middlemore
Head of School: Tim Barnard

18th July 2018

Dear Parents

Changes to governance of the school & general update

GOVERNANCE AS IT WAS (PRIOR TO ACADEMY)

As a Local Authority school, the school was governed by a Governing Board, a group made up of a number of elected staff members, parent governors and co-opted community governors. The Governing Board held the Head teacher to account and was responsible, with the Head, for governance of the school.

GOVERNANCE AS IT STANDS NOW

As an Academy, governance of the school is now carried out by a Hub Council which includes a small number of schools in the local area (all being part of Aspire Academy Trust). The Head of School, [the Executive Headteacher](#) and two Hub Councillors (parent or community members) from each school sit on the Hub Council and it is the Hub Council that govern the schools in that group. Our Hub Councillors are myself and Richard Hunt (both formerly Cusgarne School Governors, so we know the school very well). The Hub Council meet once a term, and each school also has a Monitoring Visit once a term when the Heads of School [and Executive Headteachers](#) from each school within the Hub spend the day, along with the Hub Councillors, visiting each class, observing lessons, chatting with staff and pupils, carrying out a learning walk around the school, scrutinising books etc. They also check that systems and processes are in place to ensure that progress is monitored correctly and that intervention strategies are effective. [Safeguarding and health and safety in the school is also monitored and checked very closely.](#) This level of regular 'scrutiny' by lead professionals and Hub Councillors is invaluable in ensuring the school drives forward school improvement, that every child is progressing, and that those children requiring additional support are picked up and that effect intervention is put in place. This level of regular monitoring used to be carried out by cluster groups under the Local Authority, but sadly ceased to happen some years ago with the reduction in support and resources from Cornwall Council. Mr Barnard, [Mrs Middlemore](#) and the staff welcome this support and feedback, and it is an excellent way for Mr Barnard and the other Heads of School [and Executive Headteachers](#) to share good practice across the Hub, to drive up school improvement that benefits all children.



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FORMATION OF A LOCAL ADVISORY BODY (LAB)

Although the Governing Board devolved following conversion to an Academy, the former Governors and Mr Barnard agreed and resolved to form a Local Advisory Body, with a similar set up to the former Governing Board, to provide support and advice to Mr Barnard and the school, and to play a key role in driving forward school improvement, forging and maintaining community links and supporting our pupils in accessing outstanding education and experiences. As well as providing the school with invaluable local intelligence, additional resources and energy, the LAB helps make and challenge decisions to ensure our school is working to its full potential. The LAB works with the school to provide advice and guidance on premises, staffing, H&S, curriculum, well-being, safeguarding and matters raised by parents.

The Local Advisory Body is made up of 2 staff members (inc. Mr Barnard as Head of School), 3 parent advisors and 3 co-opted community advisors. Our parent advisors are currently myself, Sarah Childs and Sally Campling. Our role is to act as a link between parents and the school and LAB, and to represent parents' views at LAB meetings (which take place once per term). Our parent advisors can feed back comments or questions to the LAB, but I would stress that if you have any concerns or complaints, please take these up with Mr Barnard, or your child's class teacher, as they are best placed to answer questions or resolve problems. Our community advisors are Richard Hunt and Jean Webster who were both formerly Governors. Richard was a Governor for many years and his children previously attended the school. Jean lives locally and volunteers at the school once per week to listen to children read.

LAB VACANCY

We currently have a vacancy for one community advisor – if you know somebody in the community who would be interested in finding out more about the role and playing a part in supporting the school then please let me, Sarah, Sally, Mr Barnard or Fiona Barnard (our Local Advisory Body Clerk) know.

LAB MEETING UPDATE

The Local Advisory Body met earlier this week and had a long but productive meeting. Mr Barnard updated us on a number of matters and explained the reasons for some of the changes that have, and are, taking place around the school and its grounds.

Benefits of class moves

The first major change has been the Class 1 and Class 3 swop which was carried out earlier in the term. I know Mr Barnard sent a letter home about this, but I would like to take this opportunity to explain that this is something that the school and governing board have wanted to do for 10 years. Schools are expected to provide Early Years children with free flow space to an outdoor learning environment to broaden and enrich their learning and experiences. Under the Local Authority the school were never able to facilitate this due to a lack of support, finances and resources. [H;](#) however, the Aspire Trust [along with Mrs Middlemore](#) have been fully supportive of our goals, and



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have been able to make this much needed and wanted development happen. A great achievement for our school, and a credit to the hard work by our dedicated team of staff. The children and staff have all settled into their new classrooms and the teaching spaces are working much better for both classes. Any initial concerns about adjusting to the different class spaces were soon relieved. Year 6's continue to be taught by Mr Barnard in the library every morning.

The new outdoor learning space created outside class 1 is a joy to see – it is used daily by class 1 children who have all relished the extra opportunities it provides them. Families visiting the school to look around have all commented on what a lovely provision it is. The area is still under development, so watch out for some new equipment over the coming months, which we hope will include some area of shade/shelter cover. In the meantime a gazebo is put up to offer areas of shade for the children to play in. The gates of the fenced area are opened every play time, allowing children full use of the whole playground, and allowing all children to access the toilets easily at that end of the building.

Toilet provision

I understand a number of parents have been concerned about the children using the different toilets. I would like to clarify that contrary to the perception that the toilets at the old class 1 were smaller, they are not, all the toilets at both ends of the school are identical in size and height. A minor adjustment to the door closer at the toilets at the new class 1 end of school will be made to ensure that young children starting in September are able to easily open and close the doors into the toilets, and the toilet seats will be switched over the summer to ensure they are ready for September's new starters.

Maintaining our culture of integration and inclusion

I know Mr Barnard stressed in his previous letter, but Cusgarne has never, and does not intend to segregate children. ~~I~~ the fencing around Class 1's outdoor play area is purely to create a safe and secure space for class 1 children to play in *during lesson time*; during break times children are free to play and mix with whomever they choose and new starters are able to see and mix with their Year 6 buddies. Our ethos has always been, and remains, one of integration and inclusion.

Mr Barnard's role

I hope you all received the letter a number of weeks ago, informing you that Mr Barnard has been formally appointed our permanent Head of School. He currently teaches Year 6 in the library every morning, which he will continue to do next year. During the afternoons Mr Barnard has management time, and I would like to remind you that when he is not in the classroom with pupils, he is investing his time, energy and passion on impacting the school as whole which benefits all children. During this time, Mr Barnard is regularly working alongside Mrs Middlemore in driving the school forward.

Mrs Middlemore's role

Mrs Middlemore's role at the school as Executive Headteacher is that she offers Mr Barnard and the school strategic 'behind the scenes' support with regards to the overall running of the school. She attends school two days per week to support Mr Barnard, but as Head of School Mr Barnard is the 'face' of the leadership and in charge of the day to day running of the school, and the person



you should contact with any concerns. Mrs Middlemore would like to clarify that, although she is only at Cusgarne for 2 days a week, she is more than happy to meet with you should you wish to book an appointment. Mrs Middlemore -but she- has not replaced Mrs Nicholls as Head of School/Headteacher, Mr Barnard has been appointed as Head of School to take on her many roles and Mrs Middlemore will support and work with Mr Barnard to continue to improve the school for the pupils in it. —I hope that clears up any confusion.

Enhancing security

You may have noticed a maglock entry system has been fitted at the top entrance gate. We expect this to be operational from September. Our current playground and access set up is not satisfactory and does not meet current safeguarding expectations or standards. C—echildren should not be able to have free access to the road or, -and nor should anyone be able to have free access from the road into the playground; especially during break times when children are playing outside. At present our staff have to stand guard at the gates to make sure that no child suddenly runs out onto the road to fetch a stray ball, this means that staff aren't able to fully engage with the children during playtimes. We do not want to be the school that thought 'it'll never happen to us' — we would be failing you and your children if that was our attitude, and we would not be meeting Ofsted's safeguarding standards. From September the gates will be open at school drop off and pick up so that children can be dropped off and collected as normal, however the gates will be locked between those times. Visitors to the school during the daytime will gain entry at the top gate by pressing the button, Mrs Holmes and/or Mrs Hall will then buzz them in. The school has known that playground access needed to be resolved for many years, but again, a lack of support and funding from Cornwall Council/County has meant that the school has been unable to do anything. We are very grateful to Aspire for facilitating this for us, assince it is important to us that we keep every child safe during their time with us.

Monitoring Visit outcomes

Our summer term Monitoring Visit was carried out earlier this month and went extremely well. Three other Heads of School and Executive Headteachers attended who all made a point of commenting on the outstanding pupil behaviour, classroom environments, adult/child relationships, and most important the evident "joy and enthusiasm" of the children. There are of course aspects that we can work on to bring/need to focus on to bring about improvements and ensure that all of our children make the best possible progress, but it is wonderful to see experienced lead professionals so impressed with the school and with what the team of staff are doing and achieving. This is further evidenced by the numbers of new families wanting to look around the school for their children, because of the school's reputation, and in fact we have a waiting list for some year groups!

Teaching support and staff development

There have been some changes to TA allocation across the classes, with a move away from TAs only working in one class. For some time now, TA's have time in each class, this upskills their knowledge and experience, and gives much greater flexibility and impact across the whole school. Mr Barnard and Mrs Middlemore manages and allocates staffing to ensure that all classes and children have TA provision that meets their needs. This is constantly being monitored and when necessary changes are made to achieve 'best fit'.



Being part of Aspire MAT has had a dramatic change on the opportunities, support and training available to all staff, teaching and non-teaching. ~~This, which~~ is enriching and empowering for staff, and enables them to share good practice and bring back ideas to implement at our school to benefit the children. All our staff are committed and dedicated and work incredibly hard for the school, and it is nice to know that they are now receiving the support and opportunities for learning and development that they deserve, and that our children are already benefiting from this.

Parent & Pupil Survey

The school is always interested in hearing how it is performing, so it can continue to learn and improve. Mr Barnard ~~and Mrs Middlemore~~ will be sending home a combined Parent & Pupil Survey in the Autumn term, to gather information on how you and your child/children think we are performing on various different aspects of school life. These surveys can be completed anonymously. Watch out for the surveys in the autumn term.

Small but mighty Cusgarne School!

One final thing, at the end of a very long letter (thank you if you're still reading!), I would like to extend my thanks to the staff, children, parents and LAB members who are all part of making this small but mighty school what it is. It is exciting to see the school developing and able to make the improvements it has wanted to do for many years. Please trust the staff, and the fact that they make decisions and changes with the best interests of all children at heart. Teaching is a passion, not just a job, and our hard working team epitomize that. Yes we are now an academy, but we are still Cusgarne School; and our team, children and parents remain the same and are what make us great. ~~I,~~ the only difference is we now have a good support network behind us to help strive to achieve what it is we all want – outstanding education and experiences for our children. As I know Mr Barnard ~~and Mrs Middlemore~~ ~~has~~ said many times, Cusgarne continues to have an open-door policy – our teaching staff, ~~and~~ Mr Barnard ~~and Mrs Middlemore~~ are always happy to talk with you about any concerns you have, and they are available at the start and end of every day, just as they have always been.

Have a wonderful summer break and see you all in September!

Kind regards



Mr Mike Galligan

School parent and Chair of the Local Advisory Body

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