



NORTH NIBLEY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

GOVERNORS NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the first of an irregular Newsletter which the Governors of North Nibley School are hoping will help communicate information about the Governors' work with the School.

A Parent Questionnaire was carried out in Spring 2015 and we had an excellent response - more on that later in the Newsletter. One area that came up was the desire for people to know more about what Governors do so this Newsletter is designed to help with that.

If we tried to cover everything in one go then it would be a pretty turgid read(!) so we hope the Newsletter approach can keep information more current and accessible.

If ever you would like to know more details at any time then do please approach a Governor to ask!

Contacting Governors

Governors are readily contactable.
Email Roly Brown - chair@northnibley.gloucs.gov.uk or send a letter or message via the School Office. Any Governor will be happy to help you.

So...WHO are 'The Governors' ...?

Under recent Government guidance we reconstituted the Governing Board in May 2015. That basically means that we had to review how the Governing Board of North Nibley School is made up. As we are a Church of England Primary School, there was a fairly fixed framework we had to work with so the make-up of the Board hasn't changed hugely. The new structure of 14 Governors is therefore as follows:-

8 Foundation Governors - Foundation Governors are appointed by the Gloucester Diocese, usually based on a recommendation from the PCC (Parochial Church Council). One of the Foundation Governors is either the parish vicar or someone appointed by him/her. Peter Hall is appointed by the Vicar, Rob Axford. The other Foundation Governors are currently Sarah Corston, Di Hay, Sandy Revie, Emma Frith, Chris Huxley-Reynard and Roly Brown. There is also currently a vacancy for a Foundation Governor.

1 Head Teacher - Paul Batchelor

1 Staff Governor – This doesn't have to be a teacher. It can be any member of School staff, elected by the staff and this is currently Miss Rebecca Allen (Class 1 Teacher)

1 Local Authority Governor – This is someone appointed by the Local Authority and is currently Sue Bradley-Jones

2 Parent Governors – These Governors are elected by the parents of the School in an open ballot. They are currently Philippa Burrows and Tassos Stamatopoulos.

1 Co-Opted Governor – This is a new role created in our reconstitution. It enables the Governors to bring someone on board because of their specific skills without them having to satisfy any of the criteria of the other positions. The role hasn't been filled yet and we are actively seeking someone to come on board. More on that later...

Whatever role a Governor has and however they are elected on to the board, they are all equal.

In addition to the full Governor roles set out above, the re-constitution has also allowed us to bring on board Associate Members. These are people who have specific skills that might help one of the sub-committees without them having to have the commitments of a full Governor. Greg Smith is our only Associate Member at the moment. He is a valued member of the Finance & Premises Committee due, in particular, to his knowledge and experience of buildings, school premises and funding.

...and WHAT do they do?

We are all part of the Full Governing Board (FGB) and that meets twice every long term, so six times a year. There are then three sub-committees and each Governor goes on at least one of those committees. These committees meet about two weeks before each FGB meeting. The committees are Leadership & Management, Teaching and Learning and Finance & Premises. The chairs of each committee then make up a separate group called the Steering Group (along with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Head Teacher).

The Governors have the responsibility for the overall long term direction of the School. We are like a board of Trustees. Whilst we have a duty to ensure that the day to day running of the School is effective, we are not responsible for the day to day running of the School. That responsibility is with the Head Teacher.

The Governors have to perform the role of 'Critical Friend' to the Head Teacher which is to be supportive, enquiring and constructively critical.

Governors also have the responsibility for the School finances. These are annually audited by the Local Authority.

Within all of this structure there are a lot of other more specific things that the Governors have to do - we have a pay panel, heads performance review panel, admissions panel, a lot of policies to review on a frequent basis. We each have a subject that we are responsible for overseeing and other non-subject areas such as Equal Opportunities, Special Education Needs, Health & Safety etc. To monitor those we carry out visits every now and again to see what is going on in School. We even pop in to see what the School Dinners are like sometimes!

It is important to stress that we are nothing special. Some of the Governors happen to be qualified teachers. Perhaps this encourages them to get involved as a Governor since they understand how schools work? The majority of us, however, don't have particular skills in the education world. We just have a willingness to give up our time to help, support and continually improve the School to the benefit of the children.

It is a very rewarding role and any Governor will be very happy to tell you more about what it involves and what they do.

We all have to follow a Code of Conduct for Governors and individual matters discussed at meetings are confidential but the role isn't a secretive one. The best way to find out more is to ask!

! Situations Vacant !

At the time of writing we currently have two vacancies on the Governing Board; one Foundation Governor and one Co-opted Governor.

We carry out an annual Skills Audit amongst the Governors to identify what skills we might need to assist us in our role as a whole Board. We have a good coverage of most skills but need some strength in depth in a few particular areas – these are:-

Finance

Buildings

Health & Safety

That doesn't mean that if you don't have particular skills in those areas that you wouldn't be a valued addition to the team but those areas are where we would like some additional depth.

The Foundation Governor would have to be proposed by the PCC and would therefore need to be someone who the PCC feel would support the Christian distinctiveness of North Nibley School. The Co-opted Governor role has no criteria other than having the time, energy, enthusiasm and skills to help out.

We would like to have these positions filled by or at the first Full Governing Board meeting of the new school year in September.

Please email Roly Brown on chair@northnibley.gloucs.gov.uk or via the School Office, or speak to a Governor you know for any further details.

A Governor will usually serve a four year term.

Current Roles

The Chair and Vice Chair roles are newly-elected each year at the first meeting of the School year in September. That is also when the make-up of the Committees are decided and those Chairs are elected at the first Committee meetings. The current Chair roles are as follows:-

Chair – Roly Brown

Vice-Chair – Sarah Corston

F&P Chair – Philippa Burrows

L&M Chair – Di Hay

Strategy

It is easy to go from meeting to meeting focussing on important detail but the Strategic Direction of the School is one of the most important responsibilities the Governors have. This year we agreed the School vision having discussed it internally and consulted with the wider School community. We have decided to set some time aside in the new academic year (2015/16) to shape the future strategy of the School. What challenges do we normally face? Can we influence them if we plan ahead? Where should the School be in five years time? What do we need to achieve that? These are the sorts of questions we will ask ourselves so that we can build a strategy for the school.

Parent Questionnaire – Thank you very much to all parents who filled out the questionnaire. We've been struck by how positive the overwhelming majority of responses have been. That isn't to say that we feel that everything is perfect and we don't need to worry about improving the school. The most valuable responses are those where we can see general direction that the parents would like to see the School go in and where we learn what is important to them. Many of the questions related to day to day school issues so the Head Teacher will be dealing with those responses but some specific areas are for the Governors to think about. FONNS did some amazing work with the new spiritual garden and that was recognised which is great. The next identified priority for improvement was the staff room so we have some plans in place to address that. We are also looking at broadband provision and how that will help children's learning.