

Our Vision is to inspire and
celebrate Learning,
Achievement, Faith and Fun!



Summer
2017

NORTH NIBLEY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

As the new Chair of Governors this year I have been finding my feet, much aided by Roly Brown, the outgoing Chair, and all the other governors, who are a most supportive and committed team.

School governors have three main responsibilities: holding the Head Teacher to account, setting the strategic direction of the school and overseeing the good management of the school budget. In practice this translates into working closely with the Head Teacher and his staff, and being involved in many aspects of school life, from drains to admissions. We are in no way involved in decisions re curriculum and teaching methods, but other decisions come thick and fast!

We believe that regular communication with parents and friends of the school is important, so that you know how the governors are working with the school. The termly governor newsletters seem to have been popular, and now at the end of the school year we have an opportunity to give a round-up of our activity this year.

We have held our full quota of Governing Board and committee meetings, with the Head Teacher, an ex-officio governor, present at all these meetings. Here, in summary, are the things we covered:

Contacting Governors

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

The Full Governing Board

This has overall responsibility for ensuring that the governors are fulfilling their obligations, and is accountable for the effective operation of the committees and panels. Central to every FGB meeting is the Head Teacher's report, updating governors on all aspects of the school life.

- At the first meeting of each year we agree with the Head Teacher a number of school improvement priorities; during the year we help monitor these, and at the end of the year we review progress against them
- The governors have to approve the school budget for the forthcoming year, and that has been done
- The biggest decision we have made collectively this year has been to invite a company to set up a before-and-after school club. If the scheme goes ahead it will benefit many working parents, as well as being a feature to attract families to the school in future, always having in mind the importance of keeping pupils numbers at the right level
- We decided to implement a 'governor of the month' system for governor visits

The Learning and Management Committee

This committee has specific responsibility for staff management, development and well-being, together with parent and community communication, and planning for the future needs of the school.

This year the committee has:

- Followed up the 2015-16 parent survey responses e.g. the interest in 'wrap-around' care
- Recruited a teaching assistant and two administrators
- Developed a governor recruitment process, including making it easier for those interested in becoming a governor to find out more and meet us
- Created guidelines on admissions that take account of the school's resources and capacity, and of the desired maximum numbers of pupils per class, but which also allow some flexibility

The Finance and Premises Committee

As its name implies this committee oversees the school's finances, scrutinises its budget, approves new items of expenditure and authorises work in the building and the grounds.

This year the committee has:

- Authorised and overseen various improvements to the school premises including the upgraded playground, improved storage in the main corridor and staff room, corridor redecoration, repair of one of the main chimneys and other minor works, including improvement to the drains.
- Purchased tables and seating for the staffroom, and new benches and tables for outside
- Employed a handyman to carry out a number of small and medium size jobs throughout the school
- Evaluated last year's spending and helped to draw up the new school budget for 17/18, with the aim of making best use of the tight available budget
- Approved the budgets for the appointment of the new administrators

The Teaching & Learning Committee

This committee is responsible for monitoring teaching and learning across the school, taking an active role in the setting and monitoring of progress in the current priorities specified in the school improvement plan.

This year the committee has focussed on:

- Monitoring the progress of new writing initiatives aimed at improving writing across the school
- Monitoring the progress of the school's efforts to further engage parents in their child's education
- Monitoring maths and the impact of the new initiatives [e.g. maths passports]
- Evaluation of the previous Year standards in detail
- Review of academic performance data

The Strategy Group

This is our recently formed group for the governors to discuss ideas in an informal way not possible within the straitjacket of the committee structures. It's an opportunity to suggest and develop new initiatives, and to think of ways we can best underpin improvements in line with our school values.

This year the committee followed up on some of last year's themes, and introduced some new topics:

- Governor effectiveness and improved governance
- Head Teacher workload
- Wrap-around care
- Parental engagement with their own child's learning
- Premises weaknesses, with a focus on the possibility of having a 'break-out' building for small group work
- Consideration of funding sources for the school improvements.
- Review of optimum school size and fluctuating numbers
- Church school distinctiveness
- A better use of governor visits to the school to drive improvements

Governor resignations and appointments.

One Foundation governor was appointed during the year, but had to resign quite soon afterwards because of changed personal circumstances.

A new local authority governor was appointed, Fiona Yarrow, who has useful professional experience for the Premises and Finance Committee.

Two governors come to the end of their current term of office at the end of July, and have decided not to stand for another term. Di Hay has been a governor at the school for 12 years, and been an extremely knowledgeable and constructive part of the governor team. Roland Brown has been a governor for 6 years, two of which were as Chair, and was a great contributor to the development and governance of the Board. The skills and good humour of both of them will be much missed.

One new Foundation Governor is about to be appointed, Anita Fletcher, and we hope to fill the remaining gaps on the Board shortly. Don't be shy to enquire about becoming a governor, and there is information on the web site about the work involved.

Summary

I hope this summary gives a picture of the wide range of work covered this year by the governors, and the decisions we have been involved in. Inevitably there are areas, such as our budget, where we have limited power to improve things, and others, such as monitoring results, that are ongoing year on year. But some specific goals have been achieved this year, and we have a clear idea of where we see the next improvements coming from.

We are very lucky to be governors of such an exceptionally nice school as North Nibley. Our dedicated and skilled Head Teacher, and his equally committed team of staff, work incredibly hard to achieve the best for the school, and that is reflected in the happy atmosphere, good behaviour and many achievements of the children there. We thank them for their dedication.

Sue Bradley-Jones, Chair of Governors

The results of the Parent Survey 2017 can be found on the website under the 'Parents and Visitors' tab on the main menu. We will respond formally in September.