



Your Governors

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Rebecca Surridge (Staff Member)
Paul Batchelor (Head Teacher)

NORTH NIBLEY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REVIEW

Where to start?! Looking back at previous end-of-year Governor newsletters the format doesn't change much. But this year can't quite fit into that template.

It has been a year of two halves: the first half going along nicely, packed with all the school's usual successful variety of activities, both in and out of the classroom; the second half turning into a virtual year, with the school premises falling silent, but the school, like the proverbial swan, still operating at maximum stretch possible, out of sight, but still very much there.

This second half has been hard, hard work. A whole new culture of online teaching and learning had to be developed fast, and the governors salute the head teacher and staff for rising to the occasion with such fantastic energy and commitment. The curriculum had to be abandoned, but many learning resources were made available, personal contact with families was maintained, daily updates and weekly online assemblies were sent out, with Mr B's bafflers to keep us on our toes. We also thank all you families, parents and children alike, for responding so well.

Everything was done to keep the sense of school community alive, but it was a relief – as well as a massive logistical operation - to partially reopen the school at the beginning of June. We hope that nothing happens to upset the plans to reopen the whole school in September. All the staff have much missed the children and face to face teaching. There is a lot of talk at the moment about 'new normals', but I think the school would like to return to the old normals!

So here's a roundup of our governor work:

The Governing Board has:

- held all their full governor meetings (latterly by Zoom), and the usual schedule of committee meetings up to March, with fewer than usual since then
- carried out a reduced programme of governor visits
- attended some training courses
- achieved a full complement of 14 governors on the Board, thanks to recent recruitments.
- as the Admissions authority for the school, made decisions about class sizes, and welcoming 15 new Reception children in September
- as the school's employer, considered the number and deployment of teaching assistants, and other staff engagement, as well as the wellbeing of staff, particularly during the last few months.
- and completed the big project of providing a new classroom, with a grand opening last autumn

The Governor Strategy Meetings, which provide a platform for open discussion surrounding the current 3 years Strategic Plan of governance, were also curtailed by the school closure, but had kick started the year with a detailed analysis of the School Improvement Plan for 2019/2020. Specific elements of the plan were scrutinised to provide an element of direction to Mr Batchelor as Head Teacher.

Our previous assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses led to research and further meetings on the topics of parental engagement and homework, subsequently followed up by the teaching and learning committee

The next topic in the pipeline when meetings resume is cross curricular enrichment.

The Teaching, Learning and Community Committee (TLCC):

From the perspective of the end of this unprecedented and most difficult of school terms, the earlier activities of the TLCC in this academic year seem straightforward and progress has been made across all areas of responsibility. We have also been part of the school's extraordinary efforts to adapt to the circumstances of lockdown, and have continued to scrutinise the school's endeavours to support high standards of teaching and learning for all children equally through this difficult time.

- In line with this academic year's restructuring of the Governor Committees, TLC took on the "communities" element of the former Leadership and Management Committee. This meant that in addition to the previous responsibilities of the Teaching and Learning Committee, the TLC became responsible for monitoring and supporting communication and a fruitful relationship between the school and the larger school community - parents, village, friends of North Nibley, and St. Martin's Church.
- Over five committee meetings, we monitored the school's curriculum to ensure that it provides a broad and balanced education, relevant to the needs of every child, and which provides continuity and progression.
- As well as analysing what could be usefully learned from last year's SATS results, we have throughout the year monitored the progress and attainment of pupils. We have consistently sought evidence of high quality teaching and learning opportunities.
- On behalf of the Governing Body, we have reviewed this year a number of curriculum-related policies including the SEND policy, the EYFS policy, Relationships and Sex Education, ICT and home-school expectations.
- We have helped ensure that the School Improvement Plan responds to the curriculum priorities identified by OFSTED and SIAMS inspections, as well as the school's own self-evaluation.
- Of particular concern this last summer terms, we have consistently challenged the school to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of vulnerable groups of children, including those with special needs.
- Through our minutes, we have tried to communicate the school's achievements and ethos to parents and the wider school community. We have also put a lot of thought and effort into how we can support the communication between parents and the school on curriculum matters, which we all understand to be a key to progress.
- We have reviewed the outcomes of the two Parent Surveys which were running in the spring. These can be found on the school website here: <http://www.northnibley.gloucs.sch.uk/parent-surveys/>
- Above all, we have addressed the data and sought to understand it within the particular context of the school, and have set out to support the Head Teacher and staff in their continuous striving to raise standards.

The Finance and Resources Committee (FRC)

The FRC had its usual meetings until March, but although it has not met since then it has not been inactive in covering important matters.

- The foremost of these is setting the school budget for the forthcoming year, (2020/2021,) which was planned to run with a slight surplus and which the Board approved in May. It is too soon to calculate accurately how the school closure will have affected the current year's budget: there has been extra expenditure as a result on equipment and cleaning, with possibly some savings on energy costs etc, so the net effect on the planned budget for 2019/20 should not be significant
- regular annual activity included monitoring the teachers' pay policy and authorising pay awards, inspection of and repairs to the premises, consideration of new staff appointments and ongoing oversight of school expenditure
- this committee has been responsible for developing and bringing to fruition the project of the new classroom: its successful completion and opening took place in the autumn.
- two new projects are in the pipeline: a substantial upgrade of the school's IT system and a new boiler and upgrade of the heating system. It is hoped to progress the latter before winter sets in.

RAINBOW COMPETITION

The winner of the competition detailed in the last issue will be announced in September. There were so many great entries to look through!

SUMMER BREAK

We wish you all, staff and families, the very best possible summer holidays in the circumstances, and hope they may include a real break away from the constraints of the present situation.

As always, we invite you to contact any of the governors (details on the web site) with queries or comments and remind you that the minutes of our main meetings are on the web site.

Sue Bradley-Jones, Chair, on behalf of the Governors.
 July 11, 2020

