



Governing Body 'Keeping in Touch'

Newsletter 1 - May, 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

We thought it would be helpful to give you an update on the work of the governing body together with an overview of the governors, our background and experiences that have brought us together to form an effective Governing Body. Also, to share with you the priorities we are working in partnership with the school leadership team. This is the first annual newsletter to parents from the Elm Park Primary School's Governing Body and we hope to update you when appropriate.

Who is on the Governing Body?

All our governors are passionate about the school and are focussed on supporting the Headteacher and staff in providing the best educational experience they can for the children at our school. You may have passed the board in the reception area which contains the names and photos of the current governors. They are:

Mrs Carol Bond - Staff Governor

I have been teaching for nearly 15 years. I have been privileged to work at Elm Park for 7 years, first as a teacher and now as Deputy Head Teacher and SENCo. My passions are for the Sciences and I have a degree in Mathematics. I am currently the staff governor and a member of the finance and premises committee.

Mrs Sandra Allen (chair) - Co-opted

As a recently retired South Gloucestershire (SG) Head Teacher I have a wealth of years in the Education sector. I have a proven track record of successfully managing resources and staff to improve educational provision, thereby providing children and teachers with the best environment to achieve their full potential.

I have a passion for maximising progress and attainment for all children and particularly those with Special Educational Needs. I have co-ordinated the provision for children with SEN in my role as Head Teacher and at Local Authority (LA) level as being part of the LA SEN group to improve the provision across the county as well as a member of the panel that reviews requests for Education and Health Care Plans. As an experienced Head Teacher I have also acted as a consultant Head Teacher providing support to schools who require additional leadership capacity and more recently I work as a School Improvement Advisor. I am still passionate about Education and believe I can be part of the team that makes a difference to the social, emotional and educational outcomes of all our children at Elm Park Primary School.

Mr David Drew – parent governor

I am a parent governor and have two daughters at the school one in Year 4 and the other in Year 5. I have primarily an engineering background and following initial training at BAe, eventually operated my own engineering company in the Oil and Gas Industry in both the UK and the Far East. More recently I am a partner in a local construction company, building new houses in and around Bristol. My experiences provide the school with a solid understanding of all matters relating to the premises, school finances and personnel. I chair the Premises and Finance Committee as well as being a member of the Staff and Head Teacher's Performance Management committee.

Mrs Nicola Allaouat – co-opted

I have 3 children (aged 21,19 and 12) all of whom attended Elm Park and I have enjoyed being a Governor for 7 years. I have an MSc in “Work Based Learning Studies (Respiratory Physiology and Physiological Measurement)” and have worked as Sleep Physiologist, both clinically and in research, in the NHS. I sit on the Staffing and Communication Committee as well as the Curriculum and Standards Committee. I have a keen interest in communication and this year, have been involved in the new website, parent consultation meetings, staff wellbeing and hope to hear some views from children and parents soon.

Mrs Karen Anderson (vice chair) – co-opted

I have been part of the Governing Body for just over 3 years. During my time on the Governing Body, I have served on all 3 Committees as well as a short period as Chair of Governors last school year. I am currently vice chair of Governors, Maths Link Governor and Chair of the Staffing and Communications Committee. Elm Park is very important to me and my family and I am driven to do what is very best for the school community – not only have our children attended the school but I have taught at the school and my husband attended Elm Park as a child. Using my previous experience in education, my enthusiasm for Maths and the leadership skills I have gained in my current role, helps me to take a strategic role in the running of the school, acting as a critical friend and ensuring accountability.

Mr David Hollis – co-opted

Skilled in investigating and analysing organisational issues to improve performance. Highly motivated, leads from the front, not afraid to make decisions and follow them through, coordinate events and delegate accordingly. Experienced with diverse groups of personnel, handling complaints and giving sound advice and support. Volunteered as a school governor to 'give back' to society a wealth of knowledge and experience. Experienced in HR and finance, knowledge of facilities management, especially fire and safety, and H&S matters. Basic knowledge of employment Law. Educated to Masters level

Mr Andrew Evans – co-opted

I have been fortunate to have worked in education over the last 20 years, much of that time in London and more recently around Bristol. I have been Headteacher of several primary schools and also a consultant adviser involved in the areas of strategic leadership, school improvement, new school / academy start-ups and school design and build projects.

I arrived at Elm Park in September 2017 and I am delighted to be working in partnership with governors, senior leaders, staff colleagues and parents to provide high quality learning experiences for all our young people.

Mrs Samantha Conway – co-opted

I have been/am a parent of 2 children who have happily gone through Elm Park and have always been committed in ensuring I offer my support to the school ensuring my children experience the best possible life skills and education that they could possibly have. I feel strongly that children need to feel supported, safe and happy to ensure good outcomes for their future development.

Ms Jo Briscoe – LA appointment

My current job role is Teaching and Learning Adviser and CPD Lead for Integra which is the trading arm of South Gloucestershire Council. As a teaching and learning adviser my areas of strength are online safety and computing. I am an accredited online safety mark assessor and an ICT mark assessor. These rely on expertise with quality frameworks for online safety and computing and mean I am able to judge quality of provision in both areas accurately.

As part of my computing role I have previously written whiteboard materials for mathematics for the Primary Strategy and facilitated national Strategic Leadership in ICT training for headteachers for National College. I also completed my Masters in Education with a dissertation on effective training in use of technology.

Currently I am a lead moderator for the local authority for KS1 and KS2 which means I am very familiar with the English curriculum on writing and with maths at KS1.

I have a thorough understanding of the Ofsted handbook and evaluation schedule and can use this knowledge in my work as a governor.

Before joining the local authority team, I was a primary teacher for 9 years.

I can use the skills from my experience in education to inform my work as a governor for Elm Park.

Sarah Harttrup – parent governor

As a mother of one children at Elm Park I have a commitment and interest in the development of the school. My role as a parent governor enables me to understand parents' views and to reflect how matters being discussed affect parents as well as the school.

As an Early Years Coordinator I have experience of working with children of all ages as well as leading a team of professionals. I have a passion for Education and I share the vision and ethos at Elm Park and believe it is a wonderful school to be part of.

What do we do?

Every school is required to have a governing body to oversee its strategic direction - effectively this means working in partnership with the Head Teacher to set the school's aims and objectives for the year ahead, agree policies agree educational targets and review progress against these. This role is often described as acting as a "critical friend" to the Head Teacher. In practice it means firstly acting as a 'sounding board', providing advice and support as appropriate. It also means we ask the Head Teacher many searching questions and are involved collectively in taking policy decisions. In these activities, the governing body respects the position of the Head Teacher as the professional leader of the school and does not play any part in the day-to-day running of the school.

To utilise the strengths of our governors and focus discussions we have three committee areas, **Curriculum & Standards**, **Finance & Premise** and **Staffing and Communication**. The minutes are then submitted to all governors via the Full Governing Body that meets 5 times a year.

1. Curriculum and Educational Standards – we see education and the well-being of pupils at the heart of the school's mission, with the goal of providing the best possible education for all our children;

2. Staffing & Communication – we recognise that staff are key to the school's success and put great emphasis on employing high quality staff;

3. Finance and Premises – this committee is concerned with the stability of the school's finances and the safety of the school buildings. Members of this committee are also looking at improving the building and environment of the school.

Below, are short reports on the activities and achievements of the committees in the last year.

Curriculum and Standards Report by Jo Briscoombe, Chair of Curriculum and Standards Committee

The committee is responsible for monitoring outcomes to ensure that all Elm Park children make the best progress they can whatever their gifts, level of ability and needs. We review and analyse how well Elm Park children are doing compared with national expectations. We receive regular reports from the Head Teacher on the quality of teaching and learning, to identify areas for improvement, and to ensure that any necessary action is taken to maximize outcomes for pupils. We also ensure that annual assessment arrangements comply with statutory requirements.

We work with school staff to look at how the curriculum is taught, evaluated and resourced to ensure that the school is delivering the required subjects. Where necessary we make recommendations to Finance Committee on resources that are needed to meet the needs of the whole curriculum. The curriculum that we focus on includes schemes of work for different subjects. It also covers the wider provision that the school offers such as trips, clubs, visits and visitors to the school as these all contribute to the learning experience of the children.

The curriculum and standards committee have a responsibility for ensuring that the School Development Plan reflects the requirement to raise standards, and to monitor and evaluate the parts of the plan relating to the curriculum and standards. We also review statutory policies that affect the curriculum to ensure that our school is compliant and all policies to ensure that these support continual improvements in learning and the curriculum.

Our committee is made up of people with the appropriate skills to look at curriculum issues including an ex Head Teacher and School Improvement Adviser, ex teachers and an Ofsted inspector

Staffing & Communication Report by Karen Anderson, Chair Staffing & Communication Committee

The Staffing and Communications Committee is made up of at least 3 Governors plus the head or deputy head and cover 4 main areas:

- Recruitment and staffing levels (including procedures for recruitment and statutory/safeguarding requirements) and the process for any senior leadership team appointments

- Pay and performance which includes receiving anonymised mid-term and end of term teacher performance reports, monitoring staff absence, support for newly qualified teachers and staff development and appeal panels for pay disputes and staff wellbeing

- Timely review of staff related policies, including pay policy and teacher appraisal policy

- Communication including promoting the work of the Governing Body, producing and reviewing surveys of the school community and monitoring feedback forms to the school

Finance and Premises Report by David Drew, Chair Finance and Premises Committee

The Premises and Finance committee ensures that what limited funding is ultimately available to the school is maximised for the benefit of the pupils within the school. In addition, the committee is responsible for Health & Safety and the general upkeep of the school infrastructure, and at Elm Park this involves continual negotiation with the local authority to campaign for our fair share of their limited budgets to maintain our school.



The committee also supports the Head Teacher and office staff in monitoring the school's expenditure against yearly targets. The committee members visit the school regularly, ensuring that any new issues around the site are identified and where possible funding allocated. Responsible to the Full Governing Body for all the school's financial decisions, the committee is key to the effective management of the school.

Changes and Challenges in the Year Ahead

To conclude this report, it seems appropriate to highlight the major challenges ahead, and where the Governing Body will need to play its part in supporting the new Head Teacher in the direction of the school. As part of the school's journey to remain as a good school with aspirations to become an outstanding one our main focus this year is to increase the attainment and progress of all children particularly in the areas of Mathematics and Phonics. To do this Governors, have regular updates on teaching methods & quality of teaching, progress of children and in-service training. Our role is to ask probing questions and give meaningful support to the Head Teacher as well as approve appropriate funding expenditure should there be a need. It is the Governors and school leadership team aim that our attainment this July is in line with National figures in all areas of the curriculum at the end of Key Stage 1 & 2 and Year 1 phonics. Another key priority is to ensure that the school has a strong senior/leadership team with a team of permanent staff providing good to outstanding practice. The staffing and communication sub-committee are currently recruiting to ensure that we achieve this goal. As soon as appointments are made they will be communicated to you via the regular school's Newsletter. The governors are committed to ensuring that the children at Elm Park have the best possible outcomes socially, emotionally and academic in a safe, stimulating and motivating environment.

