



Governors Newsletter – Summer 2017

OFSTED

We are a good school with outstanding features, it is official. The report from OFSTED came just too late to be included in the last newsletter. It was a whirlwind couple of days with our inspector, Jen Southall. There was not an area of the school that went unchallenged. Four governors came together to answer questions from early years curriculum and assessment to on-line safety policy to the long-term strategy for 6th form development and all points in between. The report contained three observations on governance:-

1. Governors bring a high level of skill and professional expertise to support the school. They have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's work and share leaders' high aspirations.
2. Governors closely monitor finance to ensure that the financial stability of the school continues. For example, they have a detailed understanding of how pupil premium funding is spent and the positive impact it is having on the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
3. Governors understand the wealth of information leaders present to them and use it to inform school development plans. Governors challenge leaders and hold them to account for the quality of education and care provided. However, records of their meetings do not clearly demonstrate how the impact of their challenge is effectively driving forward improvements and further raising pupil outcomes.

A good report but there is always more work to be done. We have reviewed the way notes are taken and how governor's challenges are carried through from one meeting to the next. We are pleased to say that the work done by all our pupils, staff, leaders and governors over the past three years was recognised in the full report.

Leadership Structure

Governors have been looking closely at the leadership structure going forward for the next three years. We have agreed to appoint a second Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) to work alongside Sally Cregan (Teaching & Learning), when we welcome back Sarah Pickering to resume her role as Headteacher in September. The Pastoral role is one that concentrates on Safeguarding. Since the decision was made, the position has been advertised nationally and a day of interviews undertaken. However, after much debate, it was decided not to appoint any of the shortlisted applicants on the day. This is such a vital role within the leadership team, concentrating as it does on our most vulnerable pupils; we are determined to make sure we get it absolutely right.

I would like to take this opportunity to say good bye and thank you to Clive Padgett. He has worked so hard for us over the past 10 months, dealing with all the things a Headteacher has to negotiate with such aplomb.

It is not just at the very top that we will be seeing leadership changes over the next year. We have plans to ensure that leadership is devolved down across the school in the coming months. The aim is that every member of staff will be given responsibility for a particular task or area within the school.

School Development Plan

Following our OFSTED report we now need to refocus on what will take the school from 'Good' to 'Outstanding'. Clive Padgett led two afterschool meetings where governors and staff came together to brainstorm ideas for a new Development Plan. We looked at four key areas for development and working together came up with a flurry of post it notes. These represented the bare bones of our ideas. Over the summer these ideas will be refined and used to construct a succinct plan, which will form the structure for change and improvement over the coming months. The plan will be published on the website once it is available.

Academisation Working Group

The governing body is mindful that although academisation is not the hot political topic that it once was it has not gone away. To ensure that Mill Water does not get overtaken by events in the future we have opted to form a working group to look again at this subject. We are in the fortunate situation now where we can take our time to access all the options available to us. Martin Callaghan has written two documents to start a project plan for the future. A small group of governors and the Headteacher have formed a working group to look in detail at options.

Governor Changes

This term has seen some changes to our personnel. Anne Wintercran, who joined us in the Spring Term, took an offer of redundancy from Bicton College and felt that it was no longer practical for her to act as a governor. Sarah Clarke stood down as the staff governor having contributed three years of service to the governing body. Simon Winward will replace Sarah as the Staff Governor in September and we will also be joined by Kayleigh Price as a Foundation Governor.

Philippa Charlton has stepped down as Clerk to Governors after a year, as she has left the school to take up a teaching post with Exeter College. She will be replaced by Bobbie Potter who is switching roles from that of Foundation Governor to Clerk after six years of service.

We are still actively looking for people from the local community to become governors for Mill Water. If you know anyone who might be interested in joining us please do ask them to get in touch. Please telephone the school on 01395 56889 and ask to speak to Bobbie Potter.