



OVERSTONE COMBINED SCHOOL

GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER November 2016

Welcome to the regular newsletter produced by the Governors at Overstone. This is designed to provide parents and carers with information about our work and current priorities.

Governing Body membership

At our first meeting of the school year, we said goodbye to Mrs Sophie Law who joined the Governing Body as a parent governor in 2012. We are grateful to Sophie for her hard work and commitment to the school, particularly in her role as Equalities and Diversity Governor and as a member of the Communications and Marketing Committee. Mr Dave Varey has moved from being a Partnership Governor to an Associate Member of the Governing Body. Dave has been a governor for a significant number of years (many of these as Chair) and has made an incredible contribution to the school, especially in the areas of finance and buildings. We are delighted that he retains an involvement with the Governing Body.

We currently have a vacancy for a Parent Governor and also for a Partnership Governor; a letter will be sent out shortly to all parents and carers inviting nominations for the role of Parent Governor. We will be contacting relevant organisations with a view to appointing a new Partnership Governor. Details of the current membership are available on the school website:

<http://www.overstone-wing.bucks.sch.uk/website/governors>

School Development Plan 2016-17

The School Development Plan for 2016-17 has been drawn up over a number of months. Developing and improving the school is a constant process, but the creation of this particular School Development Plan began with a meeting between staff and governors in February. This reviewed progress towards the objectives set for 2015-16 and generated ideas for additional future improvement. The Headteacher leads the development process, working closely with school staff and governors. Feedback from the report of the Ofsted inspection carried out in May has been incorporated into the school's plans.

The key areas for 2016-17 are:

Area 1: To further embed assessment without levels, including assessment of non-core subjects, ensuring consistency with the yearly expectations to ensure all groups, including disadvantaged pupils, make rapid and sustained progress

Area 2: To further embed the new curriculum so it promotes strong achievement in all subjects

Area 3: To embed growth mindset culture across the school community

Overstone has worked with St Michael's, High Ash and the Three Schools (Swanbourne, Mursley and Drayton Parslow) to draw up Network Learning Community Action Plans which cover Areas 1 and 3. These plans enable the schools to share expertise and resources to make progress on shared objectives.

Curriculum Committee takes the lead in monitoring the school's progress on school development while reports are also made to each meeting of the full Governing Body.

Health and Safety

Part of the remit of the Governing Body's Finance and General Purposes Committee is to oversee the school's policies on health and safety. We have a designated link governor to monitor health and safety performance, Mr Mark Watson, who liaises closely with the Headteacher. The Governing Body reviews the school's Health and Safety policy annually, with the most recent version being approved at its meeting on 26 September. This policy states that the Governing Body's overall objective is to provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment for our staff and pupils and others with whom we work.

Bucks County Council carried out a Health and Safety audit of the school in October and we were very pleased that the school's score for compliance was classed as Excellent (grade A). The audit covered a wide range of areas including fire and emergency arrangements, risk assessments, first aid, security and supporting pupils with medical conditions.

Home School Agreement

A strong partnership between school and home is crucial in ensuring that your child makes progress. When your child first joins Overstone, you are asked to sign a home-school agreement in which both the school and you as the child's parent/carer make various commitments. Some schools ask parents/carers to sign such an agreement every year in order to reinforce the continuing importance of its content. We don't ask you to do this, but we must emphasise the importance of the home-school agreement throughout your child's time at Overstone. Please contact the School Office if you would like another copy of the agreement.

What else has the Governing Body been doing recently?

Governor visits: It is important that Governors visit the school regularly in order for the Governing Body to carry out its monitoring and evaluation work effectively. Topics for Governor visits this term include:

- the role of the Governing Body in the school's processes for proposing, approving and monitoring educational visits
- safeguarding procedures
- impact of Sports Premium funding

As always, Governors have presented reports on their visits to the Governing Body and any necessary follow-up action has been identified.

Governing Body Self-Evaluation Framework: We are continuing to work through the Bucks Learning Trust's updated Governing Body Self-Evaluation Framework, following on from our cycle of activity in 2013-15. A small group of governors presented recommendations on Development, Recruitment and Succession Planning to the Governing Body at its meeting on 4 July. These included suggestions to improve induction of new governors. The Governing Body agreed to continue its annual skills audit, which had proved valuable in identifying training needs and ascertaining any gaps in expertise. The Governing Body meeting on 5 December will consider a self-evaluation of the contribution of Governors to monitoring Quality of Teaching.

Feedback

We hope that you have found this interesting. Do let us have any questions or comments via the school office or the school e-mail address (admin@overstone-wing.bucks.sch.uk).