



## OVERSTONE COMBINED SCHOOL

### GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER January 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.

#### Changes to membership of the Governing Body

The new term brings some changes to the composition of the Governing Body, as we say goodbye to Mr Robert Bridgen and Mrs Bev Reekes. Robert has completed his term as a parent governor. We are grateful to him for his hard work and commitment to the school, particularly on eco-schools and as a member of the Communications and Marketing Committee. Bev has served the school as a governor for 12 years, during which time she has made a huge and varied contribution. Bev was Overstone's first School Travel Plan co-ordinator and was instrumental in beginning so many of the initiatives that are still enjoyed by current pupils, such as the healthy breakfasts. She also played an important role on the Governing Body as the Child Protection Governor for many years and as a source of sound advice on the Finance Committee. We thank them both for their invaluable support.

Following an election at the end of last term, we are pleased to welcome Mr Stephen Gates to the Governing Body as a new parent governor. We will also be joined by Ms Michaela Gardner who becomes a new co-opted governor. The Governing Body was re-constituted in March 2015 in line with the School Governance Constitution Regulations 2012, which has led to fewer governors being assigned to specific categories of membership. The current membership of the Governing Body is now as follows:

| Name  | Category                         |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Mr Andy Ashton                              | Co-opted Governor                |
| Mrs Valerie Benfield                        | Partnership Governor             |
| Mrs Rachel Branton                          | Parent Governor                  |
| Ms Caroline Davies                          | Co-opted Governor                |
| Mr Jamie Eglese                             | Local Authority Governor         |
| Mrs Naima France                            | Staff Governor; Headteacher      |
| Ms Michaela Gardner                         | Co-opted Governor                |
| Mr Stephen Gates                            | Parent Governor                  |
| Mrs Sophie Law                              | Co-opted Governor                |
| Mr Mat McArthur                             | Staff Governor                   |
| Mrs Michelle Sutton                         | Co-opted Governor; Chair         |
| Mr Dave Varey                               | Partnership Governor; Vice-Chair |
| Mr Mark Watson                              | Co-opted Governor                |
| Clerk to the Governing Body: Mrs Sue Sawyer |                                  |

## **Attendance**

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance by the school's pupils. This is undertaken by the Curriculum Committee, one of whose terms of reference is to "monitor attendance and develop robust and supportive processes to improve attendance and support those missing out on education". The Department for Education published research in 2015 which showed a link between attendance and achievement. Some of the data was taken from primary school level and this showed that pupils missing up to just 14 days of school in Key Stage 2 were a quarter less likely to achieve level 5 or above in reading, writing or maths tests than those with no absence. Of course we understand that sometimes absence is inevitable due to ill-health. However persistent absenteeism does affect achievement, and our aim is to help all children reach the best outcomes possible for them. The good news is that overall attendance at Overstone is increasing; attendance was 96.3% in the Autumn Term 2015. The Governing Body is strongly supportive of the school's efforts to improve this further.

## **Assessment without levels**

In order to fulfil our responsibility for evaluating pupil progress and attainment, Governors (like parents) have been getting to grips with the system of assessment without levels. Curriculum Committee has moved towards a schedule in which it has a policy meeting and a data review meeting each term. The data review meeting for the Autumn Term was held in December, and senior staff presented data for EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Governors were able to ask questions about the implications of the data. Overstone has introduced a termly assessment report to parents which is an important way to share information about progress during the year. The Governing Body is very grateful to the teachers for all their hard work in collating and presenting the data; it is much appreciated and very helpful.

## **Updated complaints procedure**

The school's complaints procedure was updated and approved by the Governing Body last term. The updated version is available in the Policies section of the school website. The majority of concerns can be resolved informally and you are encouraged to speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance. Occasionally it is not possible to resolve an issue in this way, and next steps are set out clearly in the complaints procedure. Please speak, or write, directly to someone at the school at your earliest convenience, rather than using any other means. It is not appropriate to publicise any concerns you may have on social networking sites.

## **What else has the Governing Body been doing so far this school year?**

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 last term included:

- to accompany a learning walk to observe class-based teaching of Maths in Key Stage 2
  - to attend an assembly in which the School Council presented findings from the pupil survey
- As always, Governors have presented reports on their visits to the Governing Body and any necessary follow-up action has been identified. Plans are being made for visits during the Spring Term.

Governing Body Self-Evaluation Framework: The Bucks Learning Trust has updated its Governing Body Self-Evaluation Framework to match the new Common Inspection Framework introduced by OFSTED in September 2015. The aim is to assist governing bodies in considering whether they make the best possible contribution to the effectiveness of their school for the benefit of all pupils. Our Governing Body has agreed a new schedule of self-evaluation to work through this updated framework, following on from our cycle of activity in 2013-15. Work began with a review of Behaviour and Safety by a small group of governors which presented recommendations to the Governing Body on 30 November. The next review will be of Leadership and Management; the Governing Body will consider outcomes at its meeting on 29 February.

Extension of link governor roles: most Overstone governors act as “link governors”. A link governor is a governor appointed by the Governing Body to act as the link or liaison between the Governing Body and a specific subject, curriculum area or aspect of the work of the school. We already had link governors covering literacy, numeracy and PSHCE, but last term we agreed to appoint designated governors for each subject area. So far we have appointed links for Science and Geography/History, and will be looking to add more as 2016 progresses.

Staff questionnaire: parents and children have both been surveyed during 2015, and now it is time to carry out the biennial staff survey. This is organised by the Chair of Governors. Questionnaires will be distributed to all staff later this month and Staffing Committee will be reviewing outcomes.

## **Feedback**

We hope that you have found this interesting. The next Governors' newsletter will be issued around Easter. Do let us have any feedback via the school office or the school e-mail address ([admin@overstone-wing.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:admin@overstone-wing.bucks.sch.uk)).

We send our best wishes to all the Overstone community for a happy and successful New Year.