



OVERSTONE COMBINED SCHOOL

GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER June 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.

OFSTED inspection

We are awaiting the final report of the inspection team that visited Overstone on 17-18 May and will make this available to parents and carers as soon as possible. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the Parent View survey and to those parents who spoke to the inspectors.

Educational Excellence Everywhere: the Governing Body's response

In March the Government published a White Paper on "Educational Excellence Everywhere" which contained proposals for far-reaching reforms. This stated that by the end of 2020, all schools would be academies or in the process of becoming academies and, by the end of 2022, local authorities would no longer maintain schools. The plan to compel all schools to become academies has since been abandoned but schools are still being encouraged to move towards academy status. The Governing Body's Finance Committee has been monitoring this situation for some time now and regularly assesses whether it would benefit Overstone to move towards becoming an academy. As a foundation school, Overstone already has more freedom of action than many maintained schools. The school already works closely and effectively with St Michael's and High Ash as a Network Learning Community. The Governing Body does not currently consider that any more would be gained by converting to become an academy but this will continue to be monitored by Finance Committee. We would welcome any comments from parents and carers on this subject; these may be sent to the e-mail address at the end of the newsletter.

Engaging with parents and carers

One of the objectives of the Governing Body's Communications and Marketing Committee is to develop further two-way communication with parents and carers. For the first time, a number of governors were present at the parent consultation evenings in February with a dual purpose of talking to parents and carers and also providing refreshments. Parents/carers were asked to add a comment to our "positive comments board" and governors and staff were delighted to read these. Comments included:

- *Very pleased with school. Forest School is amazing*
- *Fantastic school - lots of opportunities for kids and great teaching / caring environment*
- *Very positive, a school based on individualities and each and every child*
- *Teachers are very supportive of a child's learning and help them to show the best of themselves*
- *The Early Years teachers are really caring and in tune with their students*
- *Love all of the after school activities available to the children*
- *Very impressed with all aspects of the school and children are all enjoying their time here. Thank you!*
- *Fantastic teachers. Great support!*

Parents and carers also had the opportunity to tell us what they think about the school in the annual survey earlier this year. A separate letter will be sent out shortly with information about the outcomes of the survey and follow-up action.

Governors will be present at the school's Open Evening and Community Information Fair on Thursday 23 June between 6.00pm – 7.30pm and look forward to meeting parents and carers there.

School Development Plan 2016-17

Developing and improving the school is a constant process. At this time of year, Governors are working closely with the Headteacher and school staff to draw up the School Development Plan for the next school year. Plans to take forward specific objectives are being developed in conjunction with St Michael's and High Ash. The School Development Plan will be considered by the Governing Body at its next meeting in July. Further information will be included in the next newsletter.

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 last term included:

- to update on current developments in the teaching of English at the school
- to understand PSHE provision and any challenges across the school

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

Whole Governing Body training: Overstone is committed to developing and maintaining the skills and knowledge of its Governing Body. It purchases a package of support from the Bucks Learning Trust which includes an annual training session for the whole Governing Body. Our chosen topic this year was provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities. We are fortunate in being able to share training sessions with the Governing Bodies at St Michael's and High Ash which gives us access to a wider range of opportunities than many schools. The Governing Body of Whitchurch Combined School has also invited us to share a forthcoming training session on safeguarding and a number of our Governors will be refreshing their knowledge of an essential subject in this way.

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 Leadership and Management to the Governing Body at its meeting on 29 February. These included:

- to review the scheduling of meetings of the full Governing Body for the school year 2016-17 to ensure that governors are able to review data in a timely manner
- Sports Governor to undertake annual review of impact of PE and Sport Premium funding and to report to the Governing Body
- to ensure all governors understand the school's performance management policy and process for making decisions about teachers' salary progression

The Governing Body meeting on 9 May then considered a review of the contribution of Governors to monitoring Outcomes for Pupils.

Feedback

We hope that you have found this interesting. We will issue a final Governors' newsletter of the year towards the end of the Summer Term. Do let us have any feedback via the school office or the school e-mail address (admin@overstone-wing.bucks.sch.uk).