BOXMOOR PRIMARY

GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the third edition of the Boxmoor School Governors' Newsletter. Each term we will report on what we have been up to and what our plans are for the future.

The governing body has a long list of hoops it has to jump through for its stakeholders, the latest being to prevent radicalisation. With the county council disappearing from education provision, a lot now has to be done without their assistance.

There are entire departments that have disappeared; the man who used to help with energy management, gone; the lady who used to audit our financial position annually, gone. In the recent autumn statement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared an end to county council involvement in schools by the end of the decade thereby saving £900m annually. Since the work still has to be done, presumably that means schools will now end up doing an extra £900m of work within the same budget.

This month I am pleased to celebrate my second anniversary of joining Boxmoor as a governor. Much of that time has been spent sorting out the processes surrounding how governance works at the school: committee structures, budget setting procedures, terms of reference, plans, meeting formats, governor link roles and policy reviews. I am pleased to say that we are there now. Our governing body is now complete, and I am particularly pleased to see so many individuals from outside the immediate school community who want to help us. We are very lucky to have them and the skills they bring. I am indeed very proud of all the members of the governing body, they give their time freely to the school without any remuneration and often without any acknowledgement of the work they do. It is easy to forget how recently most joined and how they are still growing into the role. I will repeat here what OFSTED said back in April.

‘Governors support the headteacher’s ambitions and continually challenge leaders to improve pupil performance. Their sharp understanding of assessment data enables them to ask incisive questions and check the impact of spending decisions, such as the pupil premium. This has led to the priority this year to ensure that eligible pupils make swifter progress so that more reach higher levels. Governors know teaching is good and improving, and aware how this is being achieved. They are rigorous in ensuring that the headteacher uses salary awards to reward only good and better teaching’.

Not bad eh!

The autumn term for the governing body is about kicking off all the plans we approved in the summer term, ensuring that the priorities within the School Development Plan (SDP) are actually being carried out. It’s also about making sure that the staff objectives (including the head teacher’s) are set and aligned with those priorities. To this end, we received a report from Mrs. Campos at the December Full Governing Body meeting; we believe those plans are in motion and in our view, on track.
It is amazing that we are already one third of the way through the academic year. The remainder of the year I believe will be dominated by two subjects:

**FINANCE**

EARLY IN THE TERM ANNIE SNELL AND I attended a county wide conference on the future of school budgets where Herts. county council finally faced up to the reality of school budgets being frozen against a background of rising costs. For Boxmoor this means a real-term cut in our budget annually of 2.6% next year (£24K) and 6% by the end of the decade (£60K). We have been aware of this for a while and as a consequence carry a larger than normal contingency fund, have been actively reducing costs in the non-staff elements of the budget and controlling staff costs through the rigorous implementation of pay progression only against strict appraisal objectives.

**ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS**

AS I WRITE, THE DEPARTMENT FOR Education comparison tables for the 2015 SAT results are released. These are the exams our previous year 6 took in the summer term. For those who have not seen them here are the comparisons for Hemel Hempstead schools.

**KS2 SATS FOR HEMEL HEMPSTEAD SCHOOLS**

It is great once again to see Boxmoor topping the list for those children who achieve at least a level 4 in all of the maths, reading and writing tests - level 4 being ‘ready for secondary school’. While still clearly above national and county averages we don’t do quite as well this year in the number of children achieving levels 5 and 6. This we knew, it’s what OFSTED picked up, and why it’s our first priority in this year’s SDP. This year, ‘monitoring progress’ of the children will take over from ‘monitoring attainment’. After 20 years of getting used to levels we are now entering a world of attainment without levels. Nobody nationally is clear how this will work in practice. This we see as a priority for the ‘Improvement’ committee in the spring term.

**FINALLY, WEREN’T THE SCHOOL nativity plays just amazing and a real testament to how good our children really are? They certainly brought a smile to my face and yes I admit a little tear in the year 1 and 2 performance. They certainly kicked off the Christmas period.**

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mrs. Campos, her senior leadership team, the staff, governors, parents and of course the children at Boxmoor for their hard work this term. Merry Christmas all, and a Happy New Year.

John Eardley, Chair of Governors
PLANNED ACTIVITIES
In the spring term, the Governing Body plans to:

- Complete a review of our Financial manual
- Start consultation process into the 2016/17 school budget and school development plan.
- Receive subject reports – maths and science
- Carry out a review of governor skills and competences
- Review attainment data for both Key stage 1 and 2 (years 2 and 6)
- Carry out in-house training on provision of the new pupil assessment regime.
- Carry out a parents survey
- Look at school meal provision
- Deliver documentation to County relating to ‘Financial Values in Schools’
- Complete the school’s ‘Self Evaluation’
- Approve the final 2015/16 accounts.
- Produce the draft 2016/17 budget

RECENT ACTIVITIES
In the autumn term, the Governing Body:

- Reviewed attendance data
- Reviewed attainment data for EYFS (Nursery and Reception) and Key stage 1 (year 2).
- Reviewed our School Development priorities
- Received a subject report – English
- Carried out a pupil voice exercise on provision of Arts within the school
- The whole governing body attended an ‘Effective school visits’ course.
- Approved monthly budget forecasts
- Approved annual teaching staff pay progression awards
- Carried out health and safety walk-arounds
- Carried out a staff survey
- Reviewed pupil and sports premium expenditure and plans
- Performed the head teacher’s annual appraisal
- Received reports on the use of iPADS within year 6
- Issued an ‘Equalities information and objectives statement’
- Reviewed website content against statutory requirements
- Initiated the production of an ‘Accessibility plan’ for disabled pupils
- Revised our grounds maintenance and external IT network contracts and initiated a review of all school contracts.
- Undertook training on preventing radicalisation in schools.
- Benchmarked school income and expenditure against other similar local and regional schools.
- Performed a review of governor training.
THE GOVERNERS

NURSERY NURSE DONNA LEWIS left the governing body this term after eight years in the position of staff governor. Our thanks go to Donna for her dedicated service to the school over many years. Katherine Ross who was formerly a co-opted governor was elected by the staff to replace Donna.

We welcome Lisa Ward and Rachel Burrage to the governing body as co-opted governors and look forward to working with them. These appointments now complete the membership of the body.

Rachel works for the NSPCC and has a keen interest in working with children. She works in primary schools across the county delivering a safeguarding service. She has always had an interest in education and is keen to give something back to the community at a strategic level in her role as a school governor. Rachel is the link governor for the arts area of the school development plan.

Lisa lives in Boxmoor with her husband and 2 young daughters. She is a chartered energy manager and has been a part of the ‘Resources Committee’ since December 2015.

The governing body currently comprises:

- Vicky Campos – Head teacher
- Dave Edwards – Deputy head
- John Eardley – Chair
- Jane Read – Vice chair
- Sandrine Florand – Parent Governor (Chair of Improvement committee)
- Richard Evans - Parent Governor
- Katherine Ross - Staff Governor
- Annie Snell - Associate Governor
- Joey Farnell - Co-opted Governor (Chair of Resources Committee)
- Richard Edis - Co-opted Governor
- Rhian Young - Co-opted Governor
- Lisa Ward - Co-opted Governor
- Rachel Burrage - Co-opted Governor

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, visit our Governors page on the school website:

www.boxmoor.herts.sch.uk/topic/governors

Governors' photos can be also found in the school entrance hall.

The Governing Body is committed to ensuring that improvements are being implemented and are starting to deliver immediate results. If you want to contact the Governors in confidence to raise any issue, then please contact us by letter via the school office.