Welcome to the fourth 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 GOVERNMENT FINALLY released its long awaited white paper on the future of schools. If enacted, it will have profound long-term implications for the school and its governance. It states that the school must become an academy free from Hertfordshire county council control by 2022 and commit to doing so no later than May 2020.

In terms of governance, the paper states that the future lies in multi-academy trusts with an increasing use of professionals holding the head to account and with paid trustees in key positions. Governing bodies are to be skills based and the requirement to have parent governors will be removed.

This week, Herts County Council circulated a letter acknowledging that this will have a significant impact on schools and stating that they will be working with schools, the Primary Heads Forum, and Herts for Learning (our governance partner) to find a ‘joint way forward’.

The governing body acknowledges the white paper but we are not going to rush into becoming an academy. We will watch and see what happens and become more informed about the academy process.

THE SPRING TERM FOR THE governing body is a time for watching children’s progress and the financial numbers. In the simplest terms, the three functions of a governing body are Strategy, Holding the school to account and Financial probity, and the spring term is the time to hold the school to account. Here are two areas of note:

- Our school improvement partner visited just before Easter to perform an annual audit (JARV). The verdict was that in two of the five OFSTED categories – Behaviour, development and welfare, and Early years – we would now probably be judged ‘outstanding’ in an inspection; the remaining categories being judged as ‘solid good’ with elements of ‘outstanding’.

- Mrs Campos reports to the school governing body each term on progress against the four priorities set out in the School Development Plan. Here is the current status of each:
Priority 1 - To ensure that all teachers have consistently high expectations of the pupils, use methods that challenge them and set work that is hard enough.

Priority 2 - To increase the progress of all pupils in writing by ensuring that they write in depth in a wide range of styles for different audiences and practise their skills across subjects.

Priority 3 - To improve the quality of the Arts across the school.
To be awarded explore level of the Arts Award.
To work towards the Arts Mark for schools

Priority 4 - To be awarded the Early Years Quality Mark.

Here is the update on attainment and finance highlighted as issues in the previous newsletter.

Finance

While the final accounts are not yet in, it would appear that we will be carrying a larger than expected level of cash into the 2016/17 financial year (our contingency). This is due to an increase in the nursery roll, additional special needs funding (many thanks to our SENDCo, Mrs Argiolas) and a general underspend. We will publish the financial numbers for the year on the website as soon as they are available.

After the Easter holidays we will be setting the budget for 2016/17. We feel the school is currently in a good place regarding finances and we will be looking to reduce our levels of contingency next year giving the school scope for additional expenditure where justified.

To this end the governing body is currently looking at priorities and seeking bids from staff and pupils for additional resources.

Attainment and Progress

During this term the Interim Teacher Assessment Framework was published by the Department for Education setting out national targets for expected levels of attainment against the new national curriculum for KS1 and KS2.

The Improvement committee regularly looks at attainment and progress against targets. Given that the framework is interim, we are not sure what the end of Key Stage 2 results will look like but we are confident that our children are on track to reach or exceed age related expectations and that, in general, attainment levels will exceed both County and National levels.

Finally, on becoming Chair I said that I wanted to run the school efficiently and so make space for the more interesting things in life. It was good, therefore, to meet up with parents, governors, staff and outside agencies last month to plan our push towards the Arts Mark award next year. It is lovely to be able to dedicate additional resources to the Arts, and who, a year ago, would have thought we would have had our very own orchestra!

That just leaves me to thank, as always, Mrs. Campos, her senior leadership team, the staff, governors, parents and, of course, the children for making Boxmoor even more brilliant this term.

John Eardley, Chair of Governors
RECENT ACTIVITIES

In the spring term, the Governing Body:

- Completed a review of our Financial manual
- Started a consultation process into the 2016/17 school budget and school development plan
- Received subject reports in maths and science
- Carried out a review of governor skills and competences
- Reviewed progress and attainment data for both Key Stage 1 and 2 (Years 2 and 6)
- Reviewed progress and attainment data for Years 1 and 3
- Attended in-house data training on the new assessment tracking system
- Looked at school meal provision
- Reviewed PSHE provision including carrying out a pupil voice exercise
- Delivered documentation to County relating to Financial Values in Schools
- Completed the school’s Self Evaluation
- Published an Accessibility Plan for disabled pupils
- Benchmarked school financial efficiency against similar local and national schools.
- Rolled out a new online platform for the storage of all governing body documents
- Approved monthly budget forecasts
- Performed the head’s interim review of objectives
- Ran creative writing workshops for Year 6
- Attended training courses on:
  - The New Behaviour Agenda
  - Assessment for Learning
  - RAMAAS training
  - Safeguarding children
  - Exclusions
  - Handling Complaints Effectively
  - In-house data training
- Visited the school as links: SEND, Safeguarding, Literacy, PSHE, school lunches, the Arts, energy, health and safety
- Reviewed Pupil Premium data

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

In the summer term, the Governing Body will:

- Approve the final 2015/16 accounts
- Produce the 2016/17 budget
- Carry out a parents survey
- Carry out a health and safety walk-around of KS2
- Update pupil and sports premium expenditure and plans on the website
- Carry out an energy survey
- Review EYFS provision
- Receive various subject reports
- Review Gifted and Talented provision
- Receive a report from the SEND co-ordinator
- Examine Year 4 and 5 attainment and progress data
- Look at curriculum plans for next year
- Review the school pay policy and staff pay
- Review staff attendance
- Produce terms of references for both committees and the governing body
- Produce a meeting schedule for the next academic year
- Receive reports from the PTA and school council
- Continue with creative writing workshops for Year 6
THE GOVERNORS

Parent Governor Richard Evans left the governing body this term. Our thanks go to Richard for his services to the school.

Parent governors play an important part in the running of the school so if you feel able to contribute please contact the school office.

Our two new co-opted governors, Lisa Ward and Rachel Burrage, have been throwing themselves into school life and it’s been a pleasure to work with them.

Rachel has been looking at delivery of our Physical Social Health and Economics (PSHE) curriculum with school lead Katherine Ross and as link governor for the Arts has been helping to push along the Arts Mark accreditation.

Lisa has taken on the role of EYFS (nursery and reception) link governor and has been working with Mrs Campos on managing school energy requirements. Lisa also starred in the Governor’s team cruelly beaten into a valiant second place in the PTA quiz!

Your current Governing Body comprises:

• Vicky Campos – Head teacher
• Dave Edwards – Deputy head and Associate Governor
• John Eardley – LA Governor and Chair
• Jane Read – Parent Governor and Vice-chair
• Sandrine Florand – Parent Governor (Chair of Improvement committee)
• 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 constantly implemented and are delivering 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 or email governors@boxmoor.herts.sch.uk