Governor Update – Spring 2019

Easter is close, and I hope your children have enjoyed the run-up to Easter at school. I’m sure they enjoyed the PTA Easter Egg hunt, and I’ve been impressed by the magnificent collection of Easter gardens and eggs that the children have created in school. Thanks to all who have helped the children with those.

Turning to Governor activities, Spring is the end of the school’s financial year so one of our most important items of business this term is next year’s budget, which needs to be sent to County. You’ll be aware that school budgets are tight – some appearing to show very severe difficulties - so budgeting is challenging. Our Business Manager and the school Senior Leadership Team spend many days every year to plan a balanced budget, often contending with changes in expected income as the funding picture changes through the year. After some ups and downs in expected funding, though, we were pleased to see that the planned budget remains close to break-even again this year. Looking further forward is still difficult, but although the funding picture does not look as if it will improve soon, we do not currently see cause for serious concern; as ever, though, the school will need to keep a close eye on future spend.

Two other substantial items of business have occupied Governors this term. First, as you know, the school has decided to change the provision for the Before and After Care Clubs. At present, it is provided by independent contractors using school facilities; from September 2019, the school will be managing this directly. Governors have been kept informed of plans for this change and we expect that it will result in improved provision as time goes on. In particular, the Care Club will be under direct supervision of school staff which will make it easier to be flexible with the space used, simpler to manage safety and security and to plan and support a range of after-school activities.

A second important item is consultation with parents. We always encourage parents to communicate with the school directly when there is a problem of any kind, and we greatly appreciate the way so many parents attend parents’ evenings and parent meetings for particular topics. However, we also like to understand how well parents think the school is doing on a range of important issues; behaviour, teaching, personal development, school leadership and so on. To help with that, we will be running an online survey next term. We currently expect to send the survey link to parents primarily by email, so if you have changed
email address recently this would be a good time to update your contact details. We will greatly appreciate your comments when the survey is announced, so do please look out for that.

Finally, it’s worth recalling the terrific range of events and activities organised this term. The calendar shows around fifty different special events and activities across the school, including visits, camps, Easter activities and many more, just this term. That adds up to a huge effort from all of you, helping your children, from the children participating, and from the administrative and teaching staff who make it all possible. Our thanks to everybody who has helped to make the term so much fun for all our children.

I wish you all a happy Easter break,

Yours sincerely,

Dr S Ellison
Chair of Governors
St Nicholas Church of England School