

# Axbridge Church of England First School Academy

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## Axbridge Academy Governor Newsletter – July 2019

Welcome to the first Axbridge First School Governor newsletter.

The governing body is made up of a team of volunteers from a variety of different backgrounds who are working hard to help the school provide the best possible education for our children. We appreciate that often the work of governors goes ‘unseen’, and we would really like to change that! Hopefully this newsletter will help to explain our role and keep you informed about our involvement in school. Along with a termly newsletter, we are hoping to set up a governor blog and twitter feed to keep you more informed of our work.

As governors we are responsible, alongside the Headteacher, for the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school; hold the head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and ensure that money is well spent, with a clear rationale. Our role is sometimes described as a ‘critical friend’. This does not mean that we are there to criticise the head or the school, instead we try to ask useful and challenging questions to gain a greater understanding of the school and to foster an ethos of continuous improvement whilst always focusing on the welfare of the children.

Most governors have a designated ‘focus’ role and sit on one of two committees the Standards and School Improvement Committee or Finance, Premises and HR committee. During committee meetings we review the Academy Improvement Plan; examine data about school / pupil performance; review appropriate policies; discuss curriculum developments within the school; review budgets and scrutinise any funding decisions needed to be made and feedback key points, questions or findings from individual school visits. We also meet as a whole governing body 5 times a year and additional meetings are held with individual governors depending on their focused role, for example the SEND Governor and Pupil Premium Governor.

### Safeguarding

Our Safeguarding Committee meet throughout the year. We ensure that policies are up to date and that consistent, effective safeguarding procedures are in place for pupils, families and staff.

### School visits

In addition to our committee and governing body meetings we try to visit the school at least termly, to visit classrooms, observe particular lessons or activities and to talk to the children and teachers about the school. As you can imagine, they always have plenty to say! These visits are something we have tried to put more emphasis on this year and this will continue into the next academic year. For example Sarah, our Pupil Premium Governor, has recently observed a peer reading session involving the whole school. She was struck by the level of engagement of the children across the year groups and their enthusiasm for sharing books with children of a different age. Not only were they building literacy skills and developing their speaking and listening, but also fostering good relationships with children of a different age, something which governors feel is a real strength in the school. It is always wonderful to see what and how the



children have been learning and to observe the progress they are making and we'd like to thank all the staff and children for always making us feel very welcome when we come into school.

The Health and Safety Governor, Graham, also visits the school to complete premises checks and monitor proposals for development. We are all very excited about the upcoming extension of the area around Pine and Willow class and the increased space and opportunity for learning that this will create.

Members of the Governing Body also attend various other school events, such as church services, collective worship, sports day, the summer fayre and other PTA events and have a good sense of wider school life.

### **Training**

Governors have taken up a range of training opportunities this year including induction training; Safeguarding and Child Protection training; Prevent training and updated Ofsted training.

### **School review**

The school recently undertook a whole school review, involving our local school improvement partner, John Jefferies. Amongst other things, this involved observations of teaching and learning across the school and discussions with various members of staff and governors. The outcomes were extremely positive, with useful feedback to support our development plan for the next academic year.

### **Contact**

If you would like more information about how the Axbridge First School Governing Body works, or if you have any other comments about other school related issues, we would be happy to hear from you. We value your ideas and opinions, so please feel free to pop a note into the school office addressed to the appropriate governor.

We hope this newsletter has given you a flavour of some of the things we do. In future newsletters we hope to provide more specific feedback from governor monitoring visits, short reports from the two main committees on the work undertaken during the term and governor profiles, helping you to get to know individual governors a little better.

### **Thank you**

As the academic year comes to an end, we would like to thank all the staff for all their hard work and commitment to providing the children with a stimulating curriculum and safe, caring environment for learning. In a small school like Axbridge, a lot is asked of the staff to ensure all the tasks and responsibilities are covered and we are fortunate to have such a flexible and hardworking team. We would also like to thank all the children for their super work, effort and behaviour this year.

The Governors wish to say a big thankyou to our very committed PTA - funds raised by the PTA are incredibly important and the money raised each year thanks to the fantastic support of parents and carers means that the school can buy equipment and experiences which we otherwise couldn't afford.

We would like to wish all our Year 4 leavers every success in their future endeavours and forthcoming challenges and we would like to extend a warm welcome to those families joining us in September.

Finally the Governors would like to thank you all for your continued support of the school. We wish everyone a safe, relaxing and exciting summer holidays and look forward to welcoming you all back in September.



## Governors - who's who?

Richard Helps	Chair, FPHR
Kate Browne	Vice Chair, SSI, Safeguarding and welfare, admissions
Lorna Richardson	SSI, FPHR, Headteacher
Tim Hawkins	FP&HR, safeguarding and welfare, ITT link governor
Graham Page	FP&HR, Health and safety governor
Paul Fowler	FP&HR
Penny Groves	S&SI, admissions, SEND governor, parent governor
Helen Davies	S&SI, teacher governor
Dominic Shillabeer	S&SI, FP&HR, teacher governor
Zoe Hebden	S&SI, Safeguarding and welfare, parent governor
Sarah O'Shaughnessy	S&SI, Pupil Premium governor, admissions, parent governor
Patricia Page	Clerk to Governors

