



# Templewood School

## News from the Governors



October 2015

### **Welcome**

Welcome to the Templewood Governors Autumn Term Newsletter. With almost half the term gone some of you may be wondering how the first 6 weeks have flown by but it is a busy time for pupils, parents and staff.

Welcome too, to pupils, parents and carers joining Templewood for the first time this year. We hope that the school year has started well and that you are settling into life at Templewood.

We are delighted to welcome Miss Morris back and would like to thank Mrs Emerson for her support and leadership during the last academic year. We would also like to welcome another Miss Morris to the school as Year 1 teacher. Miss Robert, Mrs Roche and Mrs Buckminster have also joined the Learning Support Team and we welcome them to the Templewood Community.

### **Thank you and Goodbye!**

The Governors would like to say thank you and goodbye to Julian Payne and Bruno Zago who stepped down from the Governing Body at the end of the summer term. Between them, Julian and Bruno have supported the school in their roles as governors for more than 20 years. We are actively recruiting 2 co-opted governors to join the Governing Body if you know anyone who may be interested in joining from outside the parent group please contact the school office.

### **New school year**

The new school year is now well underway, and the children are enjoying their new challenges. The display boards around the school are already full of wonderful learning and the newly painted playgrounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage & Key Stage 1 have been the scene of much hopscotching. The outdoor learning area continues to mature as the seeded grass areas have established. The school has four new interactive teaching screens and the school IT suite has received an upgrade with new screens and hard drives.

Thank you to everyone who has worked hard to make this happen. We know that Miss Morris and the Leadership team have invested a lot of time in planning these changes and it is great to see this having a benefit on the whole school community.

Thank you also to the TSA for their continued support and fundraising. Last year their funding allowed the school to build the new outdoor learning space and install an amazing Pirate Ship in the Key Stage 1 area. Over the summer their funding also allowed the playground painting in the Nursery and Key Stage 1 areas. There are discussions taking place with the School Council about some exciting new additions in the Key Stage 2 playground, so watch this space for further updates.

## **School site update**

Work continues to improve our school site. Philip Turley, our Premises Governor, has been working closely with Miss Morris and contractors to ensure work continues with as little impact to the school activities as possible. Over the coming weeks you will see upgrades to school security and we also hope to be able to update you on the windows refurbishment.

## **Governors Skills Audit**

Over the summer the Governors have been getting into shape. Part of the government initiative to reconstitute Governing Bodies involved reviewing the skills within our Governing Body. This was completed just before the summer break and the results showed that we scored positively across all criteria. It also helped us identify where we will focus our training for this academic year.

### **Governor Profile – Finance Governor – Helen Anthony**

One of the roles of the Governing Body is to oversee the financial performance of the school and making sure of value for money. Helen has taken over the role of Finance Governor and has a key role to play in monitoring how the school carries out the set financial procedures. So what is actually involved?

#### **As the Finance Governor I guess you need to know a lot about finance and will get deeply involved in the numbers. Is that what really happens?**

The role of the finance governor is actually as much about process as it is numbers. An accountant from Herts County Council prepares the accounts. The finance governor - along with the other members of the finance committee (currently Miss A Morris & Iain Critchley) - checks that the school is sticking to its budget. The finance governor also helps to set the budget and maximise school income, as well as ensures that money is well spent by checking that due process is followed.

#### **How well funded are schools and Templewood specifically?**

Funding for the school is distributed by Herts County Council and is calculated per pupil. This is supplemented with various other grants such as Pupil and Sports Premium Grants.

As might be expected, funding is tight, and this is only likely to get worse over the coming years. The County expects to receive the same amount of money for schools next year as it did this year; with rising costs this effectively means the school budget will be cut.

#### **What are the biggest costs to the school?**

The biggest costs to the school are, unsurprisingly, staff costs. Other significant costs to the school include maintenance of the building and grounds. The school also invests in resources that can best support the staff in teaching and the children in learning, though the budget never covers all that the school would like to buy. Templewood is very lucky, though, to have a very supportive parent body and an active parent association in the TSA – funds raised by parents through the TSA help the school buy a number of additional resources which provide excellent benefits for the children, and which the school would otherwise not be able to afford.

## **And finally**

We hope you enjoyed this term's updates. If you have any questions or are curious to find out more about how the Governing Body supports the school, then please ask us. A large number of the governors can always be found playing hopscotch in the playground. Alternatively, please leave a message at the school office and one of us will get back to you. The next governor newsletter will be published in the Spring term.