

Hotwells Governor News

February 2013

www.hotwells.bristol.sch.uk

WELCOME

Welcome to our regular Governor's newsletter. Here we hope to keep you informed on governing priorities and school performance news. We would also like to offer a warm welcome to all the children and their families who have started at Hotwells this school year.

The Hotwells Eco team take delivery of our Green Flag! We achieved the 'Green Flag' award towards the end of last year - congratulations to the team!



HIGH STANDARDS AT HOTWELLS!

Hotwells children continue to do well with recent figures showing they are achieving well above the national average.

An important part of the governors' role is to monitor the academic standards our children are achieving. The governors were delighted to see that last academic year, the standards achieved at Hotwells were higher than ever!

At the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6), 93% of pupils achieved Level 4 (the expected level) in both English and Maths. This is significantly above the national figure of 79%. In addition, 48% of pupils achieved the higher level 5 in both English and Maths, again significantly above the national figure of 27%. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2) was also significantly above national standards.

Governors also analyse information about the standards achieved in every year group and were pleased to see that in all classes, children are achieving highly and made expected or better progress during the academic year.

It is fantastic to see our children are achieving such high standards!

SCHOOL PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

You may have noticed a smart new gate at the entrance to Reception and that part of the Nursery playground fence has been removed.

The new gate gives Reception children safe, direct access straight into the Nursery playground, meaning that they can enjoy more outdoor learning and can move freely from indoor to outdoor activities.

As the weather warms up Lynsey and the Reception team will be using the nursery play-ground more and more for outdoor activities and the team is delighted with the new addition.

ACADEMY UPDATE

Following the results of an initial review by the Governor's Academy Working Group, and feedback from Parent and Staff consultations that were held throughout May and June last year, the Governing Body agreed that there were strong reasons to perform a detailed review of the financial impact on Hotwells Primary School if it was to become an Academy.

Academy status would mean that the school would become financially independent from the Local Authority, and give it other freedoms including the ability to set the Curriculum which would enable it to maintain focus on the key elements of its

current "skills-based" approach to learning.

It has become clear during this initial consultation process that, parents, staff and governors needed reassurance that the school would be financially secure if we were to convert i.e. ideally to be better off but at the very least to be no worse off.

Accordingly, in order to perform a detailed assessment of the financial implications, it was agreed in October to contact the Department of Education (DfE) and take the first step to 'apply to convert' in order to access grant funding to pay for this work.

Since then, the Governors have been working closely with the school's Business Manager to conduct this financial review. It

should be highlighted that school is not yet committed to converting – we have only taken a preparatory step so far. The final decision of whether or not to convert will only be made after performing another consultation process with parents and staff, which itself will only take place following the completion of the financial review. We hope to perform this further consultation process in the next couple of months and parents and staff will be notified about this well in advance.

Please be assured that the Governing Body is fully committed to making the right decision for our school in order to secure the best possible educational provision for our children.

NEWS UPDATES

ON-LINE PAYMENT

The on-line payment system has been up and running for a few months now and is proving to be a very useful and popular payment method, with more than half of Hotwells parents already using it. If you are not making on-line payments but would like more information about how to do it, please ask in the office.

HOTWELLS NEWSPAPER

The Hotwells newspaper was such a success that more editions are planned so keep an eye out for the next one hot off the press!

FOREST SCHOOLS

Forest School for Reception children is now running for a second year due to its great success last year and funding being secured from various charitable trusts.

Forest School provides an inspirational outdoor classroom where children can explore nature, develop confidence and get muddy! The Reception Class has six sessions in the woods spread throughout the year. They experience the woods in the different seasons and engage in activities including: exploring wildlife, building fires, campfire cooking, nature art, crafting wooden pendants using tools, building dens



and making mud 'tree spirits'.

The children have had enormous fun and the visits have very successfully supported their learning in the classroom.

MAKING THE MOST OF PUPIL PREMIUM

Introduced last year, Pupil Premium is the additional funding schools receive to support 'vulnerable pupils' to enjoy and achieve in line with all other children.

The government believes that allocating Pupil Premium funding is the best way to ensure funding to tackle disadvantage reaches the pupils who need it most. This includes pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals (or have been at some point in the last six years) and Children in Care.

It is the role of the governors to oversee how the money is used by the school and to monitor the impact it has on the children's learning. This year, pupil premium funding has been used in a number of ways, from funding children's participation in extra-curricular activities, to providing additional targeted learning support. The headteacher keeps the governors informed on the progress pupils are making termly.

More information on how Pupil Premium funding is being used at Hotwells can be found on the 'About us' page of our school website.

ICT EXCELLENCE

Hotwells' commitment to ICT, recognised by our ICT Mark, has been underscored this year with the purchase of popular new equipment

iPads and Lego may not seem like obvious teaching tools, but both are being used to great effect in our classrooms. iPads enable creativity not easily matched on traditional computers while the Lego Wedo, with which children can build and program simple working models, gives pupils experience of 'control technology'.

Hotwells was proud to achieve the 'ICT mark' two years ago - accredited recognition of how the school successfully uses IT to enhance learning and all aspects of school life. Key to our success is sensible investment in technology and, more importantly, commitment to ensuring staff are trained in its use.

COMMUNICATION

Good communication is vital to our school and we have tried to make it as easy as possible to stay in touch:

In person: Please feel free to approach your class teacher at the start or end of each school day. If you would like a bit more time to discuss something in particular you may like to book some time with your teacher to suit you both. If you would like to meet with our head teacher, Annie Butler you can pop into the school office and make an appointment.

Email: This is a great way for you to contact the school office, your teacher or the head teacher. Martine in the office will always forward your emails confidentially to the intended recipient.
hotwellsp@bristol.gov.uk

By phone: Our school office number is 0117 903 0044 and one of the office staff will always be available to answer your query, pass on a message or arrange a good time for your teacher to call you back.

Text: Tell us your mobile number and we'll keep you informed of all urgent or important messages by text.

Website: We've got a great website that is kept right up to date. Please visit it regularly to see the latest pictures of school trips, term dates, spelling tests, and class work. There's opportunity for you to feedback on there too.

Post: Our address is Hotwells Primary School, Hope Chapel Hill, Bristol BS8 4ND

School closure notices: During extreme snowy weather you will be notified of our school closure by one, or all of these: local radio announcements, a message on the school website or a text message.

STAFF NEWS

The governors welcome two new appointments, Ashley Conner to Year 6, Abbie Batt to Reception.

Governors agree new staff appointments and, with the headteacher, undertake the appointment process.

This term we have appointed a new Learning Support Assistant, Ashlea Connor. Ashlea supports in Class 6 in the mornings and is also a member of the lunchtime staff team.

This year, for the first time, we appointed an apprentice Early Years Support Worker, Abbie Batt. This appointment has proved to be a great success! As well as providing additional staffing, an apprenticeship gives a young person the opportunity to gain valuable work experience whilst completing a qualification, embarking on a career of their choice.

Abbie is working 4 days a week in our nursery class and attends Weston College one day a week, where she is studying for a Level 2 child care qualification. Abbie says she is thoroughly enjoying the opportunity and the nursery staff say Abbie has been a 'great addition to the team'!

The role of the governing body is crucial for the effective leadership and management of the school. The governing body complements the professional leadership of our head teacher and senior staff by bringing a range of perspectives to bear on issues facing the school.

We have two committees, Finance & Resources and Teaching & Learning Standards. These meet once every term. We also hold a Full Governors Meeting six times each year.

GOVERNOR NEW FACES

Following governor elections last Summer, Hotwells appointed five new governors, they are:



Jo Eades

Jo is a parent governor and has taken on the role of Assessment Governor.

Laura Hifle

Laura is a parent governor and has taken on the role of Extended Schools Governor.



Lisa Clarke

Lisa is a parent governor and has taken on responsibility for Health and Safety.



Rob Logan

Rob is a community governor and is responsible for Finance.



Gina Channell

Gina is a parent governor and has taken on the role of Communications.



YOUR GOVERNORS

Your current governors are:

Eddie Harding (chair), Annie Butler (head teacher), Clare Ogden (deputy chair and chair of Teaching & Learning Standards), George Gibberd (chair of Finance & Resources), Jo Eades, Lisa Clarke, Laura Hifle, Bob Tarren, Elizabeth Vance, Jon Little, Rob Logan, Dan Roddy, Matt Edwards, Amanda Bleach, Kirsty Barnes and Gina Channel.

There are two regular observers from the school staff, Sara Yarnold (deputy head) and Patsy Lawrence (business manager). Our clerk is Paula Parker. You'll find photos of all the governors on the noticeboard in the school entrance hall and on the website.