

St Anne's School & Sixth Form College



GOVERNOR'S  
NEWSLETTER

February 2017

Welcome to the first formal Governor's newsletter for parents and carers of pupils and students at St Anne's School and Sixth Form College. When I was elected Chair of the Board of Governors over two years ago, I ensured that full minutes of all meetings of the board were uploaded to the school website along with a less formal summary of discussions and key actions. The landscape, however, in education and particularly 'additional needs' education is changing rapidly so I have decided to publish a newsletter following every full meeting of the board or as required at other times during the academic year.

This publication does not replace the normal school newsletter about term times and events etc. That will continue but this is intended to keep parents and carers informed of all key developments in the School, College and Residence within the remit of the Board of Governors.

This first edition provides an update on what is happening within and to the school featuring the following information:

- 1** Changes to the Membership of the Board of Governors.
- 2** Ofsted Inspection of the Residence
- 3** School Nursing Provision
- 4** Academy Status Consideration
- 5** Appointment of HR Support Officer
- 6** Mental Health in Children with Disabilities
- 7** Emotional Health and Well-Being - 24 Hour School Support
- 8** Safeguarding Update
- 9** Head Teachers Report to Governors Summary
- 10** Online Safety Policy
- 11** Contacting Governors

- 1** Changes to Membership of the Board of Governors

Last term Jan Woodford resigned from the board because of other professional and family commitments. Being a governor takes up a lot

of time. Jan being a former head teacher of a primary school made a significant contribution to the school, particularly as my Vice Chair and in other areas of governance and operations. We have thanked her for her support and wished her well in the future.

At the board meeting on 19 January we were delighted to formally co-opt Mr Andy Day as a new governor. Andy is a retired Head of Geography at Witherensea School but has worked in education throughout the region for many years and continues to do so in supportive roles. He will take over responsibility for chairing the Curriculum Sub Committee, be a member of the Performance Review Group and link governor for basic skills education. St Anne's is very fortunate to have such an experienced member of the teaching profession as a key member of what is a very strong team.

## **2 Ofsted Inspection of the Residence**

Over three days from 14 November last year there was a full Ofsted inspection of the Residence. It was thorough with a lot of time spent by the Inspector in both the Residence and School. He met pupils, parents, the Child Care Manager, staff, Head Teacher, other members of the Leadership Team and Governors. His report was formally released two weeks ago, reporting that the Residence was graded outstanding in all key areas. These are the quality of care and support for the children, how well they are protected and the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers. This was an excellent result and well deserved by all the Residence Team under the leadership of Kay O'Neill.

The Residence is an integral feature of the School and College in continuing the education of our pupils, caring for them, and guiding them towards independence as well as providing much needed and deserved respite for parents and carers. Governors have congratulated Kay and her team. Both the School and Residence are now graded as 'Outstanding' in all areas by Ofsted, but we still strive for continuous improvement throughout.

## **3 School Nursing Service**

Last term the Head and Governors expressed concern about the nursing cover in the school provided by the City Health Care Partnership. This was taken up with commissioners as a matter of urgency and as a consequence a new, sharply focused, Service Level

Agreement was drawn up becoming effective on 1 September last year. We are therefore delighted to note that there has been a vast improvement. The principal nurse, Pauline White, is on site 3 days a week, with additional staff on the other days, and has become a much valued member of the team at St Anne's. Pauline supports pupils, students and staff in all health related issues, some of which are quite complex. She has introduced a Health Care Template for each pupil to be used alongside the existing health care plans. This covers information on airway and breathing, circulation, medication, nutrition, epilepsy, elimination, skin condition, wound management, mobility, communication, rest and sleep, and safety. Each page of the form is signed by the parent/carer and nurse. The form stays with the pupil in each class or wherever they are. Its introduction has been very successful. Pauline is available to be contacted by parents during the school day.

#### **4 Academy Status Consideration**

This continues to be a substantive agenda item at all meetings of the Board of Governors. Academies are state schools which receive their funding direct from the Department for Education and not the Local Authority.

We are in a period of significant change in the whole education system. The Government is working towards every school becoming an Academy or joining other academies in formal partnerships known as multi-academy trusts. Schools will now not be forced to convert, but in the existing economic climate all schools must ensure that they can maintain their current educational provision at a time when there is year on year funding reductions.

Over meetings last year, Governors considered the future direction of the School, College and Residence, having regard to the changing landscape. Options considered included merging with other East Riding special schools, certain primary schools, South Hunsley or the Hessle Federation of Schools as it then was with which St Anne's has extremely strong links.

The structure of St Anne's is unique because of its Residence and whichever course is taken the Residence must remain that integral part of the School. Of all the options considered, should the school apply to convert, the Hessle Federation now known as the Consortium, would be the preferred option. As a multi-academy trust the

consortium will include, Hessle High School, Hessle Sixth Form College, Wolfreton School and Sixth Form College, Cottingham School and Sixth Form College, Penshurst School, Hessle and possibly other local primaries.

This month Governors and the Head Teacher met with the Director of Children, Families and Schools for the East Riding, with his Head of Schools and Head of Specialist Services, about the future of the local authority in education and funding. It was a very helpful meeting.

In a long discussion at the full Governing Board meeting on 19 January it was decided not to take any immediate action towards conversion to an academy, but to keep it under formal review at every meeting. By the next meeting there will be greater clarity about future capital expenditure on the school which is very urgent, the future role of local authorities in education in a report to be published this month, the designation of the Residence and the development of the Hessle Consortium. No decisions will be taken in the current academic year but parents, carers and staff will be consulted at every stage of any discussions.

In the meantime, the Head Teacher is seeking to formally change the designation of the Residence from a Special School with residential facilities to a Residential Special School, which is what it really is. The existing partnership with Hessle High School and Sixth form will be formalised but only in relation to day to day operations, including support for our own sixth form students, sharing of resources and staff development through two-way lesson observations.

Along with other Governors I would be happy to answer any questions about the whole academy issue from parents when I am in the school or at parents evenings.

## **5 Appointment of Human Resources Support Officer**

By the very nature of St Anne's and its complex needs children and students there is very large staff team of around 170, including part time and lunch time staff members. Governors have been concerned about the amount of time members of the Senior Leadership have to spend dealing with routine or more pressing HR issues including induction, training, assessments, sickness, pay and discipline. Whilst support has been available through the Local Authority HR branch this was limited. Approval was given therefore to recruit our own HR

Support Officer for the School, College and Residence. Kate Burgess was appointed to the position and commenced work this term on a 20-hour per week contract. Kate brings experience in both the private and public sector of HR and is already making a difference taking the burden off the Head and her senior leaders, allowing them more to lead on the core elements of education. The appointment will also benefit staff and their welfare.

## **6 Mental Health and Children with Disabilities.**

Last November Richard Vickers organised a seminar at the school to include all relevant agencies to discuss how issues of treating mental health in children with disabilities could be improved locally. This followed concerns about how some cases had been dealt with by partner agencies over the last year and a national drive to improve mental health services for children with transformation of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. (CAMHS) The seminar was independently chaired and a visiting professional speaker addressed the delegates. The most powerful speaker though was Parent Governor Mary Moverley, who cut through the jargon and spoke with real passion and in very practical terms about the issue. Much remains to be done by all agencies and following on from the seminar, Richard is leading a 'task and finish' group to recommend improvement action for the May meeting of governors.

## **7 Emotional Health and Well-Being - 24 Hour Approach**

This agenda item followed reviews I have carried out of a number of difficult cases over the last 18 months when the response of partner agencies and coordination of services at every level could have been better to support parents and our pupils in crisis.

Parents and carers often, and understandably, view the school as a point of reference and help when difficulties arise with their children linked to their disability after school hours. Governors had asked that this practice be formalised. To do so an Emotional Health and Well-Being 24 Hour Approach Strategy was required. Lesley drafted a strategy for consideration which put the child at the centre but included effective leadership, partnerships, resource allocation, safeguarding, strong skilled workforce, early identification and support.

In the cases I have reviewed I have been acutely aware, as have the governors, of the pressures faced by parents in caring for their child. These include sleep and behaviour problems effecting other siblings and family members, relationship breakdown, balancing time, transition to adulthood, worry about the future, in some cases isolation, seeking help from a complex network of agencies and financial constraints. We have learned in reviewing cases and the subsequent action taken that parents and carers are often so busy caring to realise their own high levels of stress. If left unchecked depression and potential breakdown can follow. We have therefore agreed that the following action be taken.

- a) The 24 hour approach was approved.
- b) During school hours the point of contact for parents and carers wanting help and support will be the school through the Home School Liaison Officer Deena Lidgett. She will confer with Lesley and Kay as the designated safeguarding and welfare leads.
- c) After school hours between 4.0 pm and 9.0 am the point of contact will be the Residence which, for most weeks of the year, is a 24- hour facility. The call does not have to be in relation to a child that uses the residence.
- d) After school hours Lesley, Kay or Deena will be contacted to help the parent or carer by phone and, if necessary, alert other agencies including the East Riding Emergency Duty Team, CAMHS Crisis Team, Children's Disability worker or appropriate sections of the NHS.
- e) Those services will be informed of the 24-hour approach applied by the school.
- f) Day to day communication with parents and carers will be geared for being available to help with a pupil, but also a parent, in crisis
- g) Parent's evenings will be re-structured to inform parents and carers of the progress of their children in the school and also to offer support if they are having difficulty in coping. The support will be discreet and arrangements will be made for trained counsellors to be available.
- h) It will commence with effect from 27 February after the half term holiday
- i) It will operate as a pilot between 27 February and the Easter holidays, when it will be reviewed, not to discontinue, but to streamline as required.

- j) Parents and carers can speak to me, Lesley, Kay, Deena, or Sophie and Mary as parent governors, should they want to discuss the process in the meantime.

## **7 Safeguarding Update**

Governors have accepted the latest guidance from the Department for Education 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2016. That is now on the website but a full updated and comprehensive safeguarding policy relevant to St Anne's has also been approved. This includes the needs of parents and specifically relates to our pupils and students. It would be helpful if parents accessed the website to read it as safeguarding is the responsibility of all of us.

## **8 Head Teachers Report Summary**

Governors received the Head Teachers Report. It was detailed and covered progress with basic skills, creative arts, PSHCE, PE, Science, ICT, Children Looked After, (care of local authority), Autism Accreditation, School to School Support, lesson observations, quality of teaching, health care support, behaviour and safety and partnership work.

Governors were satisfied with all aspects of the report and noted that the School, College and Residence was involved with sixty partners in support of the pupils and students at the school. These include seven mainstream primary schools and two secondary schools with Hessle High featuring strongly.

Concern was expressed again about the lack of opportunities being opened up for students as they leave the school at 19 years of age. Whilst some excellent work experience partners are working with the school, including Hessle High School, the Deep and ARCO, much more must be done. It was agreed that another high profile seminar for employers should be arranged in April.

## **9 Online Safety**

Governors approved a new and updated E-Safety policy drafted by the ICT Coordinator. It covers all relevant issues of digital citizenship and was up to date with national developments.

The School, College and Residence will be heavily involved in the national Safer Internet Day on 7th February and there will be activities all

that week. This is in partnership with the East Riding Safeguarding Children Board and the media have been informed to cover it.

Governors urge parents to be aware of all aspects of online safety education in the school to ensure that it continues at home when their children are using devices and accessing online material.

## **10 Contacting Governors**

I can be contacted through Pearl Curtis in the school admin office, or via email using [geoff.ogden@stannes.eriding.net](mailto:geoff.ogden@stannes.eriding.net). The two parent governors Sophie Claybourn and Mary Moverley can be contacted also through the office or on their emails, [sophie.claybourn@stannes.eriding.net](mailto:sophie.claybourn@stannes.eriding.net) and [mary.moverley@stannes.eriding.net](mailto:mary.moverley@stannes.eriding.net)

**Geoff Ogden, MBE**  
**Chair of Governors**