



From the Chair

Spring has sprung since last I wrote at Christmas. Much is blossoming on the governing body's agenda. We are increasingly more involved with the NW24 Teaching and Learning Partnership projects at governor level; the school vision statement refresh project is evolving; fundraising plans are developing; MAT (Multi Academy Trust) research is moving forward; we are enjoying relations with our new SIO (School Improvement Officer), Trish Dodds; the new school development plan January to September 2017 has been unveiled triggering a new monitoring programme; and we have two prospective (community and co-opted) governors 'observing' at the April Full Governing Body meeting.

Bronwen Wright has stepped down as a parent governor and therefore Co-Vice Chair and also Chair of Resources, due to increased work commitments. She has been fantastic and we will miss her and her invaluable input greatly. She remains as the school's Responsible Officer. Huge thanks to Bron for everything.

We also say thank you very much to Peter Kay, parent governor and communications specialist, stepping down due to work commitments; and Helen Wood, Co-opted governor, SEN link and former Colston's teacher, now busy with family commitments and some exciting travel plans! Nick Woodroffe takes on the SEN link role.

Would you like to be a parent governor? Do you have accountancy skills and experience and / or a law background? If so, please contact governors@colstonsprimary.co.uk in the first instance.

I hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative. With warmest wishes for the spring break. On behalf of the governing body

Kate Swainson Price,
Chair of Governor



Happy 5th
Co-operative
Birthday to us!

Illustration by
Karen George
www.karengorge.net

We have been a Co-operative Academy for over five years now. This should be celebrated with 'wood' according to the elements chart of anniversaries. Ideas anybody?

First though, a recap of what it all means. Colston's Primary School converted to Academy status in 2012 and the adoption of a Co-operative model was a key decision in this process. The universal co-operative values of equality, self help, solidarity, democracy, equity, and self responsibility are the perfect backdrop against which to make decisions at Colston's. It also means the school stakeholders own and shape their Academy Trust.

The Co-operative Forum is a great platform for members to contribute to the development of school policies and projects. A number of projects have grown out of the Forum including the Food For Life policy, after-school club development, and the Cotham Grove Playground project. The school vision statement refresh project, opinions and ideas around school funding and researching Multi Academy Trusts are all agenda items at the Forum. It is one of the key 'go to' places for governors to seek out stakeholder views.



Alex Jarman, the school's Co-operative Lead relays what 'co-operative' means from a staff perspective:

"Since becoming a Co-operative Academy in 2012, the co-operative values have become increasingly central to how our school is run. Each term we celebrate one of the values and look for ways to give these values meaning for the children.

The most important question we ask as we embed the values into our practise is: is the school's co-operative status having a positive impact on outcomes for our children? As staff we are always asking if the decisions made are as 'co-operative' as they can be. And as we look to the future working out the way forward for Colston's, these co-operative values remain as important as ever to our school."

Have you become a co-operative member yet? The more members, the stronger the co-operative impact.

Visit the school website and /or contact cooperative@colstonsprimary.co.uk direct for all things co-operative.



Governor spotlight

Pauline Allen, Community Governor since March 2016 Responsible governor for Health and Safety, Oxford graduate (MA and DPhil, Chemistry), former researcher at leading science campus, Harwell, Bristol University Diploma in Strategic Management, Colston's CAPS after school club and Co-Chair of Central Neighbourhood Forum, Pauline brings much to the governing body.

One year into her governor role, Pauline said: "My son, Charles, attended Colston's primary School 1988-1995. CAPS was a major factor in choosing the school. I was delighted when Colston's decided to become a Co-operative Academy in 2012, as I fully support co-operative values. After attending a Community Forum in 2015, I was persuaded to become a Community Governor."

School funding ... and fundraising

Do your children read 'The Week Junior'? If so, grab the 11 March 2017 issue with the front cover headline: 'Does your school need more money? Cuts leave schools short of cash'. Currently a hot news topic, reports on school funding are difficult to escape.

Schools are having to manage funding cuts to the tune of £3 billion. For Bristol the sum is £3.44million. Colston's Primary School has about £300 less per pupil this year compared to 2015, and funds will decrease incrementally over the next three years.

LGiU, local democracy think tank, recommend the DfE demonstrate "that school spending power can reduce at the same time as educational outcomes are improved" as they work up to launching the new funding formula in 2019. Improved outcomes is the key concern to Governors when holding school spending to account.

The school's Senior Leadership Team continue to report regularly on the school's budget. Sensible efficiency measures are being adopted in terms of effective workforce deployment and procurement in the short and long term; and governors continue to monitor closely.

A fundraising strategy is also being devised. Volunteer fundraising professionals, school staff and the PTAF and the Co-operative Forum are developing a fundraising appeal to launch September 2017. If you'd like to be involved please contact governors@colstonsprimary.co.uk.

As members of the NW24 Teaching and Learning Partnership, we benefit from mutual support around funding issues affecting all our schools; with the common goal of excellent, sustainable educational outcomes for all the children.

Governor visits to see pupils in action are always uplifting evidence of buoyant happy children, well looked after and inspired at Colston's whatever the funding climate.

Steve Purdie and Katy Dunscombe gave out a plethora of certificates in assemblies recently, and Kate Swainson Price saw the sparky school council reps in action at the recent NW24 Super Schools event in March.

As always, a heartfelt vote of thanks go to the dedicated staff of Colston's Primary for all their hard work in delivering the best for the children.

Thank you to parents and carers too for support, as our school, along with all schools, continue to navigate the challenging funding landscape that lies ahead.

Multi Academy Trust (MAT) update

Conscious that the future status of the school is something we need to consider, we've been keeping abreast of recent developments at national and local level with regard to MATs.

Nationally

The White Paper March 2016 announced the Government's intention for all schools to become academies by 2022 stating "most schools will form or join MATs". On 6 May the Government dropped these plans, but Lord Nash, Under Secretary of State for Schools, indicated that the Government expects most schools to have converted and joined a MAT in five or six years time.

Locally

Both Cotham and Redland Green are in the process of establishing MATs. We have engaged in their consultation processes as part of our MAT research. And continue to engage informally with both schools, as well as other schools within the NW24 cluster, as we look for the best potential way forward for Colston's.

Governors will be in touch again with regard to MAT consultations in due course.



The Schools
Co-operative Society

