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COLSTON'S PRIMARY SCHOOL SCHOOL GOVERNORS NEWSLETTER

TERM 2 DEC 2016



From the chair...

Yes, it's finally here - the first governors' newsletter 2016/17. On the eve of the first anniversary of Alex Bell's headship, we are pleased to present you with a flavour of things from the governor perspective one year in.

We've been busy pursuing our role as 'critical friend' reviewing the school vision and setting objectives, supporting and challenging the school as best we can. The Full Governing Body has met three times, the Outcomes and Resources Committees twice each, and a robust monitoring programme is well underway. Thanks to staff for their availability and help with this.

Financial Matters

Auditors visited the school in November, the accounts were signed off in early December and the final Annual Report will be filed in Term 3. The 2016/17 budget is tight. Governors are monitoring the business side of school life closely as the government continues to cut funding for schools. An article in The Bristol Post (Nov 24th) reported that "calculations by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) show that Bristol will be worst affected city in England under the new cuts. The total cuts to education in the city will be a staggering £28.3million under new Government rules, which will come up to a £577 loss per pupil" (exact figure for Colston's is a budget change of £288.28 less per pupil in 2017 compared to 2015).

Senior Leadership reports to governors show these funding challenges are being met with level heads, positivity and creativity. Our community fundraising is crucial in the current climate. I'd like to take this opportunity to extend a huge thank you to all involved in the PTAF, from those who attend to those who organise, for its fantastic work - £14.5K raised last year. Not only is the extra money hugely beneficial, the events also provide a community glue that helps make Colston's Primary such an appealing place.

Catering

In October, governors approved school plans to tender for a new catering contract to start October 2017. Colston's will be tendering along with a group of other schools from the NW24 partnership. Thank you to the Food Group for all their hard work on helping to put a food vision and policy together. These will form the basis of requirements to tenderers to ensure the best quality appointment.

Governor of the Month

We are happy to be taking up an invitation from Alex Bell to take part in a 'Governor of the Month' initiative. This is a lovely idea to involve governors in a more informal manner to raise our profile within school. So, look out for a governor appearance at your next Achievement Assembly children. You may be receiving your next golden rules certificate from one of us...

Before signing off, I'd like to thank Shuaib Omar for being a governor while he could afford the time. His input was very helpful and greatly appreciated.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all, on behalf of all the governors,

Kate Swainson Price
Chair of Governors

Other news...

Vision Statement Refresh:

At the end of the academic year for 2015/2016, with a mixture of current and new governors, an evening was held to review the school vision and set governor objectives. This was an important exercise to clarify Colston's vision and values, but also to ensure we as governors are managing our roles and responsibilities to the best effect to support the school. For the current full school vision for 2016/2017 please visit the website. A project to refresh this vision is underway with plans to consult all current stakeholders so that Governors, staff, parents, pupils and Co-op forum members all have input into the final result. The aim is to have reset the school's vision statement by term 6, when Governors take stock of objectives again.

Resources Committee Headlines from Bronwen Wright, Chair of Resources:

The first two terms for Resources are busy ones. Our auditors have been in for their annual audit, we will have the final report by Term 3. Kate Patience is our new Business Manager and has been working very hard to manage and train the new office staff. Health and Safety reviews took place in Term 1 and a rolling maintenance plan is being put into place.

Outcomes Committee Headlines from Steve Purdie, Chair of Outcomes:

The Outcomes committee has had a very busy start to the year reviewing and analysing pupil performance during the last academic year. Progress and achievement of our Reception children was excellent and above both Bristol and National standards. Likewise, the performance of our Year 6 pupils in the KS2 SATs was above both Bristol and National standards. Unfortunately, performance in phonics and in the KS1 SATs were not where we would have liked them to be. The Outcomes committee have, therefore, made these areas a priority for improvement this year. We have had a presentation to understand the changes that have taken place to improve performance - and received some initial data that suggests that these changes are having a positive effect. We will also be focusing on the performance of pupils in Groups in comparison to the performance of Non-Group pupils.

Multi Academy Trust (MAT) News:

Colston's is currently a stand alone Co-operative Academy which focuses on the school community working together in accordance with the globally shared co-operative values (solidarity, self responsibility, self help, equity, equality, democracy). We believe this provides the best environment for the children here to achieve the best outcomes. If you follow the news you will know that the government are pro MATs as the favoured set up for schools. There is currently a working research group amongst the governors, investigating the potential benefits or disadvantages of joining with other academies to form a MAT. Joining a MAT would mean additional tiers of governance with directors above trustees and a local governing body. The group has formed to ensure we keep abreast of the political landscape nationally and locally regarding the status of academies, and where Colston's sits in relation to this. The school currently receives the benefits of subscribing to NW24, a mutually supportive network made up of infant, junior primary, secondary and special schools within Bristol.

Have you become a member of Colston's Co-operative yet? Membership shows explicit support of the values adopted by Colston's. It provides the opportunity to influence school development and policies via the Co-op Forum. A recent and ongoing successful co-op project has been around food provision. Playground improvements are next on the agenda, look out for further developments on this and how you could be involved. See the school website for more details and how to join.



The Schools
Co-operative Society

