

LINTON-on-OUSE SCHOOL GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER – JULY 2017

Report By The Chair of Governors; Mr Nigel Cross

The sudden passing away of Mrs Southern in May was such a shock to us all; she had been both a tireless worker, supporter and an integral part of the strategic direction of this school for 6 years bringing a wealth of skills, experience and value to the role of Governor and Chair of Governors. She will be greatly missed and I do not underestimate the size of the shoes I have been elected to fill.

The pivotal piece of work conducted by the Governing Body this year was the recruitment of a Headteacher to succeed Mrs McLoughlin from September 2017. It was a lengthy and robust process involving all the children, parents and staff along with a member of the Local Authority. We were delighted that after the process Mrs Davinia Pearson accepted our offer.

Mrs Pearson's educational journey has seen her teach in Primary Schools in Lincolnshire, Gloucestershire and North Yorkshire culminating in a Deputy Headship appointment prior to spending the past four years as an Educational Improvement Advisor for Primary Schools across North Yorkshire. We have every expectation that Mrs Pearson will build on Mrs McLoughlin's outstanding legacy.



Since March our focus has been on the finances of the school; it's been a tough few months – no doubt about it. A casual observer of educational current affairs will have been bombarded with high-profile national news about financial cut-backs, staffing reductions, shortened school days and even strike action in protest about the new “funding formula”.

Our school has not been immune to these challenges; the Governing Body has needed to make key decisions and robust action about the

school's finances ready for the next school year. We have challenged costs for all resources and services and are preparing ourselves for whatever decisions the Government make next.

We were once again successful this year in securing a significant MoD Education Grant amounting to £29,000. This was the last opportunity to obtain such funding as this MoD Education Grant Scheme has now ceased. As significant a sum that is, it still didn't get anywhere near the amount the Government's Funding Formula reduced our school budget by. However, it was spent wisely on additional IT equipment for the children to use in class.



Additionally during this year the future of Linton-on-Ouse Primary School has occupied us; should we join a Multi-Academy Trust and become an Academy or should we join other schools as part of a “Federation”? These weighty issues will have far-reaching effects for future generations of children at this wonderful school and so the Governing Body has deliberately taken the time to study the detail, attend conferences and seminars, seek expert advice and discuss what the right course is given the uniqueness of our school. Our thought process is more focussed but we still have time to ensure the right outcome is achieved.

The new Headteacher, Mrs Pearson, has been present at our recent meetings and so is fully informed of the current situation.

Most recently, our attention has been on the expansion of the Nursery to offer 30 hours of child care through the Extended Entitlement Funding. We continue to advertise this superb opportunity for 3 year olds from within the local area to give them the best start to their educational journey in a teacher-led nursery.

We continue to acknowledge the tremendous professionalism, impact and dedication of the teaching and support staff, most especially during these recent turbulent months. Their attendance on Continuous Professional Development courses and Network Meetings out of school hours, their willingness to mentor student teachers, provide free after-school clubs and preparedness to always go the extra mile is very often unseen and unappreciated – but not by us.

The *Friends of Linton-on-Ouse Primary School* continue to excel at prising gold and silver coins out of ours, and local retailers, pockets which continues to provide much needed resources for the good and benefit of the whole school and free, or subsidised, coach travel for all. Their functions are well planned, well supported, great fun and hugely appreciated.

We have visited the school regularly over the year to ensure the children have been receiving a high quality of education; we do this by carrying out learning walks in the classrooms, book scrutinies and talking with the children. In addition to the six Full Governing Body meetings a year, three sub-committees meet regularly; the Health & Safety and Premises Committee carries out regular inspections of the building and accident forms to ensure the children's safety; the Finance & Personnel Committee hold the school to account with the use of the primary PE and Sports Premium and the Service Pupil Premium and measure their impact on outcomes for the children; the Curriculum Committee ensures the breadth and balance of the curriculum and its impact of pupil outcomes and their personal development, behaviour and welfare. They also look at how well the school supports the formal curriculum with extra-curriculum activities. We monitor the progress of groups of pupils very carefully to ensure none underachieve.

Having flicked through my school diary I have been amazed at the rich diversity of experiences and opportunities the children have enjoyed this year; musical recitals, East Barnby, charity days, star-gazing, farm visits, Greek and Roman Days, Forest Schools, a Great British athlete, a forensic scientist, African drums, Ripon Cathedral visit to name but a few. The highlight for me was being able to host the Archbishop of York in January – a real honour for a non-denominational school.



Fern, the Archbishop and Fatima

This term also sees the retirement of Mrs McLoughlin. Much will be said about “Mrs M” as the term draws to a close so I won't add to that here, but will state – quite clearly – that as Chair of the Governing Body I have continually witnessed the total selfless dedication and passion for the education and well-being of the children and leadership of her teaching staff. I would urge all parents and carers to attend the Retirement Assembly scheduled for 2.30pm on Friday 21st July.

We have welcomed both Mrs Khan and Mrs McCreadie to the Governing Body this year and from September will welcome Mrs Goodridge as the new Parent Governor succeeding Mr Tucker following his assignment. In addition, due to the very sad news of Mrs Southern's passing, we will be recruiting a Co-opted Governor next term.

There are challenging times ahead across the educational sector; we remain committed to being part of the engine that drives the strategic direction of our school, monitoring the impact of the work of the staff and holding them to account.

On behalf of the Governing Body, I wish you all a safe and happy summer.

The School's Governing Body are;

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| Nigel Cross | Chair & Co-opted Gov |
| Helen Kirby | Vice-Chair & LA Gov |
| Siobhan McCreadie | Co-opted Gov |
| David Hicks | Co-opted Gov |
| Raana Khan | Parent Gov |
| Barry Tucker | Parent Gov |
| Morag McLoughlin | Headteacher |
| Karen Renton | Staff Gov |