

ST ANNE'S SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE



GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

JULY 2017

Welcome to the second formal Governors' Newsletter for parents and carers of pupils and students at St Anne's School and Sixth Form College. This publication does not replace the normal school newsletter about term times and events etc. Its purpose is to keep parents and carers informed of all key developments in the School, College and Residence that are within the remit of the Board of Governors. It also reflects discussions and decisions taken at the full meeting of the Board on 18 May 2017 and features the following information:

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1 Plans and Approved Funding to Build a New School

I am delighted to announce that £6.75m has been allocated from both the Educational Funding Agency and East Riding of Yorkshire Council to build a new school alongside the existing building commencing in June 2018. The 'new build' will consist of three main blocks behind the current Sixth Form College connected by a large corridor space. There will be open air spaces between each block, an Administration Centre/Reception and new Hydrotherapy pool. Following

construction many of the school's old and outdated buildings will be demolished and replaced by an additional outdoor learning space. This will also make available more space for traffic management.

The programme is the 3rd and final phase of improvements to the 'Additional Needs School' Estate in the East Riding. The new plans are well overdue as the current school was built for up to 60 pupils over 40 years ago and current pupil numbers are approaching 150. This has only been managed by the existence of temporary buildings located throughout the estate with access underneath a network of canopies.

It is to the credit of the staff at every level but particularly the Grounds and Estate Team that the School, College and Residence has managed to function so well in such outdated and restricted buildings.

Governors are confident that the new school will be completed in time for the 2019 Autumn Term. The 'new build' does not include the Residence but all funding avenues are being explored to build a new Residence taking account of the valuable service it provides for our pupils, their parents and carers.

Whilst we expect the new school to open in September 2019 the school and college will continue to operate normally as building operations will be contained in the 3-acre field near the Sixth Form. Regular updates will be provided and a 'Buildings Committee' will be established by the Board of Governors to monitor progress. This will include Steve Rix our Site Manager who will be the link to the contractors.

2 Board of Governors Code of Conduct

The role of a school governor has become increasingly demanding during the last 10 years and more is expected of the UK's largest volunteer workforce. We need to know how the school, college and residence is structured, what is the curriculum, how policies are decided and implemented, how pupils are kept safe at school, home and in the community and who is responsible for what. The ability for a governing body to work as an effective team for the good of the school depends on trust and understanding of our common purpose. Many governing bodies prefer to conduct business in an informal manner but

we prefer to have a formal framework and our own Code of Conduct and Work Plan.

We have therefore taken a template from the Local Authority and adapted it for the very special role of our own Board of Governors. It includes the Principles of Governance using the 'Nolan Principles of Standards in Public Life', standing orders and a formal Code of Conduct. It has been approved and uploaded to the Governor Section of the school website.

3 Academy Status Consideration

This continues to be a substantive agenda item at full meetings of the Board of Governors and to some extent at committee meetings. There has been a lull in national developments within education as a consequence of the General Election and to some extent that continues. The academy structure is however now firmly entrenched within education and locally there have been developments particularly with the Hessle Consortium. That continues to grow in relation to local schools joining both secondary and primary and as a school and college we have continued to strengthen our links particularly with our Sixth Form students. St Anne's is held in high regard locally because of its SEN specialism and being an Outstanding school. There is a desire for the school to become an SEN Hub for other schools whether through an academy or with the Local Authority. We will keep parents fully informed of developments.

4 Emotional Health and Well-Being - 24 Hour Support.

The 24-hour support service covered at length in the last newsletter is now firmly embedded in policy. We have been able to deliver this by the hard work of our three designated safeguarding leads, namely Lesley, Kay and Deena along with the goodwill and enthusiasm of the staff in the Residence after hours.

Support has been provided to parents and carers, some of it low key, but in a few cases to resolve very serious developments in the health and well-being of pupils and parents. Some difficulties have been encountered when seeking the support of partner agencies which has

resulted in a number of reviews being undertaken to clarify the roles of key support agencies and to stress the importance of a key professional being identified to coordinate care and support when necessary.

Parents and carers should continue to contact the school through Deena during the day but the residence between 4.00pm and 9.00am each day and at weekends for most weeks of the year. This service is reviewed at every meeting of the Safeguarding and Well-Being Committee.

5 Parents' Evenings

Key features of the support to parents linked to the last item are the Parents' evenings which are held usually in April and October. These are opportunities for parents and carers to discuss the progress that their child is making, along with any areas of concern but also as to how they are coping.

Governors have taken a particular interest in parents' evenings as to how they are structured, who attends from partner agencies and the attendance of parents. Governors are also available, including myself, the Vice Chair and other colleagues.

At the last parents' evening only 41% of parents and carers attended which was a concern for governors. The reasons will be varied namely a recent annual review, child care for the pupil or other siblings, inconvenient time etc. Whilst parents are in touch with staff at the school throughout the year the parents' evening is the time when the educational progress of the pupil along with the development of skills to be independent are discussed. They also give parents the opportunity to talk about how they are coping to establish if additional support is necessary.

It was agreed and reiterated by the Safeguarding and Well-Being Committee that parents' evenings, or 'meet the parent' sessions should be reviewed with the opportunity to change them for the sessions due in October 2017.

To assist in seeking views Sue Larter, Governor and Chair of 'The Friends of St Anne's, is conducting a survey of parents and carers

about what they want from 'meet the teacher' evenings and the result of this will reflect decisions on the future format and time. Lesley and her team are happy to be as flexible as possible but it is crucial that attendance improves. Parent evenings in mainstream schools are important but in an additional needs school they are even more crucial for the pupil, parent and teachers.

6 Correspondence with East Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Over the last year I have entered into correspondence with the East Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group regarding areas of concern about the service provided by CAHMS through the Humber NHS Foundation Trust and Hull Royal Infirmary through the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospital Trust. This follows incidents and mental illness linked to the disability of our pupils. A parent governor has also been involved applying a joint approach to the concerns.

As a consequence of this a full service review has been instigated by the CCG and this is underway. I have been briefed on the progress of the review together with the parent governor.

Much remains to be done. Our concerns are around agencies responsible for mental health in children and young people needing guidance when dealing with children and young people with disabilities. This is linked to the 24 hour support we offer to parents at the school and also the work being undertaken by my colleague Richard Vickers in this field with partners. There is some urgency but parents and carers can assist by maintaining a record of concerns they have and informing the school or, if one is identified, their key worker. Early identification of problems can often prevent more serious mental health issues developing later.

7 Mental Health in Children with Disabilities

Richard Vickers continues to chair the working group linked to this issue following the seminar last November. Much of the work tackles the problems outlined in the last two items of this newsletter. The following action has been taken but it is very much 'work in progress'.

- a) Monthly meetings of key partners to encourage effective communication and early intervention.
- b) Improved communication with parents.
- c) Promotion of Mental Health Awareness
- d) Delivery of a pre CAMHS service by the mental health charity MIND.
- e) Educational Psychologist and ELSA support to be enhanced.
- f) Closer links to Children's Centres and Behavioural Support Teams.

Parents and Carers will be kept informed of progress in this operational area through this newsletter and also via the school but governors see it as a priority for action.

8 Governor Visits and Reports

Governor visits to the school, college and residence in accordance with their special responsibilities have usually been reported via a written report. These are useful but at the last meeting we introduced a system where governors reported verbally and individually. This was a useful process.

Alan Willson reported on progress with the Autism Accreditation programme with the review by the assessors due for 13,14 & 15 June 2017. More of this later.

Sophie Claybourn summarised visits she had made regarding physical education and gave a comprehensive account of all the very positive work on PE. Specific mention was made of the combined duties of the two teachers with responsibility for PE namely Rachel Watts and Rachel Stott with a commendation as to how well this was working.

Peter Atkin referred to the science curriculum and the Green Flag Assessment due for 6 July.

Sue Larter reported regarding 'early years', her visits to the free play sessions and planned work with parents to offer support in the home.

Andy Day discussed his visits re basic skills and commented on the warm learning atmosphere in every class. Sally Sullivan had briefed him on the school's assessment of basic skills.

Mary Moverley reported (by report) on her work with creative arts. A number of lessons had been observed and a positive assessment was given on the priority targets, namely 1 - Communicating and Gathering information and Ideas, 2 - Shaping the Curriculum and 3 - Monitoring and Assessment. Very practical examples were outlined.

Richard Vickers covered his many visits to the residence, his discussions with staff, residents and examination of registers etc., all positive. Richard also chairs the Residence Committee.

I updated members on my safeguarding work outside the normal committee. Additionally, I reported upon my lesson observations in 2 classes with the Online Safety Lead Teacher, Sharron O'Keefe and other staff members. The lessons were innovative and all children were engaged irrespective of their varied disabilities. All were having fun and learning. I had also met with the PSHCE Lead Teacher re his programme for the term but lessons have yet to be observed.

9 Headteacher's Report to Governors

The Headteacher's report to governors also had contributions from all the middle leaders in the school highlighting a strong team approach.

We heard that the school is still graded as 'outstanding' by the local authority School Improvement Team. The report covered updates on Basic Skills, Creative Arts, PSHCE, PE, Science, Computing and Online Safety, 'Looked After Children', Autism Accreditation and staff training.

We heard that 15 students were due to leave at the end of term and the anticipated number of pupils for September was 140.

Detailed graphs were included on performance in English and Maths but, by the very nature of St Anne's cohort of pupils, measurement of progress is difficult if done by data alone. More accurate assessments are obtained by recording those small steps towards independence when they have profound and complex needs.

The Head reported on an excellent Transition Seminar held by the school at Hessle High School in April. This was to engage with more employers in the region to widen the work experience opportunities and persuade more businesses to employ our very able students when they leave St Anne's. It was a success. Links were made with 10 local businesses together with our existing partners at Hessle High School and South Hunsley. More will now assist with work experience programmes and by next year we are confident that some employers will employ our leavers with a certain amount of support. Leading by example St Anne's will be employing one student in September and three others will be on an internship programme in the school, residence and on the estate.

10 Human Resources Officer

Governors heard that the employment of Kate Burgess as our HR Officer has had real benefits for the school. It has allowed the Senior Leadership Team to direct more of their time to teaching and leadership. All HR policies have been streamlined and the recruitment processes have been significantly improved. Kate has been able to support staff with issues and her appointment has been welcomed by all. She has become a valued member of the Senior Leadership Team.

11 Safeguarding

Safeguarding continues to have a high profile in the school. An updated School, College and Residence Safeguarding Policy has been approved disseminated to staff, included in training and uploaded to the website. Governors receive regular reports on safeguarding matters, referrals and work with partner agencies. Kay, as one of our Safeguarding Designated Leads, is now also a member of the ERSCB Education Reference Group allowing her to contribute to wider policy in the East Riding but keeping up to date in the ever changing safeguarding landscape.

A real concern for staff and governors is 'Online Safety'. The school has a very good Online Safety Policy which is applied at every level but for those more able pupils most online activity by them will be at home. That is the responsibility of parents.

The rapid growth of the internet, social networking and electronic technologies has opened up a new world of exciting opportunities for many children and young people. Through the internet and mobile technology it is possible for them to have access to and be entertained by unlimited worldwide information. Through social networking sites they can contact and socialise with other young people. Alongside the benefits are the significant risks, and whilst many are competent in using such technologies to keep safe many are not and that could include our pupils and students.

The risks include sexual exploitation, cyber based bullying, the impact of technologies on sexual behaviour, radicalisation, substance misuse, gaming, self harm and eating disorders.

To fully tackle these issues the support of parents is crucial. The school can offer support to parents through online safety training, parental controls and filters etc., in short sessions if required. Teachers however do need to know about the online activity of pupils at home and this will be a discussion included in the reformatted 'parent evenings'.

12 Autism Accreditation

The Autism Accreditation process is nearing completion following the 3 day review by the Assessors from the National Autistic Society.

For information, the review was undertaken by 2 Assessors with a considerable knowledge of Autism and experience with children who are on the Autistic Spectrum. It is important to note that the Assessors controlled the 3 day review of the School and Residence and were very specific as to where they went, who they spoke to and what they observed – we had to be totally open to their wishes.

The initial report received from them was very positive although it is now a decision by the NAS panel as to whether we will receive the NAS accreditation we seek. We should receive a decision at the beginning of next term and we will let you know their decision as soon as we can.

The Governors acknowledge the hard work that has been undertaken over the past 3 years by all the staff, parents and governors and are

aware of initiatives that have been introduced throughout the school with the aim of providing the first class education and care that our pupils deserve.

13 Bereavements

Since the last Governors' Newsletter very sadly two of our pupils have passed away.

We continue to think of their parents and families and extend to them our deepest sympathy. Their loss was deeply felt by the staff and particularly the teachers and teaching assistants involved in their education and care. Other pupils and friends of the children that died have also been supported. When such sad events occur they bring into very sharp focus the whole ethos of the school. Whilst the lives of our two pupils was short, their time at St Anne's was very happy, filled with fun and the school provided an education for them.

14 Sunshine Coach

Our grateful thanks go to Hendi Longman for leading the fundraising resulting in the school receiving a 'Sunshine Coach', namely a mini bus adapted to take several wheelchairs. The fundraising involved the usual methods of involving family and friends but also finding sponsors. Hendi achieved all this with the school taking delivery of the bus in April. It has already proved its worth. Congratulations Hendi.

15 Staff Moving on and Retirement

At the end of term Assistant Headteacher Katherine Willson leaves the school to take up appointment as Headteacher of Northcott School, Hull. Rachel Stott teacher and PE TLR holder also leaves for a promotion to be the KS1 SENCO at Old Clee Primary, Grimsby.

Whilst we are sorry to lose staff, we take pride in them moving on for promotion and congratulate both Katherine and Rachel thanking them for their significant contributions to the School and Sixth Form College.

Lynn Clarkson is retiring after 32 years service at the school. Lynn was also a school governor for many years and we thank her for all that she has done over the years and wish her well in her retirement.

Mike Frankish is also retiring after 16 years as our caretaker, I have mentioned the estate and grounds earlier but the school cannot function without staff like Mike and we also wish him a long and happy retirement with our grateful thanks for all that he has done.

Amanda Verity, who has been a Learning Support at St Anne's for 26 years (Cover Supervisor for the last 7), is also retiring. Amanda has led on the Asdan Expressive Arts and Workright qualifications and has run the choir and recorders lunch time clubs. The children have benefitted enormously from her dedicated service. We wish her well in her retirement.

16 Contact

Myself or any governor can be contacted at any time through the school. For Safeguarding matters I can also be contacted by telephoning 07745 817563. or by email on ogden@hobson341.karoo.co.uk or geoff.ogden@stannes.eriding.net

17 End of Term

We look forward to the new term in September when lots of exciting things are planned. In the meantime the governors hope that all pupils, their parents and carers have a lovely restful summer.

Geoff Ogden, MBE
Chair of Governors