

GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2018

Welcome to the third formal Governor' Newsletter for parents and carers of pupils and students at St Anne's School, Sixth Form College and Residence. 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 reflects discussions and decisions taken at the full meetings of the Board on 12 October 2017 and 18 January 2018 featuring the following information.

- 1 Changes in Membership of the Board of Governors
- 2 Plans to Build a New School
- 3 Academy Status and The Consortium Academy Trust
- 4 Proposed New Residence Unit
- 5 Ofsted Inspection Reports
- 6 Autism Accreditation
- 7 Twenty Four Hour Support for Parents and Carers
- 8 Parents' Evening
- 9 Headteacher's Report to Governors
- 10 Committee Meetings
- 11 Sixth Form
- 12 Safeguarding
- 13 Humber Night Challenge and Outward Bound Trust
- 14 Work Experience and Employment Opportunities
- 15 Contacting Governors

1 Changes in Membership of the Board of Governors

At the October meeting of the board Mike Cargill tendered his resignation because of his education consultancy commitments but will remain a 'friend of the school' offering support, particularly to the Sixth Form, when requested. I have thanked Mike for all his support along with his continued interest in St Anne's.

At the January meeting governors agreed to co-opt Yvonne Briggs as a new governor. Yvonne is an experienced secondary school and sixth form college senior leader with 16 years teaching experience in English Language, Literature and Media Studies. She has specialised in: Outcomes for Learners, Teaching and Learning, Safeguarding, Raising Standards at Key Stage 4 and 5, Curriculum and Data Analysis. Yvonne has been working with the school for a number of months to assist with data collection and analysis. I am delighted that she has agreed to join the team and that this was supported by my colleagues in co-opting her. Yvonne will bring significant educational skills to what is already a very strong Governing Body and will work alongside Andy Day our other very experienced former teacher.

2 Plans to Build a New School

The plans to build a new school are progressing well. Some early designs have been seen and discussed with governors and staff. They will shortly be finalised to seek planning permission

and viewed by the community in Welton. The designs are exciting and once they are finalised and approved will be available to view at the school. It is hoped that when the building commences the site will be sterile from the existing school and grounds thus not affecting access or the smooth running of the school whilst building is in progress. We hope that work will commence during the early summer to be completed in time for the new school to open in September 2019. Parents and staff will be kept informed at every stage of development. The Vice Chair of Governors Alan Willson will chair the 'New Build' Committee of the Governing Body reflecting the skills gained in his former professional life.

3 Academy Status and The Consortium Academy Trust.

Governors have submitted a formal expression of interest for St Anne's School, Sixth Form College and Residence to become an academy and join The Consortium Academy Trust. This currently includes Cottingham High School and Sixth Form College, Hessle High School and Sixth Form College, Wolfreton School and Sixth Form College, The Consortium Sixth Form Partnership, Cottingham Crosby Primary School and Peshurst Primary School, Hessle. Other schools are likely to join but it will remain very local.

The Consortium Academy Trust has been developed in order to provide a platform to deliver high quality educational experiences for the children and young people in the local community, to enhance and improve their life chances and enable them to make substantial and sustained contributions to society. As St Anne's moves into its 'due diligence' stage of considering converting to academy status thought will be given to St Anne's being the Special Educational Needs Hub within The Consortium Academy Trust structure.

These are early days and no final decision has been made but parents, carers and staff will be consulted at every stage of negotiations and planning. Between now and the next full meeting of the Board of Governors on 24 May 2018 governors will be visiting all the constituent schools of TCAT to ask a number of significant questions. A decision will be taken at the meeting of governors on 24 May as to whether to formally apply to join and this will trigger the more structured consultation process.

4 Proposed New Residence Unit

East Riding Council has approached the Headteacher and governors about establishing a Children's Home for long stay provision linked to the existing residence. It would be located in the current lower school autism block once the new school has been built in 2019 unless a new building is agreed. Its purpose would be to support a small number of children and young people who are currently sent out of the County when they are in crisis. This is not beneficial to them or their parents and is very expensive.

In discussion with the authority governors, along with Lesley and Kay as the Child Care Manager, have made the following proposals.

- The unit should be used as a long stay provision rather than a children's home.
- It supports families in 'crisis' obviating the need for children to go out of the County.
- It is registered with Ofsted as a children's home in that it is open 52-weeks per year and accommodation can be fixed stay if necessary.
- The unit is self-sufficient i.e. a large bungalow with 3 bedrooms for children, living areas, staff area, catering, laundry and activities.

- That all the children placed attend the school.
- That the unit be used as a step-up in crisis and as a step-down when their behaviour has settled.
- The management and supervision of the unit would be through the current Child Care Manager and her managers with additional staff members as required.

The discussions continue but governors view the proposal very positively for the school and region in support of children who have hit crisis and their parents. It creates a wider St Anne's Community and enhances the service that we already offer by supporting parents 24 hours a day when emergencies arise.

Governors would welcome the views of parents and carers about the proposal. Richard Vickers is the governor monitoring these developments.

5 Ofsted Inspection Reports

Between 14 and 16 November 2017 the school, college and residence was inspected by Ofsted in what was an aligned inspection of the whole establishment and its work in every field. The school inspection was the first to be completed since it was deemed to be outstanding in March 2014 and was kept to a short inspection lasting one day. The Social Care Inspection, which has to be annual because Ofsted inspect it as a residential special school, lasted three days and was very comprehensive.

The inspectors' report on the school said that it continues to be outstanding with the Leadership Team maintaining the high quality of education. "The ambition to do the very best for its pupils shines through the school's work and is shared by other leaders and governors alike."

The report highlighted that the pupils' personal development remained outstanding along with their resilience, social and emotional skills. Pupils' safety was of the highest priority to ensure that pupils are safe in school and are able to understand and manage risks to their safety at home and in the wider community. Governors were strong ambassadors for pupils with special educational needs.

The Social Care Inspection Report of the residence confirmed once again its outstanding status and stated, "The residence has a positive impact on pupils' well-being, behaviour and communication. The care of pupils is exceptionally individualised. School leaders have sustained the outstanding quality of the provision across school and residence. They are ambitious and inspirational in their achievement and their efforts do the best for pupils".

The outcomes from both inspections highlight a whole staff team approach to the work of the school involving everyone. This includes parents, carers, our partners and of course our wonderful pupils. We warmly thank and congratulate everybody for all the hard work over the year and since the last inspection of the school in 2014.

6 Autism Accreditation

In my last newsletter I mentioned the work of the last three years for the school to be formally accredited by the National Autistic Society. This provides a uniformed and standard of excellence and a systematic framework for continuous self-examination and development to

continuously improve the quality of service provision for autistic children. The school, college and residence achieved the accreditation from the society with a special commendation. St Anne's is the only school in the East Riding to achieve the accreditation and award. Congratulations again to the team.

7 Twenty Four Hour Support for Parents and Carers

The support after normal school hours for parents and carers continues particularly when they or their children are in 'crisis'. It has been used to support parents on a number of occasions and forms part of the wider Health and Well-Being Policy for the school. Governors and senior leaders understand the pressure that parents face and the hurdles they have to jump through to get help from the various responsible agencies when problems occur or the pressure gets too much. Phoning the help line to the residence after hours can ease those burdens and hopefully encourage other partners to respond promptly. Governors are grateful for the enthusiasm of staff in making this work. They have often changed their own personal arrangements to give as much support as possible. Once again a team effort. Please do not try and cope alone when such assistance is available.

8 Parents' Evenings

In my last newsletter I referred to the concerns of governors about the relatively low number of parents attending parents' evenings considering the number of children attending the school. We appreciate the difficulties with child care and other commitments. The staff and governors explored the possibility of arranging meetings with parents during the school day. It was thought that this would create as many barriers so the evening meetings continued. We are delighted to note, therefore, that at the last parents' evenings there was a very good attendance. Additionally, senior managers from the East Riding Children's Disability Team attended to speak to any parent or carer who wanted help or advice. That worked well and will be a feature of all parents' evenings along with the attendance of other partners as required. The next parents' evening will be held on 19 April 2018. Governors will also be in attendance.

9 Headteacher's Report to Governors

The Head's reports to governors at the 12 October and 18 January meetings of the Governing Body have been comprehensive with input from her senior and middle leader colleagues. The following issues have been reported upon and discussed.

- Leadership and Management
- Emotional Health and Well-Being Survey
- Basic Skills
- Creative Arts
- PSHCE
- PE
- Science
- Online Safety and Computing
- Children in the care of the Local Authority
- Staff Training
- Pupil Admissions

- Lesson Observation
- School to School Support
- Data Analysis
- Attendance
- Communication with Parents
- Partnership Working
- Health Care Support

The collection and analysis of data has been significantly re-organised since the last newsletter. It is now very structured and covers in detail, but easy to understand, the progress of pupils at every stage of their development from early years through all the key stages to leavers' destinations in the Sixth Form. The Senior Leadership Team commissioned specialist support in gathering and understanding the data but this has been an excellent investment for the whole team, governors and parents. Special mention was made of the high quality of data by the Ofsted inspector.

10 Committee Meetings

All the committees of the Governing Body have met with reports submitted to the main board. These include Curriculum, Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Human Resources, Finance, Residence and now 'New School Building'. All committees are chaired by individual governors.

The Curriculum Committee work is worthy of special mention. Governors received a presentation from Sally Sullivan the Basic Skills lead in the school about the small steps curriculum. This highlighted a more structured approach to measuring and noting the small steps that pupils make in their education and development towards independence. This was previously difficult to capture in more formal systems. The recording of 'small steps' of progress is crucial for children with additional needs and governors were very impressed with the changes and the success that they were achieving. Monitoring small steps of progression involves a partnership between staff and parents.

11 Sixth Form

At the end of the summer term in 2017 the Senior Leadership Team and governors took the view that the curriculum in the Sixth Form needed refreshing. Pupils had to be challenged more through nationally recognised accreditations. The need for this had been highlighted by the SLT and governors at the end of the 2016/17 academic year following the presentations of awards to Sixth Form students and leavers.

Consequently, the three education senior leaders over the summer worked on developing a new curriculum to include three pathways namely Blue, Yellow and Green. These are rolling curriculum programmes covering every learning and activity on and off site for the whole period a student is in the Sixth Form through to leaving the college at 19 years of age.

The new curriculum has been presented to parents. It is fully operational and is being closely monitored. More information will be provided for the parents of Sixth Form students at the Parents' evening in April. My colleague Andy Day is the governor with special responsibility for the Sixth Form.

12 Safeguarding

Keeping our children safe at school, at home and in the community is the 'Golden Thread' that runs through all that the school, college and residence does. At St Anne's we take a far wider view of safeguarding and ensure that it includes parents, carers and staff. The three designated safeguarding leads namely Lesley, Kay and Deena are extremely pro-active with safeguarding along with all staff members and through me as the Safeguarding Link Governor. The high quality of our safeguarding work was identified in both Ofsted inspection reports.

Last Autumn we met with the author of the Department for Education National Guidance, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and recommended a wider definition with identified risks for children with disabilities. This has been accepted and consequently changes will be made nationally.

On 8 January every single member of the school, college and residence staff attended a full day's training at the Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Willerby. This is now an annual event as it is not possible, at any other time of the year, for all staff members irrespective of their role to come together. The morning session covered all aspects of safeguarding children and young people with disabilities with the afternoon session including issues around the Mental Capacity Act. It also gave me the opportunity to briefly address and thank everyone on their outstanding work and achievements over the year, which was a privilege

In the last newsletter I referred to Online Safety. Parents will have received a letter from the headteacher accompanying a magazine 'Digital Parenting'. This provides basic information and guidance to help parents manage the online risks to their children and is worth keeping handy. Additionally, our Online Safety Coordinator, Sharron O'Keefe, has offered to supplement this guidance with short talks to groups of parents at the Sixth Form Friday coffee mornings. We hope that as many parents as possible take up the offer.

13 Humber Night Challenge and Outward Bound Trust

For the last four years students from the school have participated in the night time orienteering event organised by the Tribune Trust and Humberside Police. This has involved students in teams of five with support, orienteering during the night over a twelve/thirteen mile course in the lower Yorkshire Wolds from Brantingham Park.

There are a number of check points along the route which have to be completed by the team with a general theme of safety running through them. The aims of Night Challenge are to encourage teamwork, develop a sense of adventure, understand the countryside and gain knowledge of map reading and navigation. Over previous years St Anne's students have done particularly well and highlighted to others that young people with disabilities can compete alongside all young people.

I introduced the Humber Night Challenge event over ten years ago and it has now become an annual event involving 150 young people between thirteen and nineteen years of age and two hundred volunteers. It is heavily risk assessed. I am informed that there is some reluctance this year from parents for their children to participate and it would be shame if St Anne's did not field a team because of this. Parents can be assured that the event is safe and the benefits gained by students competing are considerable. Rachel Pearson our PE lead in the school is liaising with the relevant year groups and Humberside Police to enter one or two teams from St Anne's. Please support her. The event is on Saturday 24 March.

Continuing the theme of Humber Night Challenge and outward bound the school is involved in a partnership with the Outward Bound Trust. This involves giving two students from the school the opportunity to attend an Outward Bound Serious Adventure Course for one week at one of the three outward bound centres in the UK. The course will be funded through the special fund at the school made up of donations from our benefactors and again would be aimed at developing the independence of our students. Lots of support will be available and the course is part of the wider programme at the school for our students to become as independent as possible by mixing with their peers from mainstream education and organisations.

Two members of staff are due to attend a taster weekend at the Outward Bound Trust in March to assess whether our students could complete the course and speak to the instructors. The overall view is that they could and we hope that when the two students are chosen that parents will support it. The course is for young people aged fifteen to nineteen years of age. Rachel Pearson and Sue Hosdell are the teachers involved in the planning and the course would be linked to the work already underway for students to gain Duke of Edinburgh awards.

14 Work Experience and Employment Opportunities

For several years now governors, along with members of the Senior Leadership Team, have been concerned about where our students move onto post 19 after completing their education in the Sixth Form. The quality of placements is varied, some are into further education but many others involve programmes that keep our young people safe with the continued care that they have been used to in the school or residence. For some these may be the best options but not for all after the school, in partnership with parents and carers, has given them an education, developed their confidence and helped them to become as independent as possible.

As I go around the school, along with my governor colleagues, whether it be visiting the Friday Sixth Form Coffee morning, the shop, grounds, watching rehearsals for Rock Challenge, seeing our students in Night Challenge or viewing their work, I see how incredible, intelligent, humorous, motivated and kind they are. This year we have a very strong cohort in the Sixth Form and along with their parents we want them to have a productive and fulfilling next stage to their life in a career along with a chance to be independent, shine and show the world what they can do.

Whilst at the school they are supported by the Education Health and Care Plans. Students and parents are part of that. They attend annual reviews, maintain contact, are kept on track and problems are identified. Whilst the EHCP continues until the young person reaches twenty five years of age we find that when they leave the Sixth Form, interventions are fewer and they and their parents are generally on their own. It is therefore a fairly easy option to choose placements that involve continuous care, simply keeping them occupied but with little chance of independent employment or moving on.

Those qualities of our young people that we see can be extremely valuable to an employer, particularly if they work in partnership early with the school and college along with some of our partners, as our young people leave. That is why extending the work experience opportunities with the business community is crucial. Some parents may have misgivings about letting go. We all know it is hard to let our children go and appreciate that it is doubly hard when they have disabilities or autism, but they can achieve so much.

As we approach the end of another school year, when parents and carers will be working with the school on placements, please support all work experience placements and think beyond the more traditional and 'safe' placements when they leave to ensure that our students really do achieve their full potential in life.

15 Contacting Governors

Governors can be contacted at any time through Clare in the Administrative Office. I can be contacted direct via email on my St Anne's Email Account, geoff.ogden@stannes.eriding.net

Geoff Ogden, MBE
Chair of Governors