



Sutton Benger CE Primary School Governor Spotlight

April
2018

Strive, Believe, Succeed! We strive to do our best, believe in the values of God and succeed together...in friendship

Sutton Benger School Vision Statement

To provide a creative curriculum and inspiring learning environment which encourages every child to reach their potential by becoming a confident, self-motivated and independent learner. Through purposeful leadership and effective communication we strive to give all our pupils the lifelong gift of prayer and the certainty that they are loved and valued.

Academisation Update

Governors met at the end of last term to continue our journey in exploring the opportunity of becoming an Academy with the Diocese of Bristol Academy Trust (DBAT). John Swainston, CEO of DBAT, and Jeremy Piper, one of DBAT's School Improvement Advisors, attended our Full Governing Body meeting (and Jeremy also met with staff in school the week before) to answer our questions and provide information about the services and support that DBAT could provide for Sutton Benger School.

As you know we are committed to safeguarding the ethos and values of Sutton Benger School - every conversation we have continues to be grounded in having the best interests of the children and families of the community at heart. As a governing body we are keen to ensure that the school is part of a wider organisation that can support and develop it as the role and reach of the Local Authority diminishes. We want to be able to access and provide support, training, and school improvement services more widely, and play a key role in the government's continued aim to create a school-led, self-improving school system. We want to benefit from the economies of scale that can be created when working together, and gain the support and expertise of a professional MAT organisation. We want to free up the time and resources of our senior leaders so they can concentrate more fully on the core elements of teaching and learning by delegating responsibility for HR, overarching financial management, facilities and other core services.

We don't yet have all the answers for what joining DBAT will look like, and we haven't yet fully clarified the financial implications of joining. We want to provide as much information as possible for parents and staff, and describe the conversion process in detail. As a result Governors have decided to initiate the formal consultation process stage which will provide extensive opportunities for all stakeholders to find out about the implications, benefits, the pros, cons and process of becoming an academy, and to ask questions to gain a deeper understanding. We have not and are not committed to becoming an academy at this stage – the consultation process will arm us with the information we need to make an informed decision. We look forward to finding out your views and any concerns which will help us decide how to proceed. We will be in touch soon to outline a timeline for this formal consultation process.

Link Governor Visit Update

Each Governor at Sutton Benger School is responsible for monitoring a key subject area – part of our role is to visit the school to carry out learning walks and pupil conferencing, look at children's work, talk to teacher subject leaders and check that policies are being followed effectively. We look at subject action plans and data and jointly with the subject leader, identify areas for improvement in their subject. In a recent assessment focussed link governor visit pupils consistently articulated that they enjoy school and the learning they are doing, referencing specific pieces of work and lessons, and reflecting that they are being appropriately challenged. In the English link governor visit it was observed that strong links had been made between Sutton Benger and Oaksey leading to the development of writing workshops between Year 2 and Year 6 children. In maths, a book scrutiny carried out jointly by the subject leader and link governor revealed that children are working at greater depth and that maths now has a higher profile across the school. Visiting the school, talking with children and staff, and exploring what is being planned and taught is helpful for governors to understand better what is happening in school and to help them provide robust challenge and support to leaders.



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Pupil Progress Update

In last year's Year 6 SAT tests we were pleased that our pupil attainment results (the percentage of children which achieved the expected standard in the SATs tests in May 2017) were in line with the national averages. However, our progress results were below the national average figures. It is important to note that the progress measures that are used nationally have changed. Four years ago, when last year's Year 6 cohort was in Year 2, the children were measured using National Curriculum 'levels' (the children were expected to achieve Level 2b, to be working at expected in the Year 2 tests). The children were then required to achieve 4b to make expected progress by the Year 6 tests. Two years ago, the measures were changed and children are now required to be working 'within expected' for their year group. If the children did not reach the required expectations, they were working 'below expectations' and if they exceeded expectations, they were working 'above expectations'. This lack of correlation between the 'measuring benchmarks' of the two systems has produced challenges for all schools nationally.

The staff and Governors have examined the data from last year very closely and have introduced a range of additional strategies to ensure that current practice improves the progress the children are making, particularly across the whole of key stage 2. Staff are working hard to ensure that progress is maintained and developed across all year groups, so that a solid learning base is in place for the children to build on. New standardised testing systems have been introduced in each year group where children's progress is matched against their chronological age to show progress. This contributes to the ongoing teacher assessment by which teachers use evidence in the children's books, what the children say about their learning, feedback from other adults as well as children's test results to make a judgement on a child's attainment and progress. Class teachers, staff subject leaders, link subject governors and external School Improvement Advisors then carefully monitor this assessment information. Actions are put in place to ensure that where children might not be making sufficient progress, parents are informed and additional support is provided where appropriate. We are confident that these measures will improve our progress outcomes in the next round of SAT tests.

James Hirst - spotlight on a new Governor

As a family, we made a big move from London to "the village" in September 2015 to coincide with Harry starting school. It was a move which could have been made a lot harder if he didn't settle in but fortunately that was not the case as from day one the school made the transition easy for him.

With Ava starting in Rainbow class this September, followed in a couple of years by our youngest daughter Milly, I certainly have a vested interest in ensuring the school succeeds, however this was not the only reason that I became a governor.

As the managing director of a London based brand design agency, my role is to oversee the strategic direction of the company; from ensuring we deliver the work our clients expect to constantly evaluating how we 'stand out' from the crowd in a highly competitive and uncertain industry. It's also a role that I believe has considerable overlap with that of a school governor.



It's early days but I hope my experience can be used to help the school navigate through what is certainly an interesting time and ensure it continues to offer an environment that enables our children to grow and thrive."

Key Contacts

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Sutton Benger Governors - website

For more information about what the governors at Sutton Benger Primary School do, please visit the school website: www.suttonbenger.org

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