



OUR GOVERNORS

Co-Chairs of Governors

Sandra Boyd
Susan Hatton

Vice Chair

Sarah Johnston

Headteacher

Leila Murray

Co-opted Governors

Robert Brewer
Vernon Cowdell
Kate Jenner
Steve Kingcome
Paul Marshall

Parent Governors

Emma Brown
Kat Crisp

Staff Governor

Helen Wright



OUR CHAIRS OF GOVERNORS

The last academic year (2017 -2018) brought a change to our Chair of Governors role, with the election of Sandra Boyd and Sue Hatton as Co-Chairs. The role of Chair of Governors demands a lot of time and commitment and, as both Sandra and Sue are school governors at other schools as well, they offered to share the role and split the chair's responsibilities between them.

'This year, as co-chair, has been a full one with, amongst other routine external visits; an Ofsted inspection, a pupil premium review and a review of the school's special education needs and disability (SEND). I have been a governor at this school since the beginning of 2012. Regardless of my background in post 16 education and training, this role has been a challenging one with new initiatives, DfE and WSCC LA asking for 'more' on a regular basis. Naively, when I started in 2012 I thought I would have ended my term as a governor before any of my grandchildren joined the school but I'm still here in my second term and, as many of you will know, I do have a granddaughter in year 5. My governor link roles are safeguarding, SEND and the pupil voice. I recently met with six children from each year group, two from each class and explored with them their school experience. Twenty minutes with each year group was challenging as they were keen to tell me just about everything. The key themes that came from each year group was that teachers make learning at The Windmills fun and exciting. They knew and understood the school values as well as British values. I was able to conclude that the children feel safe in school and would know what to do if, for some reason, they didn't. On a personal note, I hope you all had a wonderful summer holiday and enjoyed working through the summer projects and challenges with your children.' Sandra Boyd

GOVERNORS RESPONSE TO OUR OFSTED REPORT

This was my sixth involvement with an Ofsted inspection and have been involved in another since so I can say with confidence that, with the ever-changing goalposts, this inspection was challenging. The head and deputy head were both clear before inspection that the school was borderline, or 'cuspy' as the lead inspector continuously stated, but we were hopeful that enough progress had been made to warrant a 'good'. The inspectors left no stone unturned in their efforts to be both fair and thorough.

They scrutinised the evidence that had been gathered and agreed that much progress had been made but they felt there was still work to be done to be a sound 'good' school. They, in common with other reviewers and visitors, were impressed with the behaviour of the children and they were confident that the school's key priorities were the right ones to be working on and that senior leadership had the capacity to continue to move the school forward. As the head said, when she met with parents post inspection, there were aspects of the decision that the school didn't agree with but the school accepted the decision and will use it to inform us and grow from. Leila and Steve are, as ever, very focussed on making the children's time at The Windmills the best that they can and so we move on. Sandra Boyd



MAKING EVERY PENNY COUNT

Our review of the budget from the last financial year illustrated again that our leadership team are continuing to produce amazing educational results under great financial pressure.

The repairs to the roof ran to time and to budget – the school had to contribute to the costs paying 5% of the bill with the rest being paid for by West Sussex County Council.

Our IT purchasing strategy is something the leadership team have been working hard on, looking at our current stock and our IT needs into the future so we can continue to give the students access to the latest technology throughout their school careers with us.

The Resources Committee continues to have the responsibility of performing a Health & Safety review and a committee member does a walk round with the Premises Manager to assess security and safety of the school premises. The premises have never been more secure and the completion of the work at Downlands will lead to increased security for The Windmills.

Emma Brown, Vice Chair Resources Committee

WELCOMING OUR NEW GOVERNORS

This year we've welcomed Kate Jenner as a new co-opted governor, Kat Crisp as a new parent governor and Helen Wright as the new staff governor. Here are Kat & Helen's thoughts on joining the Governing Board.

'As a parent, I have been very pleased with The Windmills and I wanted to join the Governing Body to provide ongoing support to the school, particularly in light of the Ofsted inspection. I am very passionate about the importance of a broad and balanced curriculum and bring experience from a range of different roles and types of organisations, which I hope will be of benefit. '

- Kat Crisp, Parent Governor

'As a staff governor I hope to support the board in understanding the impact of changes from the points of view of the staff as well as championing the brilliant work they already do. It is important for me to broaden my own knowledge and see the school from a slightly different perspective. So far it has been incredibly informative.'

– Helen Wright, Staff Governor

CONGRATULATIONS & THANK YOU...

The governing board would like to congratulate last year's Year 6 on their stunning end of year performance and wish them all the success in the world as they move on to Downlands. Please take our school values with you. Also congratulations on the sporting achievements last term both in walking away with all the trophies at the Mid Sussex Schools Sports Day and for the efforts in our own sports day. What good natured, supportive and encouraging pupils we have! However, the dads in the parents' races were a bit scary for the governors holding the finish tape!

We extend our thanks to The Friends of Windmills School for all their amazing fundraising activities and for their contributions to equipment and exciting workshops and other events for the children. You do an amazing job. With much to challenge the governors this academic year we will be looking to increase the income from lettings to outside groups and organisations and to support the school in their endeavours to maintain a broad and balanced curriculum for the children whilst facing the challenges ahead with the school's budget.



SARAH JOHNSTON SHARES HER THOUGHTS ON HER FIRST YEAR AS A PARENT GOVERNOR

Expectations

I wanted to be a governor so I could help my daughters get the best out of their time here. I genuinely had no idea what it meant, and as someone who has back-to-back meetings all day, the predicted 12 meetings a year did not phase me. I just thought I could make some suggestions about how we can work with the local community more and how we can offer more fun things for the kids to do!

I was a little naive and did not really understand that governors are absolutely NOT involved in the day to day running of the school and things like setting the curriculum or influencing what the children actually do in lessons. Governors are much more strategic in nature and our key responsibility is to set the school vision, ethos and strategic direction; hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and overseeing the financial performance of the school to make sure our money is well spent.

Reality - What does a governor do?

Well, basically we must:

1. Read all briefing documents and attend mandatory/ key training
2. Read documents circulated by school prior to meetings and plan questions to be asked to challenge and hold the leadership team to account.
3. Attend meetings and ask questions

4. Visit school to gain information on Key Development Priorities and see the work being undertaken by the school
5. Produce visit reports to inform whole Governing Body. This does involve a lot of meetings and a lot of reading!!

I went to some mandatory training courses to understand the role better, and after a handful of meetings started to understand how our presence at the many meetings helps to ensure the school is always moving towards their own development priorities.

- Hours I've spent working on governor stuff: 77
- Number of documents read: 130 (estimate 😊) ranges between 5 and 20 documents before each meeting!
- Number of meetings attended: 13

Pride

Seeing how our school works beyond the lens of a parent has been a real eye opener for me. I had no idea how much work goes on to ensure the children get the best out of their time here. And I've seen first-hand how proud the leadership team are of our school and how focused and committed they are to doing the very best they can for our children.

I am proud to be a School Governor and am committed to adding value where I can, from a strategic and analytical angle rather than anything to do with teaching! Some Y4 girls asked me when I visited their maths class recently "Are you a school governor?" Yes, I replied. "Do you think our school is nice?" they asked. Before I could answer one of their friends piped up "Of COURSE she does, otherwise she wouldn't send her daughters here".

They all giggled at this – but they were absolutely right: now that I've been a governor for a year I am even more convinced of how great the school is and how glad I am that we uprooted our family to move to Hassocks, a place where my daughters can walk to school past rolling fields, and where all the schools are excellent.

Sarah Johnston, Parent Governor

