



Mary Exton Primary School

Governor Newsletter – December 2018



Keep up to date and keep in touch

Keep up to date with what governors are doing and give us feedback by visiting our governor web pages. We will also send out termly updates in our governor newsletter.

There are various ways in which you can give us your feedback, comments and general views about all areas of school life:

1. Respond to our parent/carer surveys;
2. Contact the governors directly - obviously we don't work in the school, so it's not as easy to pop in and speak with us, but you can leave a message for us at the school office.

We also love to chat to parents/carers in person so if you see us around school wearing our white governor lanyards, please feel free to come and speak to us.

Welcome to our Governor Newsletter

Christmas is nearly upon us – carols are being sung, mince pies are being eaten and Santa and his reindeer are doing their limbering up exercises. It has been such a treat to be able to watch the Christmas performances from KS1 and Reception, all the pupils and staff involved were a credit to us. Everyone at Mary Exton Primary has been incredibly busy this term, including the governors, so read on for a snapshot of what we've been up to this term.

The new academic year started with a fantastic INSET day where all members of staff and the governors had a chance to take part in a game of wheelchair basketball! It was great fun and it helped everyone realise how important team work and shared goals are. There were many sore muscles to be soaked in the evening, but it was worth it. It was a great opportunity for the governors to get to know school staff and other members of the school community and to explore how our role supports and challenges the school.

At the first Governing Board meeting both Karen Gordon and Sue Hughes were re-elected to be Co-Chairs of the Governors with Katie Alfred re-elected as Vice-Chair. We are pleased to welcome a new co-opted governor Mike Clarke who brings with him a wealth of experience and has a background in finance. See his governor profile later in this newsletter.

As you will be aware from the school summer newsletter, this is the first year, we have had to set a deficit budget. One of the jobs of the board of governors is: 'overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.' We have a governor working party reviewing and monitoring the finances closely.

Nationally school budgets have been cut and this, as you can imagine, has serious effects and impact for individual schools, especially for a one form entry like ourselves. We are fortunate that our headteacher has been proactive and

alongside colleagues and governors attended Hertfordshire financial sustainability workshop this term and have devised a 3-year action plan.

The PTA is an integral part of our school community and over the years, they have raised crucial funds to help Mary Exton flourish. Funds raised by the PTA are incredibly important and, in the future will become even more so. We would like to thank all those that have been involved so far with film nights, cake sales and the amazing Christmas event. Every penny matters and is for the benefit of all our children. The clothing recycle bin (in the school car park), company match funding and easyfundraising app are all easy ways to generate money.

School budgets are determined by two census days, one in November and one in January. It is therefore imperative that all pupils attend school on these days. **The next key date is 19th January 2019.** We thank you in advance for your support with this.



What do governors do?

We are responsible for ensuring that the school is run well and that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. We provide strategic leadership and management and ensure accountability.

Full Governing Board

The full governing board meets twice termly to oversee the work of the governing board and ratifying key decisions and policies. Each meeting has a focus either **Resources or School Improvement**

Resources issues relating to finance, staffing, health and safety, school premises, and safeguarding.

School Improvement deal with matters relating to learning, with a focus on raising standards and monitoring attainment & progress.

Pay Review Panel

This panel meets annually to oversee the implementation of the School's Pay Policy Considering recommendations for staff pay awards based on appraisal outcomes.

Governor Training

Since September governors have attended training in financial management, new to governance, safer recruitment refresher, Chairs Briefing and the Annual Hertfordshire Governor Conference. We're always keen to keep up-to-date and attend as many as the Local Authority's courses as we can.

Governor Day – Monday 3rd December 2018

Earlier this month all governors were privileged to be in school for the day – it was an action packed day and we were all impressed by our pupils and hardworking and dedicated staff.

During the day we met with parents/carers, pupils and staff. We had an in-depth look at the way the school is working and all governors enjoyed sitting with the children having lunch in the school dining hall.

Parental Engagement

Previously, from the last parent/carer survey you have told us that you haven't always felt as involved in your child's school experience. We are pleased that the school introduced "Teacher Surgery" drop in sessions on Tuesday afternoons which is a great chance to discuss things at the earlier opportunity. A reminder that appointments are booked via the school office.

During this term the school held an English Writing Curriculum evening which was well attended and then there was an opportunity for parents/carers to attend an actual English lesson during the next couple of days. Feedback was very positive and it was noted that some parents also learnt something too!

A Maths Curriculum evening is being held in January (16th) and we hope to see as many of you as possible there.

Who are the governors?

Karen Gordon (Co-Chair of Governing board) – Parent Governor
Sue Hughes (Co-Chair of Governing board) – Co-opted Governor
Katie Alfred (Vice-Chair of Governing board) – Parent Governor
Bernard Lovewell – Local Authority Governor
Chris Roblett – Parent Governor
Mariola Bochnak-Sales – Parent Governor
Mike Clarke – Co-opted Governor
Jenny Morgan – Co-opted Governor
Angharad Paterson - Headteacher
Becky Pope – Staff Governor
Lianne Taylor – Associate Governor
Vacancy – Co-opted Governor

To see a more detailed profile of each governor, please visit:
www.maryexton.herts.sch.uk/aboutus/governors

Governor Profile – Mike Clarke



What experience do you bring to Mary Exton?

I have extensive experience in people, project programme, financial and business management coupled with many years of assisting companies to grow and flourish. I worked for BT for 32 years in a variety of roles leading a variety of organisation and change management programmes.

I feel that my experience and skills are invaluable to helping the school and was delighted to be appointed to become a governor at Mary Exton and to be able to join with, and contribute to, a team committed to working with everyone to grow the school, encourage its staff and support parents in doing the best for all our children.

What is your background in education?

I have extensive experience in being a school governor as I have been a governor at two schools – Deputy Chair at Wheatfields Infant and Primary School in St Albans and Chair of Governors at Wilbury Junior School in Letchworth.

What made you want to become a governor?

I have seen the impact that a good education can have on individuals and communities. Thus I want to work with the Mary Exton team, governors and community to ensure that all children receive the best education possible.

What do you do when you're not working as a governor?

Now that I am retired I am able to enjoy I have a range of hobbies including music, gardening, involvement in a wine group. And, of course, holidays!

School Development Plan (SDP)

The priorities for this year which the governors are monitoring are:

- 1) Continue to ensure that the provision for writing leads to strong progress for all (including those with high prior attainment)
- 2) Continue to ensure that the provision for mathematics leads to strong progress for all (including those with high prior attainment)
- 3) Develop the wider curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of the pupils in the school (through developing the role of subject leaders)
- 4) Increase the progress of SEND pupils

The Senior Leadership Team have made significant strides with our school priorities and it is pleasing to report that in September when the school had external advisers in this is what they said:

*“Overall, senior leaders’ drive to improve standards of teaching and learning are having an increasingly positive impact. Senior leaders’ analysis of school progress data shows that the **rate of progress** is accelerating, with progress in 2017-2018 across the school largely at least as expected and many areas where progress is **better than expected**. Leaders are continuing their relentless drive to improve standards of teaching and learning, and the improving progress reflects their successes to date.”*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Paterson and all her staff for all their hard work, dedication and commitment in providing the best education for all our pupils. We hope that all staff, pupils and yourselves enjoy the Festive Season and look forward to seeing you in 2019!

Best Wishes

Karen Gordon and Sue Hughes

(Co- Chairs of the Governing Board)

