

Malvern Way Infant and Nursery School

Letter from the Governors July 2016

As we are approaching the end of another academic year it seems that time is just flying by. We held our last full governing body meeting for the 2015-16 academic year in early July. We (your school governors) would like to share some of our thoughts and highlights of the past year with you.

Mrs Cole and the team continue to drive the school forwards looking at new and innovative ways to help our children achieve their potential and become lifelong learners. The focus on embedding a 'growth mindset' culture within the School has developed children's capacity to learn and supports their emotional development. There remains a focus on promoting positive behaviours and respect, encapsulating our own values and the British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Our new kitchen has been a great success with children regularly baking delicious smelling delicacies. We continue to develop our links with Little Green meeting with the Heads and Chairs termly. We work together not only to help make sure that transition between the schools is smooth for pupils but we also liaise over policies, shared staff/parent training and term dates.

At our last meeting Abby Hickling stood down as Co-Chair of Governors (although she will remain a governor) and Susan Hughes agreed to take on the role of Chair full time; she will be supported by Laura Clark as Vice-Chair.

Sadly Sue Bussey and Nevin Bhandari decided to stand down as governors at this meeting due to other demands on their time. We would like to thank them all for their support shown to the School, especially Sue who has been a governor with us for 12 years. We will be advertising for replacement parent and LA governors in September.



Who are we and what do we do?

This is a simple question but a key one that we are often asked! The Governing Body are representative volunteers from different sections of our community who work with Mrs Cole and the School to agree our vision, ethos and strategic direction; hold the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the School and its pupils and oversee the financial performance of the School and making sure its money is well spent.

This means that we review data on pupils' progress and attainment, look at our school targets to monitor whether we are achieving these and review and agree the budget, including monitoring how we spend ring fenced funding such as our Pupil Premium Grant, staffing costs and other key spending. We review and agree policies and procedures and ensure that we provide a safe and appropriate environment for our children. This includes monitoring how we safeguard children from harm, the premises and health and safety. We want to have input from our stakeholders and so recently sent you a survey asking for feedback about our school, the results of which will be published separately.

Resources Committee update from Tim Craig

In my capacity as Chair of the Resources Committee, I am pleased to report that the school's finance strategy and personnel management and control are in good shape. The school's annual budget has been closely adhered to, providing effective and appropriate support to HR, welfare, training and development issues.

In addition a new kitchen has been installed, which looks great, has been well received and is being used to good effect! The school has also benefited from new carpeting in the main corridor and extensive plumbing work.

And finally, a working party was agreed for our annual completion of the Schools Financial Values Standards (SFVS). This was completed to a high standard and helps us provide assurance to the local authority that we have secure financial management in place at Malvern Way Infant and Nursery School.

The governing body is made up of the following representatives:

- Parent governors (Laura Clarke and Susan Hughes)
- LEA governor (vacant)
- Staff governor (Ben Reid)
- Headteacher (Emma Cole)
- Co-opted governors (Abby Hickling, Alistair Imrie, Ann Palmer, Hazel Hall and Tim Craig)
- Associate members (Holly Butcher and Mel Numan)

We ask each governor to build links with and develop their understanding of a key area within the School to gain a deeper knowledge about how this is taught or managed, for example we have people linked to: English, Maths, PE, Computing, Special Educational Needs and Inclusion. Further details about us and our roles can be found on the school website.

Governor Day report from Laura Clarke

In March the Governors were invited to spend a day at the school for Governor Day. As a new Governor, this was a fantastic opportunity to see all the great work by the staff and children throughout the school. We attended badges assembly and spent time with the School Council and Eco Warriors. It was fantastic to see how passionate the children are and how confident they are discussing their excellent work. We had an opportunity to visit classrooms and see some really engaging lessons as well as the wonderful quality of the children's work displayed in the classrooms. All of the children were so polite and helpful during our visit and their pride in their school and achievements really shone through. The Governors would like to express our thanks to all the staff for welcoming us as well as for all the fantastic work they put in throughout the year.

Curriculum Committee update from Ann Palmer

Over the last school year the Curriculum Committee have continued to review the School Development Plan with a particular focus on Building Learning Powers and the 6C's. We have reviewed a number of policies including the schools Visions and Values, Anti-Bullying, Behaviour & Disciplinary, EYFS, PSHE, E-Safety and SEN.

Another focus has been how the Sports Premium has been used to develop Outdoor Adventurous Activity (OAA) at Malvern Way providing pupils with the opportunity to take part in Orienteering within the school grounds and the introduction of the Play Rangers at lunchtime providing a variety of activities for pupils to take part in.

The committee has also continued to review the progress of our pupils over the year. Early data shows us that Malvern Way pupils continue to make excellent progress in Reading, Writing and Mathematics which continue to be above the national and Hertfordshire averages and is a wonderful testament to the quality of teaching at Malvern Way.

Governor development update from Ben Reid

As Governors at Malvern Way School we see it paramount that we continue to develop our own understanding of the everyday running of the school. Each year Governors acquire and develop new skills so that we can carry out our roles fully. This year the governing body took part in a data training session led by Ben Fuller who is the Lead Assessment Adviser for Hertfordshire. The training enabled us to understand how to make best use of our performance data and what it tells us about our children's achievements at school. There are many training sessions that Governors attend throughout the year which keep us up to date with new policies and rationales.

Sue Bussey

As I am retiring as a governor after spending twelve years at Malvern Way and over forty years working in and with schools, I was pondering about what makes a successful school. After my introductory tour I could tell immediately that it was an excellent one. It was something to do with the cheerful buzz around the building, the way that pupils smiled at Mrs English, the Headteacher, in passing, and how all seemed to be enjoying their learning while actively engaged in all the classrooms. Later visits just reinforced these first impressions, as I became aware of how hard all the staff worked cohesively as a team with energetic enthusiasm for the good of the pupils. There have been many educational changes in these 12 years and in the school itself. As far as the premises are concerned, amongst the most striking were the eventual construction of the lovely new classrooms after so many years of waiting, the addition of canopies outside the classrooms so these areas could be used in all weathers, and so many improvements being made to the outdoor learning environment with the provision of so much useful and attractive equipment. As far as academic work was concerned the curriculum changed several times, providing staff with yet more retraining and new challenges, but they rose to these and the school is often held up as a role model for other schools in the county. Their dedication culminated in the award of "Outstanding" by the Ofsted inspectors who descended on the school on the very day we had planned to interview for a new Headteacher! However, the next week we appointed Mrs Cole, so that was a very exciting time for Malvern Way. Recently the Governor Day initiative has also proved an interesting venture which everyone voted a great success. What makes a successful school? I think it is the whole school community: children, families, FOMW and all the staff which make Malvern Way such an outstanding one. I have been proud to be connected with it.

Finally we would like to thank all of the other volunteers who give up their time to make our school run so smoothly, including parent helpers and FoMW. Thank you.

Congratulations to Mrs Cole and the team on yet another successful year. We continue to be amazed at how dedicated all staff are to ensuring that not only do our children receive an outstanding education but that this is delivered in a diverse and stimulating way that develops the whole child; providing a nurturing and exciting place for them to be each day. We hope that you have a lovely summer.

We hope this provides some insight into the role of governors at our school. If you have any comments or concerns please do not hesitate in writing to the governors, c/o the School Office.