

## GOVERNOR NEWS – March 2017

Welcome to our latest edition of “Governor News”, bringing you information about what we, as governors, have been up to so far this academic year.

### GOVERNORS – WHO ARE WE?

The **governor page of Curzon’s new website** includes a full list of our current governors, with photos to help you identify us, and certain other governor information we are required by law to publish:

[www.curzonschool.co.uk/wp/governors](http://www.curzonschool.co.uk/wp/governors)

A **summary of the role of the Governing Body and how it operates** can be found by clicking this link.

At the end of last academic year, we said farewell to **Mr Adam Hopkinson**, who had to stand down due to his increasing work and travel commitments. We have been delighted to have **Mrs Zoe Clark** join our Governing Body as a foundation governor and to welcome back **Mrs Sally Elsey**, also as a foundation governor, following her return from a year in Australia. This academic year **Mr Michael Thomas** has been appointed as an Associate Member, supporting one of our working parties. **Mrs Rhiannon Lawrence** continues this year as **Chair** of the Governing Body. This term, **Mr Ian Miller and Mr Nick Halle-Smith** have replaced Dr Rhoda McDouall as **joint Vice-Chairs**.

### FULL GOVERNING BODY

The full Governing Body – 12 governors plus our clerk – meets twice a term. Mrs Coles presents her termly ‘Head’s Report’ and policies are reviewed. We **monitor progress** made in meeting the targets set out in the **School Development Plan** which sets out priorities for the current academic year, and we also undertake regular SWOT analyses (identifying the school’s **S**trengths and **W**eaknesses, together with the **O**pportunities and **T**hreats that face the school). Individual committees feed back at these meetings, as do governors with specific responsibilities, such as safeguarding, special education needs, or Early Years. We monitor how the school is spending the Sports Premium funding and its impact on pupils across the school, as well as the impact of any Pupil Premium funding received.

The full governing body meetings each half term also include a ‘focus’ discussion topic which is led by a particular governor. Topics during the last 12 months have included continuing the **development of our 3-5 year strategic plan and long term vision**; deepening our understanding of **assessment** under the new National Curriculum; reviewing how we are meeting both our **safeguarding responsibilities** and our **equality responsibilities**. We have set our **Equality Objectives for the coming year**, namely, to give staff and governors training on the Equality Act 2010 and its application to Curzon; and to review Curzon’s policies to ensure that they give effect to our Public-Sector Equality Duty.

During this last year, a **working party** of the Governing Body has been keeping a watchful eye on developments nationally and county-wide with regard to the **future educational landscape**. Although the government has withdrawn its requirement for all schools to plan to convert to Academy status by 2022, cuts to the funding of services currently provided to schools by the Local Authority are likely to mean that over time, schools will no longer be able to source all the support they need from the Local Authority, and will instead seek that support by grouping together in Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs). What has become clear throughout this investigative journey so far, is that **working in partnership with other schools is key**. At Curzon we have been doing this already for a number of years, for example, through shared staff training; liaison groups for heads, deputies, admin staff, governors; fine tuning the Learning Ladders assessment system; subject/key stage

moderation; or buying in to the sports events package that allows our pupils to participate in inter-school sports days. We can expect to see more of this working in partnership in future. We will continue to keep abreast of developments locally over the coming months, remaining mindful of the distinctive character and ethos of Curzon and of what would benefit our pupils and staff.

## **CURRICULUM AND ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE**

We are delighted this year to welcome Mrs Zoe Clark onto our committee. As an employee at another local primary school and librarian, she brings us lots of ideas and expertise.

Having spent last year getting to grips with the new assessment system, we are now in a **good position to analyse data** and have been looking at how well your children are progressing in reading, writing, Maths and Science.

We have also been continuing to work closely with subject leaders to **monitor foundation subjects**. Last term, we focused on **Science asking pupils about the wow factor of this subject and what aspects of lessons helped them learn most**. Lots of pupils stated that they enjoyed investigations and a few suggested that we should build science labs! Although we are unable to create secondary school style science labs, the Science workshop day earlier this month gave them an exciting scientific experience and will have broadened pupils' experience.

Eco is one of Curzon's three curriculum drivers and we have been working closely with the subject leader to evaluate progress in this area. **Forest school continues to be effective in building children's resilience, problem solving and team working skills** –not to mention their love of mud! A further Spring Wonderland day is currently being planned.

We are always keen to evaluate new initiatives and have **met with children to discuss the token reward system**. Feedback has been positive with children saying that they like the end of half term Mufti reward. **Challenging the more able pupils in Maths** by making them think and reason about their work is a key focus of our school development plan (those of you with children in KS2, may have heard mention of chillies). Some of the 'spicier chilli' challenges (the spicier the chilli challenge, the harder it is) are really quite tricky as often there is more than one answer or way of reaching an answer. We have been talking to children about how they are finding these and how they are **developing growth mindset skills of determination and perseverance** when tackling them.

With regard to Admissions, our Committee is responsible for approving and overseeing the implementation of Curzon's Admissions Policy each year, watching over applications, pupil numbers and pupil projections, which are currently very secure.

## **FINANCE, PERSONNEL AND GENERAL COMMITTEE**

The Finance, Personnel and General Committee is responsible for **monitoring of the school's budget**, approving expenditure, whilst ensuring we follow government-set standards and make the most out of every penny we have. It is unsurprising that the clear majority of funds are spent on the employment of our wonderful staff whilst the remainder is split on day-to-day maintenance, equipment, resources and administration.

Funding for schools, particularly small primary schools like Curzon, has recently been a regular item in the news with the planned move to the **new national funding formula**, rather than the current formula which is calculated by County. There is still much uncertainty surrounding the new formula and we will continue to monitor developments so as to understand the impact it will have on our budget.

As a church school, we also receive funds from the Diocese that must be spent on **capital improvements** and as a result you may have noticed the commencement of work to **upgrade the lighting** throughout the school, starting with the hall and onto Years 3 to 5 classrooms. In addition, **new CCTV cameras** will be erected shortly to ensure a safe external environment for our children.

### **PREMISES, HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

The Premises and Health & Safety Committee continues to enjoy a lower profile whilst we have no major building projects to prepare for. Aply assisted by Mrs Bradshaw, we continue to **ensure the fabric of the buildings and the school grounds are maintained to a high standard** and where finances allow, we continue to upgrade facilities, most recently with our wonderful new hall lights and by agreeing to provide a supply of hot water to the Year 6 Classroom (to facilitate art lessons). What has made a huge impact this year is Mrs Bradshaw's in-depth knowledge of the school premises and particularly of who is best placed to repair or replace items. Her ability to engage parents, helpers and tradesman to prioritise our school and provide their time at short notice and either free of charge, or at reduced costs, has made a huge contribution. This in turn has enabled Mrs Coles to concentrate more of her time away from day to day maintenance matters and onto things that really add value to the school.

### **FOUNDATION GOVERNORS**

Foundation Governors have the same role as that of other governors save that we have a legal responsibility to ensure that the **distinctive character of the school** as a Church of England (i.e. Christian) school is '**observed and developed**'.

Over the past year, the Foundation Governors have met to consider a range of issues. One of those has been the **RE curriculum and what key concepts can be identified and developed as the children move through the school**; for example, what does "God's love" or "Prayer" mean for a child in Reception, Year 3 and Year 6? We have also considered and reviewed Curzon's **Collective Worship** Policy in order to assist staff/leaders with what we would hope to see in collective worship and ways in which we can support and encourage class assemblies. The Foundation Governors have discussed (and are very enthusiastic about) Curzon obtaining an **RE Quality Mark**; were we to get it, Curzon would be the second primary school in Buckinghamshire. Another item which we have discussed is the summer term **whole school RE unit on the Bible**: the aim of this unit is to give the children an overview of the whole Bible helping them to understand how it all connects together pointing forward to Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Each child will be given their own copy of the Jesus Storybook Bible at the end of the unit.

Alongside the regular Christian input through assemblies, displays and teaching, there have been a range of particular **activities and events at Curzon which have encouraged and supported the children's understanding of the Christian faith**. These have included the RE group, a Bible Art Club, the Parent's Prayer Group, church visits, the choir singing at the village Christmas lunch, Year 6 attending "Christmas Unwrapped" at Holmer Green Baptist Church and much else besides!

### **CLASS GOVERNORS**

The role of the class governor is to **get to know the children** in their classes and aspects of the curriculum they are learning about. We try to **visit** our classes at least once each term and some governors are able to **help out** in their class on a regular basis or accompany their class on a **school trip**. Class governors are currently: Class 1: Rev Captain Simmons; Class 2: Mr Hornsby; Class 3: Mrs Clark; Class 4: Mrs Lawrence; Class 5: Mr Halle-Smith; Class 6: Mr Powell.

### **PLANS FOR THE SUMMER TERM 2017...**

It's now over four years since our last Ofsted inspection, so we anticipate that **Ofsted** may visit us during the summer term.

Towards the end of the summer term, we will be carrying out our annual **parent survey**, to seek your views on what the school is doing well and any areas you may consider need further improvement.

We hope this newsletter has been of interest to you. If you have any feedback or any questions, please do not hesitate to contact any of the governors.

We wish you all an enjoyable Easter break and a good summer term!

***Curzon Governors***

**31<sup>st</sup> March 2017**