



**Harwell Community Primary School**

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Governors' newsletter 8: April 2019

Welcome to the Governors' Newsletter and a particular welcome to all those who joined the school community since my last letter in November. I'm sure you've had a warm reception from staff, pupils and parents alike and hope you are settling well into the school.

In the last newsletter I explained that there would be some Governor vacancies in April as three Governors complete their terms of office. I am pleased to inform you that several people showed interest and Mr Chris Smith, Mrs Frances Wilson and Mrs Kirsten Christensen have all agreed to join the Governing body. Chris has expertise in the Financial sector and Frances in Human Resources. All three have children or will have children attending Harwell school and all live in the community. Minutes from our meetings are available from the school office and are displayed on the board outside Mr Gibson's office. If there is anything you'd like covered in the next newsletter please do let us know.

We are often in school during lesson time and also at parents evenings and workshops, so do come and talk to us. We will be in the playground on the morning of April 5th and would love to talk to some of you.

We are pleased that The Barn after school club continues to be popular and the children are benefitting from the improved environment and activities. Governors wish to thank the staff for all their hard work in making this enterprise so successful.

Best wishes,  
Ann Parham  
Chair of Governors.

**Updates on our priorities**

We shared our agreed school priorities in our last newsletter and explained that they are set out in the Raising Achievement Plan. Governors fulfill a series of monitoring

visits along with other evidence review to check how the school is responding to those priorities. The following is to keep you informed on the progress of some of them.

- To ensure the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school and develop good teachers towards outstanding. This covers a focus on early reading (phonics), writing throughout the school and also on the provision of high quality PE.

A significant amount of money has been invested in the teaching and learning of Phonics for new materials and training of staff. Governors visited the school in February to observe the teaching and learning of phonics. We were pleased to see that the children are split into groups working at their own level so individuals can be stretched; adults are leading the sessions with skill and enthusiasm; phonics is being closely linked to spelling and writing; children are enjoying the sessions. Governors were pleased to see good data progress at the last Education Effectiveness Committee meeting and it should lead to improved success in the phonics screening check which will take place in June.

- To further improve the Quality of Leadership and Management - increasing the capacity of middle and senior leaders to drive school improvement. Governors have monitored the early impact of the leadership team and have also spoken to subject leaders. We are pleased to hear that it is going well. The strength of the leadership has recently been seen in the support given to Year 1 during staff absence. Mrs Martin (Year 5) continues to enthusiastically lead science. She reported to Governors at the recent EEC committee meeting and Governors are pleased and impressed with the range of opportunities in Science that the children are being given. Children enjoyed the recent visits from scientists who explained the range of jobs that there are in this sector in the locality.
- To further develop confident self-assured learners who recognise their personal needs and the needs of others. This is about helping pupils understand how to be healthy, promoting the behaviours needed for learning and building their resilience. We are sure that the children will have told you about the improvements made to the hall to support them in becoming healthy and active. Other initiatives to support this have included the skipping and skateboarding workshops.

Each priority is supported by detailed plans. Governors continue to check progress through comparing our school data with national data, drawing in external experts, and by seeing for ourselves (talking to teachers/pupils).

### **Updates on some of the Wider Governor Priorities**

In addition to ensuring the above, Governors also have a number of other priorities this year:

- Develop and embed strong governance and robust leadership throughout the school. Governance continues to be strong with new Governors being fully informed about their role and they will attend formal LA induction training in the near future. Experienced Governors continue to undergo relevant training which includes the most up to date safeguarding training.  
The chair of Governors is also a trained National Leader in Governance and along with other Governors attends meetings run by the Oxfordshire Governing association.
- Strengthen engagement between the school, parents and community. Governors were pleased with the number of responses to the parent survey and thank you for your support. We also wish to thank the HSA for their continual work in raising funds for the school. Governors are supportive of all your hard work. We are also pleased that the community continues to benefit from the use of the school facilities for dance, rainbows and football.
- Maintain strong financial management. This is always challenging especially with the reductions in government funding. However, the Governing body ensures that the funding is well spent and we thank the business manager who continues to seek additional funding through grants whenever possible.

### **Annual Parent Survey Responses**

Many thanks for the 62 responses received, which was unfortunately a decrease on last year's 85 responses.

Areas where the school is doing well:

- The survey indicated that your children are happy and safe at school, are making good progress, and you would recommend the school.  
You also feel that your children are taught well, you value the encouraged interaction between the older and younger children, and the school is well run.

Opportunities for improvement:

- We have already started looking at our communication strategy and have started making some improvements through, for example, the parent workshops, the school's website, and generally between parents and teachers for specific classes where the survey indicated this was most needed.
- No other theme for suggested improvements was dominant, however all suggestions will be reviewed by the Leadership Team and taken into consideration.

Thanks again for your participation in the survey as your valuable contribution in this area is important for us to understand where the school is doing well, but most important, to be able to adopt an approach of continuous improvement.

## Harwell School Governors

Kirsten Christensen	To start September 2019
Nick Clarke	Resources Committee, Finance lead - leaves April 2019
John Dickens	Chair of the Resources Committee, Safeguarding lead
Bryn Gibson	Head teacher
Alison Goodall	Vice Chair of Governors, Educational Effectiveness Committee - leaves April 2019
Tom Gowers	Resources Committee, Maths lead, GDPR
Sue Greatbanks	Educational Effectiveness Committee, Inclusion (SEN & pupil premium) lead
Janice Markey	Chair of Educational Effectiveness Committee
Danielle Reilly	Educational Effectiveness Committee, Staff governor
Aisha Nevers	Resources Committee
Ann Parham	Chair of Governors, Educational Effectiveness Committee
Rob Sadler	Resources Committee, Health and Safety lead, Whistleblowing governor
Chris Smith	Resources Committee, Finance lead to start April 2019
Richard Thompson	Resources Committee
Liz Waters	Educational Effectiveness Committee - leaves April 2019
Frances Williams	Resources Committee to start April 2019
Jane Moreton	Clerk to the Governors