



Governors Review of their involvement at Thornbury Primary School Academic Year 2015-16

Dear Parents

We are almost at the end of another busy and successful year at school and I would like to share with you some of the things we have done as your Governors over the past twelve months.

We all attend our Full Governors Meetings and we attend either the Business Committee or School Improvement Committee. As Chair I attend both, so that I can keep in touch with as many aspects of school as possible. The Business Committee is where all information related to the financial operation of the School is discussed. This includes personnel, premises and policies and all financial returns required by the Local Authority. Any audits are reported to us. At the School Improvement Committee we are provided with a range of information including the development of the curriculum, pupil progress and standards across the school, staff development and training and the collective work of the current Trust Schools. At all meetings we are encouraged to ask questions, make suggestions and have open debate about all issues on their respective agenda. We receive reports from the Headteacher and Business Manager. At Full Governors' meetings we always start with a presentation from individual post holders about a specific area of school work. This is on a rota basis and this year we have had insight into Safeguarding, SEN and Science.

We receive the comprehensive Headteacher's reports and all our meetings end with Governors considering their responses, at the meeting, to the core functions necessary to fulfil our role as Governors; namely:-

- i) setting strategic direction
- ii) creating robust accountability
- iii) ensuring financial probity

The Clerk to Governors, Mrs Hayes, and I attend all Local Authority update meetings, which keep us abreast of the ever changing education agenda.

This year the move to Multi Academy Trust status, which we are entering into with our current Trust Schools in September, has meant several additional meetings with all other Trust Governors and staff. This is new territory and it is important that, as Governors, we have been fully engaged in the process. Collectively our Governors have had additional meetings, at school too, with the Headteacher, to receive updates on our progress towards this Multi Academy Trust status.

In November the 'Prevent' Conference in Plymouth was very worth attending as this is now a critical part of all schools' agenda. So too was the Plymouth Governors' Conference, which was very informative, as part of the meeting was concerned with Academy Status, with input from a local Headteacher who has already gone through the process.

Regular updates from the Local Authority about the progress of the school, following their monitoring visits, are sent. These are a source of evidence for us, made by an external body, which affirm our school's progress. Most recently, a copy of the Schools' Health and Safety Self Assessment documentation was received. It is a requirement that all schools engage with this document.

Visits to the Early Years department, with Miss Gerrard and Mrs French, have focussed specifically on the way in which children deal with their activities across a day, or a week, depending on the planning. Getting involved with them with their individual and group tasks have been very informative. There was the opportunity for Governors to give input to a survey relating to the development of the Early Years department with Miss Gerrard. Her collated responses will enable the Early Years team to look at practice and build on their current good work, as changes to the curriculum demand and resources become available to facilitate such changes. This was a very exciting insight into the constant review of practice which goes on in School. When, as Governors, we make such visits, we can report back to our fellow Governors and we also complete a visit note which details what we have done and learned from our visit. Mrs Banks has kindly taken time to give an update on the SEND agenda, following her strategic role in this work.

Safer Recruitment training is required of any Governor who wishes to be involved with the appointment of staff within School. Having up to date training, two Governors this term have been involved with interviews for two new appointees to the teaching staff.

The School's Council has had a very busy year, focussing on an ECO project. Mrs French invited Governor representation to join them at meetings and it has been informative following their progress with their school assembly and subsequent meetings. This ECO project will be on going next year too.

Many Governors have attended our MAT meetings, including the parents meeting at School. Here Mrs Dilloway wore two hats! We have enjoyed Christmas performances and class assemblies and been very enthused by the Christmas Choir performance at a local Church and the Music Assembly. Many of us experienced the fun of the Summer Fayre and Sports Day. They provide us with times to see, firsthand, the school community working together, children, parents, staff and Governors.

Governors have done a lot of work with Mr Brooker this year, including involvement with a Health, Safety & Wellbeing Forum, which addressed Radon and Asbestos Management and Working at Height. There has been rigorous involvement with finance, reviewing quotes for Teacher Absence Insurance, with new Governors given the time to work, again with Mr Brooker, to learn about the complexities of finance.

A group of Governors has used its expertise to support re-writing and updating the Accessibility Plan, which they then followed up with a Health & Safety walk around the School site. This plays a crucial role in monitoring required Health and Safety and general maintenance checks.

All our staff are subject to Performance Management/Appraisal and this has been a focus for two of our Governors. This role has required training with the Local Authority and included a monitoring process with a midterm review.

Mr Knowles, specifically, has been very involved with the children, attending and judging the whole school story/poetry recital competition, finding winning classes from KS1 and KS2. Keeping a literacy focus, he also read over 30 letters from Year 3 children, regarding their experiences during Book Week in March; writing back to them to say how much he had enjoyed reading their work. We sadly say farewell to Mr Knowles this term, but are most appreciative of his work for our School.

We have continued with our work on a self evaluation process for governors. This July sees us meeting to discuss our effectiveness as a Governing Body. On the same day we will be involved with all the staff as they reflect on the last academic year, setting the strategic direction for the school from 2016 into the future. It is really good find so many of us are able to be involved in this review.

Our new Governors have been made very welcome and have attended Plymouth City Council's course which provides an introduction to the role of a Governor. They have visited the School during the day, observed lessons and met with the staff working with children with special needs. They have also been fully involved with a full range of school events. They have been proactive in liaising with parents about various matters; signposting them to relevant points of contact. New Governors have also shown great commitment to training on safeguarding and child protection.

I hope this resume has enabled you to see that the work we have undertaken is broad based. With a range of skills and work experiences, we always do our best to support our staff, our children and our families.

Finally, as Chair, I have remained in close touch with the Headteacher throughout the year, so that I am available should there be any specific matters that she may want to discuss with me, or inform me about. I look forward to next year when our new academy status will provide a real opportunity to work with our current Trust schools to provide the best opportunities to enable all our children to succeed.

We all wish you a really happy school summer break.

Lynn Smith