**Governor Newsletter: November 2014.**

Welcome to new families.

As the rain taps against the window in my office, introducing the onset of winter, what happened to autumn? It seems a good time to write to you and let you know what the Governing board has been up to recently. Firstly welcome to all new families to Bolney School I hope you are all settling well. The last couple of months have been one of transition for the governing body.

Reconstitution plans.

Under legislation passed in 2012 all schools in England are required to go through a process of reconstitution. While most of the changes in procedure are fairly small it has given an opportunity to review our structure. The emphasis from Central government is for school governing boards to become smaller and more focused to manage the increasing responsibility of governors in the business of education. Please do not confuse this with the notion that education is now a business! While some will see it that way, we have no intention of seeing our pupils in terms of profit and loss. However there is a need to manage tight resources to best effect and deliver the best individual learning experience to all our pupils.

So there has been a push from West Sussex County and the Diocese of Chichester for us to prepare the board and to attract governors with vital skills to help run the school. We have nearly completed this process and await our new structure being ratified by County which should be done by the New Year. The main change is that we will have less Parent governors elected from the parent body; from 5 we will now have 2. But we have 5 posts for new style Co-opted governors: these are people the school can approach who can specifically help as they have skills the school needs.

Membership changes.

In conjunction with this three of the current board members have stepped down, these are Laurie Clark, Susie McGrath and Sally Stewart. We thank them greatly for their time and efforts while governors. As you will be aware we have held elections for three new Parent governors recently. I am delighted to report we had an excellent response and welcome Heather Macintosh, Ros Barton and Faye Heath-Lay to the board. We also welcome Judith Kew, who some of you will remember as our Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) until four years ago. Judith joins us as our new Local authority governor. So there are plenty of changes in shape and personnel in the board, when we have the final agreement from West Sussex on the reconstitution then we can report back to as to the exact shape and make up. I can though inform you that we are now in a very strong position to take the school forward and meet the challenges that face us in the years to come.

News updates.

To update you on some of those issues, governors are still engaged with the Academies agenda, talks are ongoing with neighbouring schools to find the best solution for our children. We have spoken with the Bolney Development Committee to help them with their work looking at village expansion, especially with any potential effects to the school. It is unclear though how much the school would be involved in decisions to change its size or location as decisions such as these are made at District and County levels. We will keep an eye on any proposal and seek (as always) to obtain the best solution for the education of children both now and in the future.

Our main focus is the continued successful running of the school. In our minds is the preparation for an Ofsted inspection. As you are aware we received an interim letter from the inspectors saying that they are happy with how the school is progressing and that they are unlikely to visit before Summer Term, 2015. While this is good news we are aware that we will be inspected in the next 18 months. Preparations are on track and you may well ask, as parents and carers, how can we help?

How can you help?

Really there are lots of little things that you already do. For instance, support your children and class teacher with *Home-Learning* tasks, maintain good communication with teachers around all aspects of school life. A big help would be ensuring your children has the best attendance as possible. Everyone becomes ill from time to time but limiting any other absences or lateness is a real benefit to your children’s education as well as the school. It’s amazing how it only takes a few days away for the attendance figures to drop below 95% which can severely affect our Ofsted outcome as well as your child’s learning potential. Lastly filling out surveys the school sends out and especially going online and filling out the ParentLine survey helps a lot (more to follow on the Newsletter). Ofsted look at these before they visit so good numbers of completed surveys gives them a sound impression of your views of the school.

We are very lucky at Bolney to have an engaged and highly supportive parent body and community, coupled with talented and dedicated staff and governors Together we can ensure our children get the best start they can, and *Be the Best they Can, Guided by God*!

Best wishes,

Peter Sutton

Chair of Governors