

**BOLNEY C.E.P. SCHOOL**

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July 2017

**Governor newsletter**

A few years ago, during a Chair of Governors training session, the person leading the session compared school governors to vampires! Citing that they always meet in the shadows or at night and no-one ever sees them or knows who they are!

As with other ridiculous comedic comparisons there are elements of truth to this. School governors make up the largest group of volunteers in the country; our education system wouldn't function without them. However do you know who they are? Do you know what they do?

As the current academic year comes to a close, it feels a good time to shed some light on areas governors have been involved in.

The emphasis of most of our work is in holding the school to account, understanding how the school works and the needs of our children and community, along with the demands of the National Curriculum and assessment systems. Governors work with senior leaders to self-evaluate the school and identify development areas, whilst asking, challenging and looking at, the systems that lead to development. The recent INSET day brought all staff and governors together to review the school’s current progress and set new development targets for next year.

In turn, our ability to accurately self-evaluate the school is scrutinised by outside bodies such as: the Local Authority, Ofsted and SIAMS inspectors, on behalf of the Church. The recent successful SIAMS inspection spoke of how well the governing board knew the school and the positive impact of developments that come from strong self-assessment.

Policies provide the base building blocks that the school is run on. Throughout the year we monitor and set the school policies including: learning and teaching, safeguarding, behaviour etc. After recent events in Manchester and London we have looked at the school’s security assessments and procedures for lock down and emergency plans, to ensure we provide as safe an environment for all pupils and staff as possible.

We are responsible for monitoring attendance and wish to remind all parents and carers the importance of children being in school, on time, and ready to start learning at 9 o'clock. It is also important to remember that there is zero tolerance of term time holidays, unless there are particular requirements for time away from school such as family events (funerals and close family weddings) or sickness.

We have a beautiful school site; however a Victorian building with intensive use has many maintenance challenges. We strive to ensure the school is well maintained and resourced to provide a safe and attractive learning environment, on a limited capital budget. This year has seen the instillation of new interactive classroom boards, along with updated IT and broadband provision. After at least four years of bidding, canvassing and waiting, this summer will see a major maintenance project in Beech, Silver Birch and Holly classrooms. This will deal with historic damp issues and provide newly decorated and carpeted classrooms by September. The majority of this is funded by West Sussex County Council.

Other areas governors deal with include: setting budgets, staff recruitment, preparing for inspections and looking at how Government policy affects the school now, and in the future. One of the highlights of being a governor is coming into school and seeing everything in action, it's on those occasions you really appreciate what a wonderful place Bolney is. Of course it's only that way because a lot of people invest time and energy making it that way. A school is nothing without a dedicated, talented team of staff, vibrant and keen pupils with engaged, supportive families. We are lucky and thankful that we have all of these.

A special mention and huge thanks go to the Friends of Bolney, whose tireless efforts in fund raising have a great impact on the school. The governors wish to express their gratitude to all involved with the FoB. We encourage all parents to get involved, not just by attending events and donating, but by giving your time to go to FoB meetings, helping organise events and supporting those who give so much to make Bolney special.

If you have any questions, or thoughts we are always interested to hear them. If you're not sure who we are, then please have a look at the governors pages on the school’s new website, where there's details on all the governors. We were delighted recently to welcome Mrs Becky Harrison to the board, as a co-opted governor. Remember we are all volunteers, who give up our time because we care passionately about Bolney School and we are always striving to provide the best we can for the children and families we serve.

We hope you all have an enjoyable and safe summer break. Good luck to all those who will leave us this term.

We look forward to seeing you all in September and working with you to make Bolney CEP School "The best it can be, guided by God."

Best wishes,

Peter Sutton

Chair of Governors