



Newsletter Date
10th July 2017

Welcome to our summer Governing Body Newsletter

It's hard to believe we are approaching the end of another academic year. The governors would like to thank all the staff for their continued hard work and commitment to the school over the course of the year. In particular, we wish Miss Butcher, Mr Morton, Mr Chamen and Mrs Dahle every success for the future. We also look forward to welcoming our two new teachers, Mr Clarke and Miss Steele to the team next year along with our recently appointed teaching assistants.

It has been a busy year for the governors as we have welcomed a number of new members to the team whilst some of our longest serving have retired from the role. As a group, we have made a concerted effort to be more visible to the school community and have enjoyed an increased number of visits to the school, as well as opportunities to meet parents at Open Evenings and other events. We hope to see as many of you as possible at the Open Evening on 11 July after school.

The governors, along with other parents and staff, have been involved in two strategic focus groups this year and I have provided an update on these in this newsletter.

On behalf of the governing body I would like to wish all pupils leaving us this term all the very best for the future in their new schools and to their parents—thank you for all your support of Long Furlong. We hope you won't become strangers as we are very keen to keep the school in the heart of our community. As the school approaches its 25th anniversary, we will be looking for opportunities to celebrate this with both current and former pupils and their families.

Finally, I hope you all have a lovely summer break and we look forward to seeing you in September, along with all the new families joining the school.

Nicola Gladwell
Chair of Governors

Further information on the governing body, including approved minutes of full governing body meetings are available on the school website.

Operations

We are very pleased that in the recent sunny weeks, our new solar panels have been working hard providing the school with just over 70% of the electricity used over the course of the year. Since their installation last summer, they have produced nearly 24 kWhs of electricity. This, along with the LED light installation and other green initiatives led by the Eco-Council will hopefully enable the school to gain its Green Flag award as part of the Eco-School initiative run by Miss Willetts. You can track how well our panels are working through this link <http://www.lowcarbonhub.org/projects>

Health & Safety

Our annual health & safety monitoring visit by Oxfordshire County Council took place in Spring and I pleased to report that again, there were no significant findings. Our thanks to Mrs Smith in the office for her work in managing this aspect of the school.

Strategy, Vision & Ethos

School Development Plan

Our school development plan is an evolving document and at this time we reflect upon the progress made by the school against the key objectives set for the current year. You will no doubt be aware of the initiatives around improving writing standards at the school which we hope will be visible when you look around the classrooms and other display boards at the open evening.

Some of you will have also seen Talk4Writing in action at assemblies and again, there is evidence of this in the classrooms. In each classroom, you should also see displays relating to the work in relation to Growth Mindset which we hope to embed in our school's ethos going forward. Our thanks to Miss Ellaby and Mr Burchill for leading these initiatives.

The Senior Leadership Team are now finalising the new plan for the next academic year and will share with you the key objectives in due course, some of this will include continuation of the work around anti-bullying started this year.

Academy consultation process

Our focus group looking at the options available to the school in respect of Academisation has been concluded. Having undertaken analysis of the pros and cons of each option, the group has made a recommendation to the Governing Body that the school should continue in its current model of a Local Authority school for at least the short term future but sustaining (and indeed building upon) existing collaboration. This was approved by the Governing Body last week.

As part of the process the group identified factors which could affect the current stance and, in the event any of these occur (e.g. government policy change), the position will be reviewed again using the work done to date as a basis. Our thanks go to John Kostoulas and the staff and parents involved in this group.

A summary of the focus group's work is attached to the end of this newsletter.

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Nursery Provision

As you may be aware, the government is extending the availability of funded childcare from September to include 2 year olds and an additional 15 hours to 3 year olds from working families. Another focus group has been working on considering Long Furlong's position in this respect taking into account:

- levels of demand in the area
- capacity and current usage of the nursery
- offerings by other local providers
- logistical and administrative factors

One of the biggest challenges for the group has been obtaining sufficient information to allow them to fully consider these points. As such, the nursery will maintain its 15 hour provision in the mornings from September and the focus group will continue its work. We are aware of other, larger schools in Abingdon extending their offerings from September so it will be interesting to see how they get on.

Changes to and within the Governing Body

After a considerable number of years of service, Linda Butler has decided to retire from her role. Linda has been invaluable member of the body, having undertaken the role of Chair and—more recently - Safeguarding governor and she will be missed. We wish her well for the future and hope to see her back for the 25th anniversary celebrations! Catherine Kimber has kindly agreed to take on the role of Safeguarding Governor from Linda.

Another long standing member of the governing body was Keith Dunnett who acted as our Local Authority Governor. As you may be aware, Keith is part of the Christ Church community but has spent more of his time at the Northcourt Road site recently. After much discussion, it was agreed that Keith would step down from his role to allow Phil Cooke (minister for Christ Church at Long Furlong) to take his place to help us grow our links with the wider Long Furlong community. Keith has been a valued and compassionate member of the governing body who was willing to provide a considered challenge when needed. We will miss Keith and look forward to working with Phil, who has previous experience as a Chair of Governors in other settings.

Finally, we are delighted to welcome also Graham Robinson and Harvey Tayman as co-opted governors. Many of you may already know Graham, a retired Computer Operations Manager, through his links with Christ Church at Long Furlong. Harvey works as a project manager in the Results division of RM plc.

Governor training

A number of our new governors have completed their induction training courses this term or are booked in to do so. Catherine Kimber attended a Safeguarding Governance course and several governors have completed online training regarding the role of Governance in an Ofsted inspection.

Governor visits

As well as attending the parents' evenings and forums, our governors have been in school for various meetings in relation to

- School Development Plan
- SEND
- Health & Safety
- Safeguarding (handover)
- Anti-bullying
- School council

In May, many of us had the opportunity to visit the school as part of a Governor Learning Walk kindly organised by Mrs Dunne. Between us, we were able to observe lessons to see Talk4Writing in action and how Growth Mindset was being embedded in learning. We were also delighted to spend time talking to some pupils as they shared their work with us, explained how the marking scheme worked and how they knew what their learning objectives were each lesson. As always, we were impressed by the children's positive attitude, behaviour and politeness throughout our visit. We are grateful to all the staff and children who welcomed us that morning.

Summary



<p>We have to preserve the school's key strengths as described in parent feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community feeling• Friendliness• Size	<p>We considered various factors to form 4 strategy options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• External factors• Academic-related factors• Services-related factors	<p>We conducted knowledge gathering outside of the group to validate our options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abingdon partnership• Information evenings• One-to-one relationships
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Our proposal is to stay with the current operating model and do not enter any academy or services partnership in the next 18-36 months, sustaining all existing collaboration relationships

The main reasons are:

- The current **high academic status** of the school minimizes the most usual benefits of Academy conversion.
- There is currently **little evidence on benefits realization** from Academy conversion.
- The current situation with DFE (for funding) and OCC (for services), although uncertain, is not forcing us into immediate decisions to consider alternatives. In case of changes in any of these fronts, the current assessment will be used again as baseline.

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