



Dronfield Junior School

Governor Newsletter November 2019

Hello and welcome to the latest Governor Newsletter; time has flown since our last one, I apologise for the delay.

We have put together articles on the following:

Introduction to Governor duties
Article from the Premises committee
School trips
GDPR
Online Safety

We hope you find the articles useful, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school if you would like us to cover any other issues in future Governor Newsletters.

As Christmas is only just around the corner, please let me, on behalf of all the Governing Body, wish you and your children best wishes and thanks for supporting the school.

Richard Gilson
Vice Chair of Governors

Governors

What exactly do we do?

The Government has over the years greatly increased the responsibility of Governing Bodies and we do try to be accountable for what we do, that is: accountable to our pupils, our parents and our local community. Regular inspections by Ofsted also keep us on our toes!

The Government have laid out three key responsibilities for Governors:

- The strategic direction and ethos of the school

- Holding our school leaders to account
- Handling our finances well and responsibly

We carry out our functions at our regular full Governing Body meetings (about 5 a year), in our committees and through our visits into school to meet pupils and staff. Our main focus is ensuring that our pupils are safe, achieve to their full potential and are equipped to move on to secondary school.

Our last meeting gives you a flavour of how we work. The key part of any Governors' meeting is the Headteacher's report and at our September meeting Mrs. Thomson reported in detail on pupils' attendance and on pupil achievement and progress over the last three years. We then looked at the school improvement plan which sets out our priorities for pupil achievement and progress. We closely questioned Mrs. Thomson who always very patiently explains the data to us. In summary Mrs. Thomson reported that:

'Progress in Reading and Maths is in line with national expectations. Progress in Writing is still below national expectations but has shown a significant upward turn compared to last year. '

Governors have been focussing on writing performance now for over a year and are pleased to see the significant improved results in this area as a result of the hard work of Mrs. Thomson and all the staff.

The information Mrs. Thomson provides to Governors is very detailed and is based on the school's own data collection as well as on national statistics including SATs results. None of us are experts in this area but training is available to Governors.

Other regular items at meetings are safeguarding, Special Educational Needs provision in the school, approving purchases of large items, road safety and crossings, updates on staffing and premises, and training we have attended or would like to do.

Meetings last around two hours and are held in the evening. We post our minutes up in the school reception area.

Who Are We?

We have 13 Governors including 4 Parent Governors and the rest are designated as co-opted Governors or Staff Governors. We all live locally and are involved in the local community. We do occasionally have vacancies for co-opted Governors so if you think this is something you would like to do please get in touch and we can tell you more about it.

Dronfield Governors' Forum

One great strength of our local school system is that we all work together. Our Headteachers meet regularly as PoDS (Partnership of Dronfield Schools) where they share and plan joint activities and ensure that our local system works well. Governors also meet regularly at the Dronfield Governors' Forum where we share information and update ourselves on latest developments. The Forum meets at Dronfield Henry Fanshawe School where our next meeting will focus on how we ensure that our pupils have a smooth transition through the various stages of their education in the town.

John Harvey

Premises Committee by Jill Tingle

At the Autumn Term Governing Body meeting a report was presented by the Premises Committee regarding a programme of decoration and refurbishment across the school.

Governors from the Premises Committee along with Mrs Thomson looked at each classroom and shared spaces including corridors, cloakrooms, the Hall and the Music Room.

Overall, the Premises Governors did think that classrooms and shared spaces would benefit from decoration, replacing broken blinds and replacing some carpets in some classrooms.

Before making any decisions, the Governors will explore how much this will cost the school and that will be a significant consideration regarding when the work will take place. Realistically, the Governors expect that a programme of work, which will be prioritised by Mrs Thomson and staff, will take place over a number of terms, with the work being done during school holidays to minimise disruption for pupils and staff.

The Governors would welcome any comments or suggestions from parents and carers.

Meanwhile, the Governors will look to provide updates in future newsletters.

School Trips

It has been my pleasure to accompany the children on the Y6 residential trips to France, Buckinghamshire and Llandudno. My role is to be part of the staff team looking after the children making sure they are safe, well, and happy.

The France trip is a lovely trip; we visit northern France and visit local businesses and really get a feel as to how local French people live. We all get a chance to practice

our French language skills which is great fun. During the residential, we visit a local bakery, a chocolate factory, a local French market and goat farm. Furthermore, we visit Nausicaa, which is the largest sea life centre in Europe, and also spend a morning at the War Military cemetery which is a moving experience for us all.

We stay in a PGL run hostel and they look after us and feed us well! The coach driver is great and has an excellent knowledge of the area which is certainly an advantage. We do put a lot in to the days we are there. Every time I have been on this residential, I am proud to say that the children are a credit to the school and their parents as well as being great ambassadors for our country.

The Buckinghamshire residential comprises of visits to Cadbury World and Harry Potter World. The Cadbury World visit helps the children prepare for the Chocolate Enterprise project in December and the Harry Potter Experience supports children's learning with the Witches, Wizards and Wires topic.

The Llandudno residential may be looked as a holiday destination but far from it, we visit the Great Orme, RSPB Centre and Chester Zoo to increase the children's knowledge of the area (to support their geographical understanding), the wildlife (to support understanding of food chains, conservation and sustainability) and a chance to see different types of animals not seen in this country. We have a bit of fun at an ECO theme park, where all the rides are self-powered!

It is always a pleasure to be part of these trips and to listen to all the nice comments from people along the way on how well behaved the children are; it makes me really proud.

Thanks to the parents for supporting these trips

Richard Gilson

GDPR

It is essential that under the GDPR (Government Data Protection Regulations) schools that stringent procedures in place to ensure data acquired is used, stored and disposed of securely with the data subject in mind.

The Governors have a policy and on regular occasions monitor the GDPR rules to make sure that we follow the correct procedures and they are implemented consistently across the school.

We have GDPR as a standing item on every full Governors' meeting to make sure we address any concerns should they arise.

If you would like further information regarding GDPR please contact me through the School reception. Remember I do not have all the answers as it's a moving issue but what I do not know I will find out for you.

Richard Gilson

Online Safety

As the Governor responsible for Online Safety, I visit school to sit in on meetings of the Online Safety Ambassadors (OSAs). Each class elects an Ambassador to promote Online Safety in school and at home.

Mr Mason, the Online Safety Co-ordinator, arranges for me to sit in on lunchtime meetings of the Online Safety Ambassadors.

In a meeting last July, the discussion was around what the school does well in regard to Online Safety and what could be improved on.

Things done well included:

- Rules
- Stranger Danger
- Posters around school

Things that could be improved on:

- State of the laptop trolleys (also see BP 4)
- Pupils miss out on ICT because of slow access
- Teach more in school about filters and inappropriate use
- Looking after technology – OSA-led assemblies
- Some staff attitudes to ICT (pupils to teach staff where appropriate)
- Competition for Y3s to become OSAs (could be extended to whole school)

An important aspect of the OSAs work is surveying pupils. The OSAs had drawn up a questionnaire on internet usage which had been distributed. The responses had been collected in and the OSAs were about to start the analysis. I sat with a group and we started to collate the responses.

In January this year, the analysis having been completed, the OSAs then discussed activities for Safer Internet Day relating to the findings. I sat with a group of Y4s and Y5s as they discussed a range of activities for their respective year groups.

On Safer Internet Day (05 Feb 19), I sat in on Y6M as they suggested problems with Social Media such as cyber-bullying, inappropriate images, offensive messages, fake news, contact from unknown people scams, 'death images' etc. Also how photo-shopping can create false images.

Representatives from the other year groups brought examples of their activities. The Y5 topic was gaming with the activity being to make posters for the rules for safe gaming. The Y4 topic was YouTube and again, the topic was around staying safe on YouTube. The Y3s looked at the rules for staying safe on the internet and particularly, Gaming.net usage.

AI Garrett