

# Whitehall Park School Governor's Newsletter

## Governing Body Update—Spring 2018

We had two meetings in the spring, but the most notable discussion was our response to the Trust's consultation on the role of Local Governing Bodies. We had an animated debate with Mark Greatrex Chief Executive of the Trust and Richard Tyndall from the National Governors Association where we outlined our concerns regarding the consultation – particularly how they could ensure the school retained some local autonomy and the involvement of the local community. Mr Tyndall enjoyed the challenge and commented afterwards that if this was the quality of the debate, he felt the school was in very good hands! The Trust will respond with their final proposal in May.

In January the Governing Body had two new members, Debs Evans (Parent Governor) and Amanda Burgess (Trust representative). There were two formal meetings in spring and in brief, the Head gave us her report, talking us through pupil attainment, progression and the attendance statistics for the children; this report gives us the opportunity to support and challenge the Head and the data was encouraging. We heard some families had chosen to leave Whitehall Park School and discussed how we might collect some information from future leavers to help us explore their reasons. Miss Birkett explained the challenges recruiting staff in north London and told us about new staff, including an apprentice and SENCO. Much of the 'snagging' associated with the school build was being tackled over the Easter holidays.

We are always exploring new ways to seek the views of parents and the autumn parental questionnaires had a poor response, so we are looking to move the survey online. Debs also has a proposal below for more informal feedback through the Class Representatives. We routinely have reports from the Finance, Policy and Education Committees but these are supplemented by '*Governor Learning Walks*'. These walks are where we spend a morning in school learning from the relevant leaders, observing lessons and speaking informally to the pupils. This time we were with Mr Thompson looking at maths and how the team vary the challenge according to pupil ability; we were really impressed by the variation in each classroom providing different levels of stretch.

We normally have a development session and in January Nicky Wright (Assistant Head) presented the school approach to pupil assessment; it was agreed that this could be the topic for a future '*Governor Learning Walk*'. In terms of topics for discussion in the summer term, we agreed to table the Year 6 curriculum and extended school provision.

Finally the key documents discussed are listed below and are available on the website:

- 2018-19 term dates
- Admissions Policy for 2019-20
- School Development and Evaluation report for 17-18
- Safeguarding audit
- Updated Governor biographies and photos
- Annual governance report 2016-17

You can find full details of the Local Governing Body on the [school website](#) including our LGB structure, annual Governance report, governor biographies and photos.

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Hello!

I wanted to say how proud I am to have been elected as one of the new parent governors on the Whitehall Park Local Governing Body (LGB).

I need some help.

The parent governors are there to provide a parental viewpoint to the LGB, and as we have children at the school we bring our own experience of school life to the discussions. However, it is also important to bring a broader, more balanced view than just my own. I will plan to attend all formal events, but I also wondered whether you could ask class reps to feedback views after any of your class social events, such as coffee mornings, evening drinks etc?

This would help me understand how parents are feeling / keep up-to-date / finger on the pulse / feel the vibe (or any other expression that you like) - and help me develop a sense of how parents are feeling about the school generally.

The LGB focusses on the policies of the school. Parent governors inject a parent's viewpoint into these discussions and we raise general concerns on behalf of the parent body as a whole. However, it is important to note that it is not our role to support individual parents to resolve specific concerns. These need to be dealt with through the school's processes, although we are happy to help you to approach the appropriate person in line with guidance if needed.

I am usually around for '*Fantastic Friday*' and happy to chat. I am looking forward to my new role and I hope to hear from you soon.

Debs  
May 2018

