



OAKHAM C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL
THE PARKS SCHOOL

GOVERNORS NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2020



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Introduction from the chair



Dear Parents & Carers,

Welcome to the first governor's update of the school year and welcome to all of the new parents and carers who have joined our school community this year. It has been great to hear how well everybody has settled back into school life and although the situation is still far from normal everybody has been working hard to ensure that our children are happy, safe and get the same excellent educational experiences that they are used to.

In our first full governing board meeting, I presented the goals that I would like the board to achieve this year.

- Publishing a new strategic vision - More details later in the update
- Beginning the process of strategic planning for the upcoming years
- Evaluating our effectiveness as a board and identifying any skills gaps
- Recruiting successfully for our remaining open vacancies
- Putting in place succession strategies for key responsibilities

These are in addition to the many statutory duties that we commit to deliver on each year such as monitoring the school's performance. This is something I cover in more detail later in this update.

The aim and objective of these newsletters are to shed some light on governor work, areas of interest and development, and to generate improvement suggestions. If you have any feedback please do let us know. As always, we appreciate you taking the time to read these updates and for all the support and feedback you provide to the school.

Stewart Needham (Chair of the Board of Governors)

Ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Governors have continued to work with the school throughout the Summer and Term 1 to adapt the school environment in compliance with government guidelines. We also supported risk assessments, reviewing policies, and approving the school's remote learning strategy which had to be in place by the end of September.

All schools must have plans in place which allow individual classes or the whole school to switch to remote learning at short notice while delivering on the same curriculum goals and maintaining regular contact and feedback with their class teacher. We are very pleased that Mr Cox and the senior leadership team took this opportunity to accelerate plans which were already being discussed. You should now be aware that we are adopting the Class Dojo platform which provides us with fantastic opportunities to strengthen the school's collaboration with parents and to extend learning outside of school. As staff, children and parents become more familiar with what the platform provides we hope that this will become central to school life.

Governors are extremely grateful to the school staff who have all worked tirelessly since March to keep everyone informed, provide every child with engaging learning opportunities and to implement changing guidance. We would also like to thank all of the parents, carers and children for supporting the school in this unprecedented time.

Strategic Vision & Aims

It is the responsibility of the governors to ensure that the vision, ethos, and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined. It's one of our three core functions as a governing board (Along with holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and the school's financial performance). Over the past few months, the governors have been working with the senior leadership team to create a new strategic vision. This vision will underpin and guide the school development plan and efforts of all for the next 5 years. We are pleased to be able to share with you our draft proposal for a new strategic vision today.

Both of our schools have made fantastic progress and seen significant improvement over recent years. With us being in such a strong position, we have a unique opportunity to choose how we move forwards and in which areas we want to excel. This is a very exciting prospect and we hope that you agree that we have created a vision that is highly ambitious, bold and allows us to build on the excellent provision we already provide across both schools for our children.

We would like to invite any feedback and thoughts on the attached proposal, its structure and contents. Parents and carers are important stakeholders within our school community and it is important to us that you have an opportunity to contribute ideas about our future direction. We welcome any constructive feedback so please feel confident to respond to myself or Mr Cox with any thoughts and suggestions.

Monitoring Strategy

Throughout the year, governors take part in a number of activities as part of our responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school. We utilise a variety of sources and evidence to achieve this which includes scrutinising reports provided by the school, asking challenging questions as well as visiting the school to speak to staff and children. Triangulating sources of evidence in this way is used to provide greater credibility and confidence in our evaluation which means we can be more effective in the actions that we take.

This year the board has agreed to continue with our strategy of monitoring the core curriculum subjects of Reading, Writing, Maths, Art, RE & Collective worship along with our governor link areas of SEND, Safeguarding, Pupil & Sports Premiums, Health & Safety.

To support the school's strategy of protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of our children and staff, governors will primarily work remotely and hold virtual monitoring visits until further notice.

Board news and updates

This year we welcome two familiar faces onto the board of governors. Mrs Wade joins us as our new staff governor and Mrs Maxwell has been voted onto the board as a co-opted governor. We are very excited about these new appointments as Mrs. Wade and Mrs. Maxwell bring considerable experience and fresh perspectives to our collective.

Ben Searle, has been voted onto the board as a co-opted governor for a period of four years. Ben has been an active parent governor for the past four years passionately contributing in areas such as sports and the arts. We are thrilled that Ben will continue supporting the school in his new role.

As a result of Ben's transition, I am pleased to announce that we now have an open vacancy for a new parent governor. We will therefore be holding a parent election which the school will provide further communication about in due course.

To find out more about the board of governors, how we are constituted and the committees we delegate authority to, please see [our page on the new school website](#)

We want to hear from you

The Governing Board at Oakham C of E Primary School & The Parks School are a very friendly bunch, so do say "hello" if you spot any of us. We often spend time in school, executing on our duties, and helping at school events. We love talking about the school that we work so hard to support. The school is always looking to improve its practices and to ensure that the children at Oakham C of E Primary & The Parks School receive the best possible education and care.

You can email me at chair@oakham-primary.rutland.sch.uk with any feedback or ideas. We love to hear feedback from parents, carers & members of the community. These are often shared in our full governing body meetings and fed back to staff. Thank you to everyone who has provided feedback so far this year, via surveys, via Mr Cox or through sharing your positive experiences with others in the community.