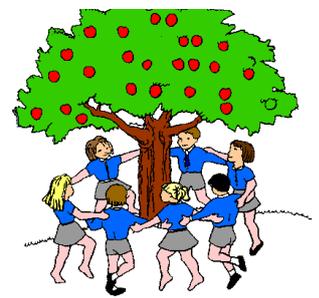


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**Headteacher: Mrs D J Nayna**

**December 2013**

## **SEASONS GREETINGS FROM THE GOVERNORS**

Welcome to our newsletter! The purpose of the newsletter is to keep you informed about who we are, to give you some understanding of what the Governors do and although it may seem that we hold a lot of meetings (which we do!), they are all intended to contribute to our overall aim - to support, enrich and add value to the life and work of Speen School and the children that attend it. We hope that our work provides an environment that gives the best start pupils can have to their education.

### **Governor Responsibilities**

The Governing body is made up of volunteers drawn from parents, staff and members of the local church and community. Our duties make us accountable to you and the wider community for the performance of all aspects the school. Within the last year two Parent Governors, Alistair Scott (Numeracy Governor) and Katherine Matthews (Diversity Governor) and Ex-Officio, Christine Rooney (Literacy Governor) joined us and we welcome them to the team.

### **Our main duties include:**

Planning the school's future strategic direction and helping to determine the schools aims.

Making sure the latest curriculum is taught within the school and promoting effective ways of teaching and learning through the school aims and policies.

Deciding how the school can encourage pupil's spiritual, moral and social development.

Making sure the school provides for all its pupils, including those with special needs.

As Governors we also have an increasing number of statutory responsibilities, such as approving and reviewing, on an ongoing basis, the school's annual budget. We are responsible for appointing the head teacher. However, we do not become involved in the day-to-day management of the school – this is the head teacher's responsibility, but we do hold the head teacher to account for all the performance aspects within the school.

The Full Governing Body (FGB) meets approximately once per term and considers a wide range of issues related to the management of the school. These can include discussions about the long term school development plan, policies, budgets, school admissions, reports on monitoring visits, risk management, and also reviewing the regular reports from the head teacher. The FGB closely monitors the details of the latest school performance data.

In order that all the various aspects of the school are dealt with a number of committees have been established. These committees allow the FGB to be made aware of the main issues from each area of the school and to make key decisions and policy revisions as a whole when required. These committees generally also meet twice termly.

Here is a brief summary of what each sub-committee has been working on this term:

### **Health and Safety/Premises**

Chair: Jackie Edwards

Members: Charlotte Burton, Amanda Cleaver, Head Teacher

As you will be aware, the extension project to expand Mrs Lidington's classroom is well underway and this exciting additional teaching space is due for completion mid-January. An official opening ceremony is planned so please watch this space for further details. We appreciate your patience as the work is being carried out with minimal disruption to the children's day. Mrs Edwards and Mrs Moore conduct annual Health and safety audits.

### **Communications**

Chair: Katherine Matthews

Members: Charlotte Burton, Amanda Cleaver, Janis Hearn, Debbie O'Brien, Head Teacher.

The communications committee are in the process of refreshing our school website with more photos and written content to enhance the visual appearance. The re launch is expected in January.

We always welcome your feedback and your opinions of all aspects of school life are vitally important to the continued success and future development of our school. To address this two of our governors will be carrying out parent and pupil surveys in the spring term. In the meantime we do have a dedicated email address: [governors@speen-cofe.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:governors@speen-cofe.bucks.sch.uk) should you wish to contact us. All correspondence will be treated "in confidence" and will always receive an acknowledgement and response.

From January Robyn Moore will be including within the weekly Monday notices any Governor meetings taking place.

### **Curriculum and Standards**

Chair: Debbie O'Brien

Members: Charlotte Burton, Julie Cooper, Helen Lidington, Head Teacher, Christine Rooney and Alistair Scott.

Curriculum Committee have been busy analysing the academic results on the school data dashboard.

Pupil Numbers in Year 2 have increased by 3 this year. This has had an impact on the decision whether to move the year 1 into the year 2 class room. We confirmed that we were happy with the new arrangements which are:

- English and Maths to be taught in year groups.
- Other subjects to be taught by key stages.

There will be a small increase in Teaching Assistant time.

The New National Curriculum will be introduced in September 2014, with the exception of English, Maths and Science which is introduced for year one only. Year two will continue with the old curriculum until 2015. Maths and English are very prescriptive but there is time in the rest of the curriculum to focus on developing a 'love of learning'. Speen intend to teach the other parts of the curriculum in a less prescriptive way and allow time for the children to develop curiosity and be more engaged in their own learning. The committee also monitor how additional funding for sport and music is being used.

### **Finance**

Chair: Eamonn Barrett

Members: Head teacher, Alistair Scott, Gerry Cranley, Jackie Edwards.

The recent Finance Committee meeting reviewed school expenditure for the year to date and projections for the forthcoming period (this happens at every FC meeting). We also reviewed progress and spend on the current construction project, and started planning for setting the budget for next year (when we will have a smaller amount of money coming in due to pupil numbers being lower). We also discussed the current Teaching Assistant provision, and agreed an increase to ensure that we have the right level of resourcing for current teaching and support requirements, and also approved smaller capital expenditure amounts for necessary repairs or improvements; of these, the one which parents are most likely to notice is replacement of the external lighting on the driveway and around the school building. The other topic of discussion was preparation for free school meals, which as parents will know the government has decided should be available to all children up to and including Year 2 from September 2014. Our planning is well advanced, and we hope to be able to undertake the kitchen refit during the Spring Term: Bucks County is providing assistance for part of this, and we will be discussing with the PTA how to dovetail this with their offer to fund some kitchen units so that we have the best and most cost-effective outcome for the school's needs (and also the needs of others in the community who make use of the school's facilities).

### **Pastoral**

Chair: Julie Cooper

Members: Gerry Cranley, Janis Hearn, Helen Lidington, Katherine Matthews, Head Teacher, Christine Rooney.

Our long serving school caretaker, Peter Johnson is retiring at the end of this term. Thank you to parents for contributions to a leaving gift. We have been busy advertising and interviewing his prospective replacement. We also reviewed pupil attendance and their welfare. A revised Home/School agreement is also currently under review.

### **Admissions**

Chair: Amanda Cleaver

Members: Head teacher, Charlotte Burton, Jackie Edwards

This committee considers all applications for admission to the school in accordance with the admissions criteria approved by the governing body, ranks the admissions criteria, sets the numbers for admissions and publishes the policy for the forthcoming year. The policies are published on the county and school websites. The governors would be pleased to hear how parents feel about these.

### **Performance Management**

Chair: Julie Cooper

Members: Jackie Edwards, Alistair Scott

This committee meets on a regular basis and carries out a Head teacher review annually.

### **Curriculum and classroom links**

Governors each have curriculum links and each year group also have governors linked to it. The purpose of link visits is to foster good relationships with the staff and pupils and to fulfill the governing body obligation to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school and its' curriculum. During these visits we do not, however, make judgments about the quality of teaching or the progress of individual children. Governors have a target to visit the school termly to provide feedback to the rest of the governing body. Governor visits over the past term have included:

- Visit to Royal Albert Hall for schools concert
- Observation visits to Foundation stage class
- Visits to various worship assemblies
- Assisting with Open Morning for prospective parents
- Judging book week competitions

## **Training**

All governors are required to undertake regular training to enable them to exercise their duties effectively. This is a vital part of being a school governor and by doing this we keep up to date with the continual developments that are happening across all areas of education provision. Debbie O'Brien is to be commended for her work in ensuring we are booked on the appropriate courses to match the school's needs, whether it is the new Ofsted Framework or the new Curriculum changes.

Governor training attended this term by individual governors has included:

New Governor Induction courses part 1, 2 and 3 Data Handling

Early Years and Foundation Stage curriculum

SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist School

## **Thank you to Parents**

Finally, we would really like to take this opportunity to thank parents for the huge amount of time and effort it takes in organising various events to raise funds for Speen School and for all the support they provide to the school. Notably, the excellent Christmas Fair last Saturday, which was very well attended by children, parents, grandparents and staff. Two parents in particular must be thanked for the arduous and long overdue task of clearing the school pond.

Projects such as repainting of the playground are possible with your generous PTA donations. The after school clubs including cooking and film club and Kate Laughton's music lessons and early morning yawn provide a stimulating extra curricular activity for the children for which parental involvement is hugely appreciated. Mid day supervisors are an integral support to the teaching staff during the lunch hour and we are grateful to you all for giving up your time to carry out the duties entailed.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter and we hope you have found it informative. The next newsletter will be published in the Spring Term 2014. We welcome any suggestions for its content and any questions you would like answered within it. A reminder of our dedicated email address: [governors@speen-cofe.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:governors@speen-cofe.bucks.sch.uk)

All that remains is to wish each and every one of our parents and their families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

With very best wishes,

Eamonn Barrett – Chair, Julie Cooper – Vice Chair, Charlotte Burton, Amanda Cleaver, Gerry Cranley, Jackie Edwards,

Janis Hearn, Helen Lidington, Katherine Matthews, Denise Nayna, Debbie O'Brien, Christine Rooney, Alistair Scott.

