



# Governors'

## Newsletter No.1

16TH JANUARY 2015

# A New year's update from your Governing Body

Over the past year you will have been aware that there have been a number of changes in the organisation of the school but you may not have been aware that there have also been significant changes to the structure and membership of the Governing Body.

### **The aims of this Newsletter are to:**

update you on the changes that have occurred in the Governing Body in 2014 and provide you with information about our work throughout the year.

### **What is the role of a governor?**

Governors are a group of volunteers who include parents, staff and members of our local community. Being a governor takes quite a lot of time but our close association with the school is incredibly rewarding, especially when we are closely involved with the implementation of important changes. Our main role is to promote ongoing improvements in standards throughout the school. We work with the Headteacher and staff to plan the school's long term direction and to evaluate progress. We help to set the school's aims and values. Many of our responsibilities carry a statutory requirement. This means that we are obliged by law to do things such as agree the annual budget and to conform with appropriate training with respect to issues such as safeguarding.

Our role is sometimes described as a 'critical friend'. This does not mean that we are there to criticise the Head or the school. Instead we try to ask useful questions to gain a greater understanding of the school and to foster an ethos of continual improvement.

## What is the structure of the Governing Body?

It has been a requirement of the government for governing bodies of all maintained schools to consider their constitution, according to a new set of rules. Sytchampton governors were ahead of the game and reconstituted at the beginning of 2014, well before the deadline of September 2015.

## How have we changed?

As a Voluntary Aided school, supported by the Lloyds' Foundation, our GB is now made up of 7 representatives of Lloyds, 2 elected parent governors, a Local Authority representative, a staff representative and, of course the Headteacher. We reduced our number of governors from 16 to 12 in the re-organisation. The photo below shows staff and GB working together on our TED day in Sept.



## Who have we said 'goodbye' to?

Sadly, we said our farewells to John Silvester and David Linney, members of the GB for over 30 years (!) who have given amazing service to the school. They have both taken the role of Chairman over that time. Those of you who have been associated with the school for some years might recollect that our amazing school hall is built on John Silvester's land. Today's children will all recognise the name 'Silvester' as one of the school's House names!

Another member of the GB who resigned during the year was Laureen Moyse. Laureen had been a governor for several years and for much of that time came into school regularly for shared reading with the children.

More recently, at the end of the summer term, we were sad to receive the resignation, due to time pressure, of Tony Catchpowle, an elected parent governor. Although pressed for time in his busy life, Tony took a special interest in Special Educational Needs within the school and managed to find gaps in his schedule to enable him to make school visits and to report his findings on SEN to the Governing Body.

We also said goodbye to Mrs Rowan, on her resignation, as staff representative.

We give our thanks to all of these colleagues who have volunteered their time and energy for the good of the school.

## Who have we welcomed ?

Paul Adams joined us as a Foundation governor in January. Paul is an accountant and is Treasurer for the Lloyds' Foundation and a useful asset to the Finance committee!

We were joined in September by Pinky Jain, taking over the role of Local Authority Governor from Laureen Moyse and Paul Steele who was appointed as a Foundation Governor. Pinky is a Senior Lecturer in Primary Education at the University of Worcester and is their Maths Coordinator - an extremely useful addition to our GB - and Paul teaches maths at Stourport High, as well as being a Sytchampton parent. We look forward to strengthening our links with Stourport High through Paul.

Finally, I am thrilled to let you know that Mrs Iris Fox is to join the GB from this term. Many of you will know that Iris was Deputy Head at Sytchampton for over 30 years. She was the instigator of the Eco Award work and was responsible for guiding the school towards the first of its now 6 Green Flags!

## How do we operate?

The GB divides into two main committees. The membership depends on the interests and skills of the individuals.

The **Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee** oversees the school's finances, looks after the premises and agrees staffing arrangements and salaries.

Members of this committee are: Ros Brocklehurst (Chair), Sharon Williams, Paul Adams, Paul Hancock, Paul Marshall and Stephanie Gait.

The committee discusses the school's finances and is instrumental in agreeing how its income is to be distributed throughout the year and how future income is to be deployed, especially with respect to the change to primary.

The **Teaching and Learning Committee** oversees the quality of our teaching and learning within the school. Their role is to contribute to providing a high standard of education for our children here at Sytchampton. The committee is particularly interested in standards achieved by the pupils, both with respect to progress of individual pupils and overall standards achieved, compared to similar schools nationwide. The committee members question the Head in order to verify the results presented to the meeting.

Members of this committee are: Pinky Jain (Chair), Sharon Williams, Stephanie Gait, Jen Cutler, Paul Steele, Bethan Houston, Claire Kneebone, Iris Fox and Ros Brocklehurst.

Individual governors have particular responsibilities for different areas within the school, according to their special interests.

Some of these are:

Claire Kneebone	Safeguarding and Science
Pinky Jain	Numeracy
Bethan Houston	Literacy
Paul Marshall	Health and Safety
Stephanie Gait	Special Educational Needs
Jen Cutler	Early Years
Paul Marshall	Health and Safety

### How often do we meet?

The full Governing Body meets once a term. As does the Teaching and Learning Committee. The Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee meets twice each term.

There are also occasional meetings of the Steering Committee and Salaries Committee.

### What did we do last year?

We agreed, along with the Headteacher, the 'School Development Plan' for 2014 - 2015. The aims of the school, agreed by the GB and the Headteacher, included

- to focus on boys' writing

- to maintain exceptional reading progress across the school

- to review mental strategies in Maths

- to ensure 70% of Early Years achieve expected level of development across the prime areas.

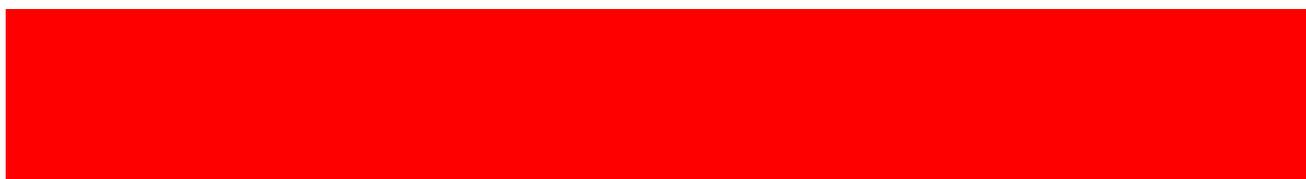
We also agreed that all classes should have access to new technologies for assessment.

Individual governors visited the school throughout the year to monitor the progression towards these aims and to report back to the GB. Governors, acting as a 'critical friend', questioned Mrs Williams to confirm the reported progress in these areas.

We are pleased to confirm that the school's targets have been attained and we thank Mrs Williams and her staff for their work towards the attainment of these goals.

We also spent much of our time considering the change to Primary. We underwent a consultation with parents, the Local Authority, potentially affected schools and other institutions such as the Lloyds' Foundation and the Parish Council. This took a great deal of paper work and time but, as you will be aware, we overcame all of the hurdles, reached agreement with those concerned and we are now preparing to move to Primary, taking Year 5 pupils from September 2015. The achievement of this goal will be a particular focus for the GB throughout this academic year, putting the appropriate marketing in place and the development of the Year 5 curriculum.

**We are all excited by the potential development of the school in the coming years.**



# Our Current Governing Body

What does our Governing Body now look like?

Headteacher                      Mrs Sharon Williams

Foundation Governors      Dr Stephanie Gait              Chair  
   Mrs Ros Brocklehurst      Vice-Chair  
   Dr Claire Kneebone      (parent)  
   Mrs Bethan Houston      (parent)  
   Mr Paul Adams  
   Dr Paul Steele              (parent)  
   Mrs Iris Fox

Parent Governors              Mr Paul Marshall  
   Mr Paul Hancock

Local Authority              Dr Pinky Jain

Staff Governor              Mrs Jen Cutler

Clerk                              Mrs Jane Lawson

How can you contact us?

Your elected Parent Governors, Paul Marshall and Paul Hancock can sometimes be found on the playground, along with the other governors who are parents: Bethan Houston, Claire Kneebone and Paul Steele. Should you wish to contact any other governors, then please do so through the school office.

Dr. Stephanie Gait, Chair of Governors

