

Governor update

Autumn Term 2017

Chair of Governors – Vic Parker



We hope you've enjoyed our wonderful Christmas Nativity and Concert, a perfect way to start our festive break.

Firstly, I would like to say a huge congratulations to Mrs Laver on her recent appointment as Headteacher. We are all delighted and very excited about the future of Sparsholt School under her leadership.

I've had the pleasure to work more closely with Mrs Laver this term. We meet every fortnight for at least one hour and both bring a list of agenda items to cover., ensuring that the Governors and School Leadership remain connected throughout the term.

Across the Governing Body, we have had a number of changes. After 11 years as a LEA Governor, Tim Lander chose to stand down and Rob Ainsworth's term of 4 years came to an end. Tim & Rob had a strong impact on the governance of Sparsholt, from Finance to Health & Safety to Septic tanks... & we are incredibly grateful for their support.

We also welcome a number of new Governors. Ceri Baber replaces Rob as our Health & Safety Parent Governor and Helen Ley replaces Tim Lander as our LEA Governor. I am also thrilled to be re-elected as your Parent Governor for another year.

Together with Sally Wesley our new Foundation Governor and Matt Stagg Parent Governor, we have a strong, passionate, committed Governing Body supporting the school leadership this year.

Wishing you and your families a great Christmas,

Vic

Head Teacher Recruitment

Congratulations to Mrs Laver!!!!

Following a gruelling 2 days of assessments and interviews - we were delighted to appoint Mrs Laver as Head of Sparsholt School.

The appointment of a headteacher is extremely rigorous and a process has to be followed and is monitored throughout by the LEA.

Huge thanks to Katy Cobbold, Kathy Bamber Brown, Jeremy Bennett, Vic Parker and Reverend Jax who devoted hours of time producing recruitment packs, training with the LEA and conducting the entire process.

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

Every school must have a school improvement plan in place and at a meeting in September, Mrs Laver presented the plan for 2017/18 to parents. A SIP is produced by the school to set out priorities to raise achievement for all pupils.

If you weren't able to attend, but would like to know more – there is a copy on the school website. It's definitely worth a read.

This year there are a number of priorities. If you'd like to find out more, please head to the school website.

- Priority 1 – Increase the number of children achieving greater depth
- Priority 2 – Accelerate progress for children with Special Educational Needs
- Priority 3– Improve the Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment in History, Geography & Science
- Priority 4 – Accelerate our journey to Outstanding teaching
- Priority 5 - Promote emotional health and well being

In the Spring Issue we will provide a more in depth update of progress made

Governors.....what do they do???

Katherine Edgecombe

Before I became a governor of Sparsholt this time last year – I had no idea what governors really did!! A year later – things have become a little clearer!

Essentially, school governors provide strategic leadership and accountability in schools. We appoint the headteacher and deputy headteacher. It's also governors who hold the ultimate responsibility for the finance, and who work together with the headteacher to make decisions about balancing resources.

Our governors work as a team and are responsible for making sure that the school provides high quality education for all pupils. One of the governing board's main roles is to help raise pupils standards of achievement.

We meet as a full team 4 times a year – and each governor has sub committee roles – either on the curriculum team or the finance and staffing team. Each sub committee meets 3 times a year – and everytime – stats are scrutinised and new targets agreed.

You may well see curriculum governors in school observing lessons, while finance governors are more likely to be analysing spreadsheets and policies!

We are lucky at Sparsholt to have a great team of governors – many of whom are parents. If you ever want to know more – we'd love to chat!

Newsflash!!!

At Novembers Full Governing Board meeting, Mrs Laver shared some statistics from the recent Inspection Data Summary Report. Across the board, Sparsholt did exceptionally well against Hampshire and National statistics.

Most notably :

- Key Stage 2 progress in writing was significantly above average and in the highest 10% nationally
- Key Stage 1 attainment in reading in 2017 was above average and in the highest 10% nationally

Congratulations Sparsholt!!

Parent Survey Matt Stagg

Huge thanks to all who contributed to the recent survey. We were pleased with the response with over 50% of families completing (room for improvement though!!)

Big positive themes :

- Nearly 100% agreed that Sparsholt supported their child's well being in school
- There was overwhelming support and appreciation for the breadth and number of clubs that are on offer (with suggestions for more of course!)
- Feedback on communication between parents and school had improved significantly

Improvement Feedback Addressed

You Said – You would like more information about how parents can support their child's learning through the VLE

Our Response – Mrs Sheppeck and staff will be offering several training sessions after school in the New Year to show parents how the VLE works and how it can be used at home to support learning

You Said – You would like more information about how the school deals effectively with bullying

Our response – At our first information evening planned for Spring Term 2018 we will share our effective anti-bullying approach

You Said - You would like your child to be encouraged by school to contribute to the wider community

Our response – We have planned a visit to St Mary's Southampton next term, and have made a link with Karis Kids which is a charity that links churches in UK with churches in Uganda. We are also planning visits to a Sikh Gurdwara and virtual Jewish Synagogue as part of our Key Stage 2 provision

You Said – You want to learn more about your child's progress

Our response – We have planned more parent's information evenings for this year providing guidance in maths and reading strategies to help your child

Communication Explored

Katherine Edgecombe

One of the key themes that came out of the Parent Survey concerned communication. We were delighted to see that positive feedback in this area had improved, but we are focussed on continuing the trend.

Below is an outline of current communication methods

If you have ideas/ feedback on how we can improve – do get in touch with me kathod@hotmail.com

Weekly newsletter – to keep you posted on weekly school highlights, recognise specific achievements and give heads up on forthcoming events

School Website – all school policies are here, together with regular updates on news and events

Parents Evenings – October Half Term (Nov for reception), and Spring Half Term, plus a further one in the summer term on a request basis

Pupil Reports – Individual Pupil Report sent home at the end of the summer term

VLE – Web based communications tool, currently used for homework and pupil interaction. Further use of this being explored

Texts – School reception will send text reminders about news and events

Headteacher Meetings/ Information Meetings – all parents are invited to attend these throughout the year

Class Meetings – all parents are invited to attend at the beginning of the year to meet the teachers and understand key focus for the year

FOSS Facebook – Foss uses this to report on events and activities and ask for help. If you are not on, and would like to be, please contact Bonnie Stagg

Outcomes – Throughout the year, you will be invited to school to see the work that your child has been doing in the classroom setting

Meetings with Teachers or Headteachers - Meetings can be arranged on a one to one basis if you have a specific concern that needs to be discussed. These should be booked through the school office.

Finance Update

Dan Parsons

Many of you will have read articles about the precarious financial position of primary and secondary local authority run schools. For the past 18 months, there has been a lot of media focus placed on the new way schools such as Sparsholt will be funded specifically through what is known as the National Funding Formula (NFF).

Following two rounds of national consultation, implementation has been further delayed until 2018 but the latest round still suggests that Sparsholt will receive between £5k and £10k less than we have previously.

This reduction in funding, together with increasing costs from things such as the Apprentice Levy and very modest salary increases for our deserving staff means that this year more than previous ones, we'll be very tight on our budget. We haven't thankfully yet got to the stage of asking parents and guardians to bring in lavatory paper and stationery, but we've had to make savings.

The position would have been worse had it not been for a number of extremely generous donations from the parents of current and former pupils, as well as FOSS and the Church.

As the Chair of the Finance and Staffing Committee, I wanted to personally thank those donors. We are all facing stretched household finances, but if anyone else would like to discuss the possibility of making a donation at any point in time, regardless of how small, please do get in touch.

Dan

Governors – Who we are

Governing Body

Vic Parker – Chair of Governors & Curriculum Committee is mum to Jackson, Yr 6 and Madsy Yr 3 and has been our Chair since 2015. She is currently on a career break from her role at Diageo, but brings a wealth of experience to the role and ensures that we stay focused and productive.

Reverend Jax – Rev Jax is responsible for 5 parish churches across the Downs Benefice and despite this, still manages to lead Worship and be a visible part of our children's time at Sparsholt. She is also a Governor and sits on the Head Teacher Performance Panel.

Head Teacher & Staff Governor

Lynn Laver & Jane Gwilliam

Clerk

Jill Judge – Jill is an invaluable member of the team giving up hours of her time to attend and record and circulate minutes from every meeting. She also updates policies and ensures that we adhere to them!

Finance and Staffing Committee

Dan Parsons – Head of Finance and Staffing Committee.

Dan is a parent of former Sparsholt pupils Millie and Tom. He has a demanding career in the city and we are grateful for the time that he continues to devote to ensuring that we remain financially viable.

Katy Cobbold – Katy is mum to Charlotte Yr 2, Aubrey Yr R and Madeleine who starts in 2018. Katy's experience as HR Director in a variety of settings is invaluable in guiding us through, often complex procedures

Ceri Baber – Our newest recruit. Ceri is mum to Olivia in Willow and will bring with her invaluable health & safety experience from running her own Dentist practice

Helen Ley – Helen is about to embark on her second stint as a governor with Sparsholt. Having been through the school with her son Thomas, she is now back with her son Patch Yr 1. Helen works for the LEA and will provide us with a wealth of experience and insight.

Katherine Edgecombe – Mum to Elsa Yr 5, Orla Yr 3 and Isabella Yr R. Kath has a background in training, youth development and communication

Curriculum Committee

Jeremy Bennett – Dad to Victoria Yr 6, Cara Yr 4 and Freya who left Sparsholt 2 years ago. As a lawyer, Jeremy brings an amazing attention to detail and ability to cross question to the role

Kathy Bamber – Mum to Maisy Yr 5 and Abby who left last year. Kathy has worked at Sparsholt College in varying teaching roles and heading up departments including Equine Studies, Animal Science, Veterinary Nursing and Sport

Sally Wesley – Sally became a Foundation Governor in Sept. Before retirement Sally was a maths teacher. She is involved in St Stephens Church where she occasionally leads services and is the Church Treasurer

Matt Stagg – Father to Leo Yr 5, Tallulah Yr 3, Fearne Yr R and Pippa and Lori (couple of years to go!) – Matt set up the hugely successful local scout group, works full time, is mad about rugby and is married to Bonnie who is the chair of FOSS