

Chair's report to Governors - 15th September 2016.

The school year 2015-16 has perhaps been one of the most exciting for many years. Firstly, our new Headteacher, Mr Matthew Yandell, was welcomed into the school and was soon planning the key priorities for the year. It was decided that governors should each monitor and track one of the six priorities across the year to ensure progress was being maintained. A final review at the last meeting of the Governing Board in June showed that the system had worked well and governors had both monitored and reported on all priorities thus also gaining a much deeper knowledge of the School Development Plan.

Governors had long been concerned by the inadequacies of the school website and so a major overhaul was undertaken to ensure that all statutory information was available for parents and also that the website fully reflected daily life in school. Governors benefitted from this update too and now have a separate area in which all papers, policies and calendars can be stored and readily accessed by all members of the Board. Thanks are due to our clerk Sue Foreman for this. The school site also received an update with new playground markings, new class names and signs and general smartening up of all areas.

Most exciting was the news that the promised replacement of the mobile classrooms would be completed during the current year. Plans were produced, scrutinised and agreed and various dates suggested. In the event, the building was completed during the second half of the summer term for first occupation at the beginning of the new school year. Governors wish to congratulate the site manager on an extremely well run project, who respected all the constraints of working in a school environment and consulted with the Head and Chair at all stages. The staff worked tirelessly in moving out of the mobile classrooms and back into the new building by the start of term. There are still many finishing touches required but these will have to be added and further equipment added as funds allow.

Finance has been a concern of the Governing Board this year, as pupil numbers were reduced by children leaving in the upper classes. Applications for entry into Reception class are always full but families leaving the area leave gaps further up the school which are more difficult to fill. Governors have managed to recruit an associate governor from HSBC bank to lead our Finance Committee when our current Chair retires next November. We continue to receive a grant from the Babington Trust, for which we are very grateful, and these funds have been identified to help furnish the new building, one room of which is intended to be named the Babington Room, in appreciation of the Trust's contributions over many years. The plans were presented by the Head and myself to the meeting of the Trust and they were enthusiastically received.

I am pleased to report that governors have been taking a very active role in school during this year. Governors have supported the PFA in their activities, joined in the activity days, visited pupils when out on residential trips, joined in fun runs, den building, taken pupil and staff surveys, run a prose reading competition with prizes

for year 6 pupils, addressed the School Council as well as visiting school on designated Governor Visit days to see the school in normal day to day action. Governors also observed the KS2 SATS tests this year, which as a result of changes to the marking schemes will require the Standards Committee to explore the results carefully when they meet in the new term.

It remains difficult, however, to recruit new parent governors. This year we have said goodbye to Carol Worsley, and we anticipate the departure of Rosie Smith and Julie Patterson early in the next year. Recent advertisements to parents have produced no results and so an extra effort will need to be made to encourage new parents to join us. Our Committees have worked hard all year but the increasing load of monitoring, particularly in the Health, Safety and Safeguarding area means that with fewer governors the load increases for others.

Premises management has also been an issue as the contract with Humphrey Perkins became difficult to manage and the officer attending Cossington left. As a result it has become necessary to appoint our own premises officer and an appointment was made for the start of the new year. However the hot dinner provision from Humphrey Perkins continues to be very popular and is enjoyed by pupils and staff (and occasionally , governors!)

Once again, I must commend the staff on their dedication, particularly with all the changes and disruption as the new building has been taking shape. We will have changes to staff in the new year as we bade a fond farewell to Mrs Bev Freer after 12 years at the school. Mrs Barton will be returning part time from maternity leave and Mrs Nicholson will be going onto maternity leave. Arrangements are all in place and governors are confident that pupils will have the full complement of staff in time for the start of term.

In such a year of change I am confident in reporting that the Governing Board has fulfilled its responsibilities, worked well together in supporting and challenging the school. I thank all the governors for their continued support, dedication and commitment .

Governors have training in the following areas during this year:

- Strategic Governance
- Pay and Appeals
- SEND and the Governing Board
- British Values
- Quality of Teaching
- Safeguarding Children
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- HR Policies
- Engaging Parents

Ruth Muldoon
11/09/16