



News from the Governors

December 2016

As we come to the end of the autumn term this newsletter aims to keep our school community updated on the governing body's involvement in the work of the school. At the beginning of an academic year governing boards focus on the priorities ahead for their school, mindful that our key function is to

*set the vision and strategic direction of school;
hold the headteacher to account for its educational performance; and
ensure financial resources are well spent.*

Governors have been in school for a variety of activities this term, those with specific responsibilities such as Health & Safety, Safeguarding, ICT, Literacy and Numeracy have all been monitoring their areas. Our two Chairs of Governors joined with staff in September to re-affirm our school's vision - **Achievement for All**. Our school's vision directs the work of governors which in turn ensures that School Development Plan priorities are focussed on delivering the school's vision for our pupils.

We held the first of our two Governors Days just before the October half term break. It's always a pleasure coming in for days such as this as it allows us to see the school in action, chat with pupils about what they like and don't like about school and we get a chance to meet with staff. This time we very much enjoyed attending the Junior school assembly when our pupils demonstrated great confidence in illustrating, through the use of music, poetry and art, the various aspects of British life they had learned about during British Values week - democracy, the importance of maintaining an open society to tackle discrimination and coming up with a new national anthem! During the day we met with our school's Improvement Advisor and reviewed last summer's results in relation to the changes to Ofsted's accountability framework, and we reviewed how prepared we are for our next Ofsted inspection.

Governors have attended in total eight meetings this term - two as a full governing body, the remainder as committees:

Curriculum - governors carried out a learning walk looking at how the school's investment in new interactive smartboards and laptops are used during lessons in the classroom. As governors we need to ensure that the significant investment made in equipment is delivering value for money. Meetings also reviewed a range of policies from Collective Worship, Homework, Sex & Relationships Education, Equalities and the Home/School Agreement which sets out the commitment the school, parents and pupils make when joining our school.

Finance, Health, Safety & Sites - we received a full update on the financial position of the school as well as reports on conditions of the buildings and grounds and feedback from our Health & Safety governor. Like all schools Calcot has had to absorb increased staffing, national insurance and pension costs with no increase to school funding for a number of years. In real terms the amount of money we have to spend is far less than it was a few years ago and expenditure has to be carefully planned. A priority for us is to try and find physical space within both school buildings for small group work and music teaching. We looked into the possibility of semi permanent facilities but these are proving cost prohibitive so we will continue to look at options.

Personnel - fundamental to a child's education is for a school to have a high quality staffing team. Recruitment is an issue for all West Berkshire schools and here at Calcot we want to retain the committed staffing team we have and be sure that if we do recruit we are attracting high calibre applicants. Staffing is approximately 80% of our school's expenditure and it is important that our staff want to stay at our school because our appraisal system rewards good teachers and our pay policy is attractive to the right candidates. Our three committee meetings this term have focussed on monitoring pay decisions and updating staffing policies.

It hasn't all been business - governors have attended Parents Forums to keep us in touch with areas of importance to our parent body, and a group of us formed a team for the PTA quiz evening. Well done to the winning team (sadly not us!) and thank you to all those who supported this event, with particular thanks to the PTA for organizing such an enjoyable evening and raising funds for the school.

Our Impact of Governors Work gives more information on the variety of activities governors are involved in and this is on our school's website -

<http://www.calcotschools.co.uk/page/?title=Governors&pid=22>

We have three vacancies on our governing body so if you would be interested in joining us please do get in touch via the school office.

We wish all our pupils, parents and staff an enjoyable Christmas break!

2016/17 Academic Year

Joint Chairs of Governors:	Kath Howard & Julia Kidd
Vice Chair of Governors:	Andrew Marsh
Chair of Curriculum:	Kath Howard
Chair of Personnel:	Katie Dean
Chair of Finance, H S & Sites	Andrew Marsh
Clerk to Governors:	Alice Elliott