

SPEEN CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

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November 2015

Dear Parents and carers,

A warm welcome to you all, in particular to the new families who have joined us this autumn term at Speen School. We hope your children will thrive with us and be very happy during their time spent here.

The purpose of our Governor's 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 from Robyn's weekly emails 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. A local Speen resident and a father of past pupils, Alistair Blundell who boosts our Finance, Health, safety and premises committees, has recently joined us. Susan Seward, an experienced teacher, joins us as a Foundation governor nominated by the Oxford Diocese to boost our curriculum committee.

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.

We also undertake regular training courses run by the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust to further our knowledge and CPD. Most recently Katherine Matthews attended an Early Years Foundation stage briefing to ensure we are equipped with latest information.

The Full Governing Body (FGB) meets approximately once per term with a clerk in attendance to fully minute our meetings and we consider a wide range of issues related to the management of the school. These can include discussions about the long term school development plan, policies to review and adopt, 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 presented by the Head Teacher and challenge where necessary.

In order that all the various aspects of the school are dealt with a number of sub 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. Copies of all of our meeting minutes are available to view on request through the office.

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

General Purposes Committee comprising all governors meets to discuss anything that we feel is of current importance and requires the input of all governors. For example, our primary focus recently has been to discuss the pupil intake in reception class, staff levels and future recruitment together with a focus on the new curriculum and OFSTED framework, school meals and budget requirements. We will be meeting soon to undertake whole governing body training on self-evaluation and then to develop the School Development Plan which sets the strategic direction of the School.

Finance Committee – Eamonn Barrett, Al Scott, Alistair Blundell, Mrs Nayna

Met recently to robustly discuss the monthly financial summary report, future financial spending plans and staff pay policies.

Communications Committee – Katherine Matthews, Amanda Cleaver, Simon Floyd, Mrs Nayna.

Simon has been outstanding in his efforts to upgrade our broadband speeds to enable the staff and teachers to work more effectively, whether it is in the classroom or the office and he has been working hard with Bucks CC trying to resolve this and finally improvement has been seen. We are looking at the idea of introducing tablets with teacher recommended applications for the children to support their learning and once the suitable programmes have been chosen by the staff, we can progress with purchasing of ipads or similar. We hope parents are pleased with the video clip on our website depicting a typical day in the life of our school. Do take a look if you have not already! We are currently updating our profiles with new governors to upload to the school website. We actively promote Speen School through our Open Mornings, local press articles and Speen village newsletters. Our next project is producing an updated leaflet highlighting key aspects of our school. We also work to ensure that our website is compliant with latest statutory requirements.

Admissions Committee – Amanda Cleaver, Christine Rooney, Mrs Nayna

Have met to discuss the applications for new places and the admission arrangements policy. We are pleased to report a healthy number of new applicants for the new academic year.

Pastoral Committee – Reverend Tony Bundock, Julie Cooper, Helen Lidington, Mrs Nayna, Katherine Matthews, Christine Rooney.

We have met to discuss staffing matters, update safeguarding and SEN individual needs and confirm the school has a very good attendance.

At the well attended Open morning held last week prospective families and visiting governors were able to view the fast paced Number fit session held for all children. The children seemed enthralled and completely engaged with this unique style of maths teaching whilst keeping fit! Outside we could see the evolving Sensory garden, which the PTA and after school eco club has so generously contributed to with funds and time. The governors are very grateful to all involved for their vision and hard work.

The school staff and governors are always keen to survey your opinions and views of aspects of Speen School, and in particular we are now exploring the idea of providing after school care, whether it be on site or elsewhere in the village. Please would you be kind enough to email Katherine Matthews at the governor's dedicated email address: governors@speen-cofe.bucks.sch.uk with a Yes or No or indeed please feel free to add further details of your requirements to enable us to proceed with this project. You may not need child care provision everyday so it will be useful to gauge our parents' specific needs.

Mrs Nayna and the governors are keen to hold future Parent Forums that in the past have been a great opportunity to focus on Parent-School communication, our Reading and Maths schemes and how you can help your child further at home to support their learning. Is there a topic you would like us to present? Please let us know. A date will follow for the Spring term.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter and we hope you have found it informative. We welcome any suggestions for its content and any questions you would like answered within it.

With very best wishes,
On behalf of Speen School Governors

Eamonn Barrett
Chairman