

The Team

At the start of the year, the governing board said goodbye to Sue Eagle who has been a wonderful support for 10 years, especially in early years, head teacher performance management and as chair of the standards committee. We continue to look for a replacement, although pre-Covid we had a prospective candidate. We welcomed Amie Marshall as our new parent governor, and she has joined the standards committee. Beth Barrett took over as chair of standards and Allan Henderson continued to head up resources, attending budget meetings even during lockdown. After Christmas, Chris Brown stepped down as chair due to other commitments and Gill Hipwell took on the role on an interim basis for 2 terms. Beth Barrett continued as vice-chair. Ms Strode resigned her role as staff governor in June and was thanked for her commitment. A replacement is being sought and should be in place by September.

Staffing

We began the year with Mrs Sonnex on maternity leave. Her role was covered by Mrs Burns as interim head for two days per week. Mrs Goodhew was an excellent acting head for the other two days, whilst developing her leadership skills alongside her NPQH studies. Mrs Varela arrived in September to take the reins in Acorns and money was invested in updating and improving the outdoor learning area.

Mrs Sonnex returned for 3 days a week in January. Mrs Goodhew continued her role, supported in Oaks by Mr Wood, who we were delighted to welcome back for one day each week. From 1st June Mrs Sonnex increased her time to 4 days a week.

Staff have coped magnificently with home schooling online and with the new regime of working in 'bubbles.' Governors appreciate how difficult this was and were impressed by the high standards and commitment shown. All is set for a calm start for all pupils in September. Mrs Varela will be on maternity leave; Mrs Hicks, an excellent and very experienced early years specialist teacher has been appointed for a year.

Governor activity

Governors continued their supporting, monitoring and challenge roles, with a range of activities centred on the 2 committees. The standards committee changed the pattern of their meetings so that progress is scrutinised termly, and the monitoring schedule has a stronger focus in the other three meetings. The resources committee has been active in managing the budget, supported by Mrs Byer whose expertise is invaluable. The ethos group, including members from our local churches, monitored RE and collective worship provision on behalf of the governors as well as preparing a larger piece of discussion and consultation around vision and ethos. The culmination of this has been delayed by the current situation.

Support from a range of external providers identified some areas needing attention. On her return, Mrs Sonnex has expedited action for improvement, which is ongoing. We have been

fortunate to receive generous support from the outgoing improvement adviser of St Benet's MAT.

Future developments

Governors discussed joining the St Benet's MAT and agreed to explore this possibility. The arrival of Covid 19, with lockdown hot on its heels, disrupted our plans for the summer term. It also led to more urgent discussions by the chairs' group around the need to belong to a 'family' of schools. This led to a unanimous decision by the governing board to express an interest in joining the St Benet's MAT and to work more closely with the schools already in the MAT during the interim period.

These have been trying times with a great deal of disruption, but people have continued to work together to get things done in a very positive way. We have appreciated the regular updates from Mrs Sonnex to governors.

Thank you also to Maggie Smith, our clerk, who has continued to keep us informed of local governance developments throughout the time we have been unable to meet in person.