



CHERITON GOVERNORS

Termly Newsletter from the Governors of Cheriton School

Changes to the Governing Body

Sadly we say good bye to one of our Parent Governors, Tom Balme. Tom has been a governor of Cheriton School for 5 years and gives some thoughts on his time as parent governor in the next column.

We now have a vacancy for a Parent Governor. Details can be found on the School Newsletter. Closing dates for applications are 31st March 2017.

Welcome to New Governor



Brenna Weston Bell
Co-opted Governor

I have lived in Cheriton for 10 years and have one daughter who will be starting school in September. With experience in both the secondary and primary sector, I am currently Deputy Headteacher of a special school in Andover. I am interested in inclusion and in the specific challenges that small schools may face and hope that my skills and experience in both of these areas will be of benefit to Cheriton Primary School.

Clerk to the Governing Body

A vacancy has arisen for a clerk to the governing body. Details can be found on the school website under Community, Staff Vacancies

Tom Balme

Departing Chair of Resources Committee. Thoughts on his time as a Governor at the School

My time as a parent governor and chair of the resources committee for Cheriton Primary School has been both interesting and rewarding. I was encouraged by my previous employer to take on a governor's role in a local school; I had no previous experience of what the role would entail. I have been responsible for overseeing the budget of a £500,000 company in addition to my day job which was far more responsibility than I was expecting when I volunteered!

When I joined the governing body the school had not had to recruit for a number of years and all of a sudden we needed a new head teacher, new reception teacher, a new class 2 teacher plus support staff. Being involved with the recruitment process and interviews was interesting but exhausting!

Getting to know the people who are accountable for the running of the school behind the scenes has given me confidence in my children's education which I might otherwise lack at times. Being involved behind the scenes has given me the opportunity to improve things which the budget couldn't stretch to, including redecorating the classrooms which in turn led to Tesco staff coming in to complete the office and corridors and we were then able to spend some of the budget on refurbishing the wcs.

The governing body is made up of an incredibly skilled group of very dedicated volunteers from many different professions. It is massively under appreciated how much time, effort and expertise the governors give voluntarily to the school to keep it running smoothly, both academically and financially. It has been great to be able to 'give back' to the school - I feel proud to have had the opportunity to contribute.

Thank you.

Tom Balme

Accessibility Plan

Thanks to all of you who responded to the accessibility survey last month, we had a great response rate, which shows to me that you value this. It is important that your experience and feedback helps to direct the school policy. All the feedback received was constructive and positive, and ensures that the school concentrates on the most important areas of improving physical access to the school, and access to the curriculum and all written information.

I was pleased to find that many of you had no serious concerns about access, but it is an area that we must constantly reassess, as we welcome new children and parents into the school. There were a number of specific suggestions and concerns that we are looking at, particularly around the entrances to the school. The issue of parking is being dealt with separately, as it falls outside of the scope of this policy area. I'm sure you will agree that Cheriton Primary School wants to be as welcoming and supportive as we can be to children, parents and staff who have disabilities and this policy is intended to reflect that. The policy is available to view on the school website.

Jacob Leadley

Communicating with Governors

Governors with children at the school can regularly be found on the school playground at pick up and drop off times. They are Jacob Leadley, Andrew Flett and Paul Debont. They will be happy to have a chat with you.

Governors are always available at Parents Evenings to discuss any concerns you may have.

All governors can be contacted through the school office by emailing: adminoffice@cheriton.hants.sch.uk



HOW IS THE SCHOOL FINANCED?

The Department for Education (DfE) provides the local authority, Hampshire, with a dedicated schools grant (DSG). This is then distributed to schools via a locally approved formula, largely based on the pupil census data from the October before the financial year starts. The 'local formula' is the mechanism used for allocation funds to each maintained school (Cheriton is a maintained school) by way of a 'budget share' This is the main source of funding for a school. The budget share for each school is a public document and you will find every HCC maintained school budget share on the HCC web pages on <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/schools/budgetshares> .

This budget share figure is allocated by the Headteacher and the Finance Officer to reflect expected areas of expenditure, discussed at committee level and approved by the full governing body. Thereafter it is monitored at each resources committee meeting noting any significant variances between income and expenditure

In addition to the budget share the school also receives additional 'ring fenced' funding for specific areas, the pupil premium grant, SEN high needs , primary sports funding and free school meals. Details of how these budgets are spent by the school can be found on the school website (except free school meals).

Resources committee meetings are held once per half term . The Chair draws up the agenda to ensure all the financial commitments of the school are discussed and dealt with as and when appropriate within the yearly budget cycle.

General Principles of the Resources Committee is to ensure:

- Today's money is spent on today's children. Future children of the school are neither more or less important than today's children. Spending should be apportioned accordingly.
- Spending is linked to educational outcomes and the School Improvement Plan
- Value for money. Always getting the best value ensuring the budget goes further and the procurement process is transparent.

Forest School visit Wednesday 26th January 2017

I spent a really interesting afternoon with Rebecca Prior and year 6 at the Forest School which was a very different experience from the classroom. Rebecca's approach was facilitative with a focus on equality and first names were used. Children were expected to discover things and challenge themselves but she was available to help and encourage if this was requested. They began with a ten minute relaxation exercise where they lay down quietly looking up at the trees and the sky. Then as a group they discussed their aims, various approaches and tools they could use and were reminded of the boundaries they needed to adhere to. They were encouraged to explore and experiment and seek advice if required. They closed the chat with a discussion on safety.

Some children focused on sawing wood to make into cricket bats, mallets etc., experimenting with a variety of methods to shape the wood. I was impressed by the way they worked together sharing tools and ideas and helping each other when they got stuck. They were very clear about what they could and couldn't do explaining to me the safety rationale behind each rule regarding tools.

Two children were building a zip wire with rope and had a long discussion about how to get the ropes higher into the trees and what knots to use. One of them was very nervous about trying it out so the others demonstrated how to do it and helped her climb on the seat and successfully ride. There was no doubt that this developed her confidence in climbing.

Other children were making a ladder with rope and wood that they used to climb up onto a branch, while a few more were exploring the river or climbing trees.

Half way through the afternoon they helped themselves to a hot drink and cooked marshmallows on sticks in the fire as Rebecca explained how to cook on an open fire. All of them were clearly absorbed by what they were doing and were reluctant to finish at 3pm. The afternoon closed with a discussion around the fire about what they had achieved and what they would like to achieve next time.

What really stood out from this afternoon was the way the children interacted as a team and supported and encouraged each other to do things that they found challenging. The atmosphere was collaborative and fun. It would be really interesting to see what other age groups do. At the end of the afternoon I had a discussion with Rebecca about the ethos behind Forest Schools and where she would like to take this. Finally to complete the picture it would be really interesting to see how their experiences at the Forest School translate back into the classroom.

Fran Lawrence

What the Governing Body Does

The Governing Body's main tasks are to: set the aims and objectives of the school, support and challenge the school's leadership, ensure that pupils receive high quality education, oversee all financial matters relating to the school, plan for future development and improvement.

Governors are responsible for appointing the Headteacher and also supporting them in their leadership role. Although they do not manage the school, they do help to set the strategic direction the school will take, assist in drawing up policies, objectives, targets and monitoring of the school's finances.

Governors are volunteers who receive no pay for their role.