

Governor Newsletter

Autumn Term, 2017



The 2017/18 academic year is well underway now and governors have been in school on a number of occasions to monitor the school's development. In this term's newsletter, we give you a snapshot of the work that governors do and you can read about our Local Authority governor, Trevor Prior.

Little Waltham School Governing Body			
			
Jon Tredwell Foundation Governor	Hugh Godfrey Foundation Governor	Dave Howatson Foundation Governor	Martin Gandy Foundation Governor
			
Diane Regan Foundation Governor	Joanne Young Foundation Governor	Tony Moxham Parent Governor	Kristy Rosam Parent Governor
			
Rev Sandra Sykes Incumbent Ex-Officio	Elizabeth Maycock Headteacher Ex-Officio	Ruth Baker Staff Governor	Trevor Prior Local Authority Governor

A snapshot of the work of governors

In order to help you get to know your school's governing body, each termly newsletter has included a short piece focusing on a particular governor (Trevor Prior this term), but what do governors actually do?

We have three key responsibilities:

- to set the school's ethos, vision and strategic direction;
- to hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
and
- to oversee the financial performance of the school, making sure that its money is well spent.

Apart from the headteacher, a staff representative and the church incumbent, all governors are volunteers from a variety of backgrounds, including education, management consultancy, HR, IT and finance, but all with the common aim of helping to provide the very best education possible for the pupils of Little Waltham School.

As a governing body we are always keen to develop the key skills and knowledge necessary for effective governance and looking to improve the way we set and monitor the vision of our school. Governors are always encouraged to attend training courses to ensure their knowledge of current issues and initiatives is up-to-date. This term individual governors have attended a number of training courses to support our professional development, this has included: safeguarding, analysing school performance, exclusions and governor self-evaluation.

The chair of governors, Jon Tredwell, meets regularly with the headteacher to discuss a wide range of topics relating to the school and its performance. Other governors meet with individual teachers to discuss their subject responsibilities and the objectives set for these in the school development plan, before reporting their findings back to the next full governing body meeting.

Whilst meetings do form a very necessary part of our role, another key element is to see the school in action and talk to the children. This term, eight governors joined the children for lunch and then spent the afternoon in class taking the opportunity to ask the children what they were learning and looking at the work in their books. It was clear that the children were fully engaged and enthusiastically taking part in a wide range of learning activities, including art, craft, poem writing and discussion. We were also impressed with the energy, enthusiasm and dedication shown by all the staff.

Other monitoring visits governors have carried out this term have included: Maths, Computing, Science, Pupil Premium funding, meeting with the School Council, special educational needs, safeguarding, RE and website compliance.

As part of our governor self-evaluation we identified the need to ensure that our monitoring cycle clearly demonstrates the continuous process of assess, plan, do, review. Following on from each monitoring visit, we try to ensure that any issues that are raised are followed up at our next visit and discussed at the appropriate committee meeting so that school development can be clearly evidenced.

Earlier this month, three governors joined the school on its trip to the pantomime. The logistics of taking almost two hundred primary school children on a trip of this nature should not be underestimated. The children's excitement levels were 'atmospheric', as were the noise levels, but their behaviour remained exemplary. Brilliant!

One other aspect of our role is to understand the views of the parents. We do hold an annual survey and, of course, do have two parents on the governing body, but we are keen to broaden our knowledge. It was, therefore, disappointing that the response to the recent invite to meet informally with governors was so poor. We have tried a number of different formats and times, but without any significant success. So, as part of our annual survey in March, we will be asking what would suit you best.

Governor Profile: Trevor Prior

Hello, my name is Trevor Prior. I'm a Local Authority (LA) Governor, I sit on the Resources committee and also act as the governor responsible for Health and Safety. My appointment was via an interview with the chair of governors and an application process via the LA (Essex County Council), which is why many of you won't recognise my face. My connection with the school is purely via the governors' role.

I live in Chelmsford with my wife and youngest daughter (who is currently taking a gap year). My eldest daughter is at university studying economics. Professionally I am an Engineering Consultant, specialising in Process Safety for high hazard, high risk applications.

Like many, my work is at times quite intense, stressful, and quite frankly unfulfilling. As such I became a governor to enable me to use up some of the free time which comes with having an older family, but also as a mechanism to re-use some of the life skills I have developed in an environment where I can genuinely provide help.

Like all governors, my role is a voluntary one. We receive no remuneration for the time spent supporting the school. We do it not only because it needs to be done, but also because the children, staff and school deserve it.

Little Waltham Church of England School is a little gem. As an outsider having only the governing role to connect me to you all, I have been sincerely impressed with the learning environment and the attitude of the children and the staff.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

We hope that you find our termly governor newsletters interesting and informative. If you would like to know more about your governing body, or are interested in becoming a governor, please email krosam@littlewaltham.essex.sch.uk for more information.

Kind Regards,

The Governing Body