

Welcome to all the new families and members of staff who have joined us this term. We trust that you are enjoying your first term as part of Little Waltham School and Governors look forward to meeting you at various events throughout the year. For a full list of governors, their roles and responsibilities, please see our website: [www.little-waltham-school.co.uk](http://www.little-waltham-school.co.uk)

The aim of our termly newsletter is to provide information on the work of the Governing Body throughout the year to help to ensure that parents/carers understand how Governors are leading whole school improvement. The strategic role of Governors involves continually monitoring the changing educational landscape and reviewing the best way forward for our school to ensure its continued success. Below is a letter from the Chair of Governors explaining proposed future developments for Little Waltham School:

## Proposed Federation of Ford End and Little Waltham Primary Schools

Little Waltham's Headteacher has been acting as interim Executive Head at Ford End for the last fifteen months and this has proved to be a successful collaboration. The governors of Ford End and Little Waltham believe that further benefits can accrue to both schools and are now actively exploring the option of forming a federation of our two schools. The aim is to provide a secure long-term future and improve the education and development for your children.

A Steering Group has been formed comprising governors and staff from both schools and governors have agreed terms of reference, with mutual priorities for closer collaboration being:

- enhanced education for all our pupils;
- retention of both school's individuality;
- continued membership and active participation in and development of the River Chelmer Primary Partnership and the benefits to school improvement that this grouping brings.

The government recognise that two or more schools forming a federation may be a more sensible way forward, particularly for local rural schools, judged as good by OFSTED. Indeed, this is an approach being actively encouraged by Essex County Council.

The national context for schools in England is changing at a rapid pace. The role that local authorities play in providing school improvement and other services is reducing and schools are increasingly looking to each other for support and challenge.

Small primary schools (defined as those with 250 pupils or less) are under pressure to ensure that they are viable from a financial and other resources viewpoint. It has become clear that small schools must look to forming ties with other local schools in order to sustain the school and improve outcomes for pupils – doing nothing is not an option.

Whilst there is a fair amount of planning and preparation needed by both schools for such a move, the expectation is that we will be in a position to commence the federation at the beginning of the next school year i.e. September 2019.

Governors are committed to keeping all interested parties – staff, parents, pupils and the local authority and diocese, informed of progress and we will be keeping you advised at regular intervals, as we move towards full federation. It is planned that both schools will hold a Parents Forum early next term to give you an opportunity to ask questions.

Yours sincerely

The Chairs of Governors of Ford End School and Little Waltham School

## What have your Governing Body been up to this term?

During the autumn term we have:

- undertaken the termly Health & Safety and Safeguarding monitoring visit;
- met with staff to discuss school data and test results;
- visited a variety of lessons and discussed our observations at our termly Teaching, Learning and Achievement committee meeting;
- continued to monitor attendance, behaviour and the budget.

## What is a clerk to Governors and who is our clerk?

My name is Geoff Slide and I am the clerk to the Governors of the School. The purpose of the clerk's role is to:

- provide advice to the governing body on governance, constitutional and procedural matters;
- provide effective administrative support to the governing body and its committees;
- ensure the governing body is properly constituted;
- manage information effectively in accordance with legal requirements.

The clerk is the 'constitutional conscience' of the governing body and is accountable to the governing body. I attend all the main meetings of the Governing Body, prepare and distribute agendas before the meeting and minutes afterwards. I advise governors as necessary, although I am very fortunate to work with our governors, as they are very competent and capable, and need very little advice.

I currently clerk at 5 other schools in Essex, ranging from a large secondary academy to a very small rural school. I have also been a governor and chair of the school in the village where I live, so understand the issues governors face. I am a retired headteacher, having been head in several different schools over a 12 year period, some of which were as an interim head covering the absence of the permanent head. This wide range of experience in education allows me to provide good advice from experience to the governors.

I have been retired from full-time work for 4 years and, when not clerking, I also enjoy looking after one - or more - of my 4 grandchildren (aged from 1 to 4), or cycling round the country roads of Essex with friends sampling the coffee and cake in different cafes!

Geoff Slide



## Thank You

We would like to say a big thank you again to all the members and helpers of The Friends of Little Waltham School. This group of hard working volunteers give up their time to provide resources, activities and events for our pupils (such as the recent Christmas Bazaar) and they raise valuable money which is ploughed directly into the school. Your help is very much appreciated.

## Finally...

To all of our families, staff and pupils we wish you a merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Kind Regards,

The Governing Body