



# GOVERNORS' NEWS

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Autumn 2013

## WELCOME TO 2013/14

Welcome back to all our Bernards Heath families, and a particularly warm welcome to those of you who are new to the school this September. We look forward to working with you all to make this another exciting, successful and enjoyable year for the children.

**There is currently a vacancy on our governing body for one new parent governor.** Further information and nomination form will be circulated shortly. In the meantime, read about the experiences of one of our new parent governors from last year and learn what the role involves. If you think you may be interested, Chair of Governors, Mary Liming, is always happy to be contacted via the school office to provide further details.

## Plans for 2013/14

It is now nearly four years since OFSTED declared our school to be outstanding. Since our December 2009 Inspection, the Government has introduced a new OFSTED Framework which has dramatically changed the criteria by which schools are judged. The bar has most certainly been raised, making it a far greater challenge for schools to demonstrate that they are indeed outstanding. And with just half a day's notice, schools need to be ready and performing at their best all the time.

All the evidence gathered by the governing body suggests that the school has not only maintained its high standards, but has continued its relentless pursuit for excellence with an uncompromising drive to improve the outcomes for all of our pupils. The school carries out rigorous self-evaluation, which is also externally challenged and assessed by our County School Improvement Partner at various points during the school year. Following her visit in March 2013, she said:

***“The standards of attainment of the vast majority of pupils are well above national expectations. Pupils for all groups make rapid and sustained progress throughout the year groups in English and Maths. Pupils read widely and across all subjects. As a result the pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next step in their education.”***

We were delighted, therefore, to see the school live up to this comment with a very positive set of SATS results from Summer 2013. The official results will be published later on this term. In the meantime, we would invite you to visit the school website where you will find a wealth of useful information about the school, from newsletters and correspondence to policies and procedures as well as links to nationally collated data and information.

**Over the course of 2013/14, the school will be concentrating on the following three key priorities, which governors will monitor as the year progresses:**

- maintaining the high standard of attainment and good progress for all pupils, closing the gaps for any pupils achieving below their peers;
- continuing to develop the quality of teaching so that an even greater percentage is judged to be outstanding
- progressively developing the curriculum in the most appropriate and effective way for our school to meet the requirements of the Government's new Primary Curriculum.

## My first six months as a Parent Governor at Bernards Heath Junior School

In July, I and three other governors were invited to experience lunchtime at Bernards Heath. Outside a range of activities were taking place, such as a session of football coaching for girls, and year 4 football on the new ball pitch. Year 6 were supervising a range of outdoor equipment for rounders, tennis, skipping and ball games. Many children were playing in groups or chatting on the grass.

Inside, the Young Carers Group was taking place. In the dining hall we were able to see how children are given the freedom to choose their own meals, and were supervised whilst they ate.

We were shown how children would be looked after following an accident at school and how children with special needs were cared for, such as a child needing tube feeding.

We saw how Year 6 children are encouraged to show younger children how to solve any problems that might arise between friends.

All the governors present were impressed by the calm atmosphere at lunchtime in the dining room, and how many children were occupied in different activities and games outside. They seemed to be really enjoying their lunch break and having fun.

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**In February 2013 I was elected as a parent governor at Bernards Heath Junior School. As new governor I was able to attend an introductory course which was very useful, as it gave me a good understanding of the role and how the Governing Body works to support the school.**

Governors at Bernards Heath belong to one or more sub-committees. I am a member of the Curriculum Development Committee, whose role is to oversee the accountability of the school. The Committee meets once a term to discuss issues such as attainment levels and progress. I also attend the five evening whole Governing Body meetings each year where all the different committees come together with the Headteacher and Deputy Head. Meetings are open and friendly with plenty of discussion not only on business at the school, but how this fits in with the wider national and county education issues.

I have, in addition, contributed to smaller specific working groups to discuss areas such as safeguarding, and also attended a curriculum leadership team meeting, giving me the opportunity to meet the teachers and hear first hand how the curriculum is approached and developed for each subject area.

**As a governor, I am finding it very rewarding to be able to contribute new ideas, knowledge and an external perspective to help support the staff and pupils. It has been a very positive and enjoyable six months and I would recommend anyone who is interested in becoming a governor to talk to Mary Liming, our Chair of Governors, and consider applying for the current vacancy.**

*Vicky Paganuzzi*