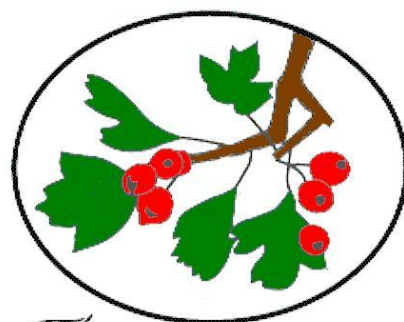


Welcome to the Governors' Newsletter of 2012, the first one I introduce as Chair of Governors. At the start of this academic year, Dave Fisher stood down as Chair and I was elected to take his place. Dave has been a recognisable figure around the school for some considerable time now, much of which as Chair of Governors, and I am pleased that we retained his expertise for another year as he took up the role of Vice Chair. Dave has however decided that this year will be his last as a governor here, and we owe him a huge debt of thanks for fourteen years of unstinting work at the school, including many meetings, supporting PTA events, attending the residential trip, and more than I could possibly detail in this newsletter.



The
Hawthorns
Primary School

The Governors' Newsletter 2012

Other changes amongst the governors this year include the appointment of Emma Wells as Chair of the Sites and Buildings Committee, and the election to the governing body of Elizabeth Bridgeman as non-teaching staff governor to replace Dawn Wojcik whose term of office ended this year. My thanks to Dawn for her work as a governor. We also have a new Clerk to the Governors, as Sarah Izquierdo took over this role at the start of the year. All of us have enthusiastically entered into our new roles, and work goes on to improve the efficiency of our procedures.



There has of course also been significant change in the school's Senior Leadership Team, in particular in December when Mr Hempson-Jones retired after fourteen years of exemplary work at the school. Much has been written and many events were held to celebrate his time and achievements at The Hawthorns, and we wish Steve well in his future ventures. The process of finding a new Head Teacher proved long and exhaustive, but we are very pleased to have appointed Mrs Pat Kerton who will join us in September. We very much look forward to working with her in taking this excellent school forward.

The length of the recruitment process necessitated the appointment of an interim Head Teacher, and we have been very fortunate to have had Mr Norbury with us for these two terms. Brian's enthusiasm and attention to detail has enabled us to look at many aspects of the school from a new perspective and make changes where necessary. The school self-evaluates using both internal data and data from external agencies. Detailed analysis of this data enables identification of areas of strength to be consolidated and areas where resources can be targeted to further improve the very high standards of provision and attainment. This is an ongoing and continuous process.



Other staff changes to date include the departure of Miss Morris, Mrs Whitehorn, Mrs Goatley and Mrs Mahoney, and the arrival of Miss Norris (year 5), Miss Brimley (year 1), and Mrs Milne (reception and Senior Leadership Team). There are more changes to come too, with the retirement at the end of this term of Mrs Ruddock whose work as Business Manager has been invaluable, and who has been very supportive of the governors. We wish Lesley well. Our new School Business Manager, Mrs Sandra Carter, has started working in the school alongside Lesley for the final half term of the year. Finally, as you will have read before the half term break, Mr Martin Gater will be leaving us at the end of this academic year for pastures new. Our thanks go to Martin for all his work in the school, as a teacher and also as Inclusion Manager, and we wish him well in his new appointment.

All of the above leaves me little space to celebrate the many achievements over the past year. Standards of progress and attainment across the school continue to be very high, and the school continues to be very active in the community, with many sports events and other extracurricular activities. My thanks to staff and parents for supporting the children in these endeavours, and for the time and effort spent in ensuring this school continues to be an excellent educational establishment. We look forward to an exciting and successful academic year ahead.

Open afternoon this year is on the 4th of July, and governors will again be in attendance if you would like to talk to us. We look forward to seeing you there.

Chris Shaw (Parent Governor, Chair of Governors)



It has been another busy year for the Finance and Personnel Committee with the recruitment of the new Headteacher and the new School Business Manager who will take over from Lesley Ruddock in September. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lesley for all her work during the last 14 years. The committee structure is a very efficient way of Governors effectively carrying out their duties but this job is made a lot easier when you have the tremendous support that I have had during the last two years from Lesley. She has always provided sensible, reliable advice and information that is just what you need when you need it. I am sure that Lesley will enjoy her well-earned retirement with all the activities and interests that she has.

Diane Hampton (Community Governor, Chair of Finance and Personnel)

My third year as a parent governor has been both challenging and thoroughly enjoyable. In October I became Chair of the Sites and Buildings Committee. We have been very busy overseeing all the redecoration and improvements that have been put in place over the past year. The additional classroom for Year 1 and the subsequent reorganisation of the Year 1 area has been a great success and has enabled all three classes to remain together.

Other improvements to the school have included the restyling of the reception area. We have put new benches in the back playground so the pupils can change their outdoor shoes before coming back into school. All the pupils can now enjoy their PE lessons much more with the brand new indoor equipment installed in the hall. Key Stage 1 pupils are now able to make use of the fantastic new IT suite located in the old Year 2 classroom.



I had a fascinating day on the Year One trip to the Brooklands Transport museum. It was great to sit in Concorde and see some of the F1 cars from seasons past. The pupils particularly liked having a chance of a ride on a Penny Farthing.

The Year 5 Book Club has now run for a second year. We meet on alternate Wednesday lunchtimes in the Library. We have enjoyed reading many different books, including Billionaire Boy by David Walliams, War Horse by Michael Morpurgo and The Little House on the Prairie by Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Emma Wells (Parent Governor, Chair of Sites and Buildings Committee)



We were very lucky this year to enhance our ICT capability by introducing a half-size ICT Suite aimed at the use by the Early Years - we now have 15 personal computers specifically for their use. The main ICT suite of 30 can now be timetabled for the Junior Years to give each class access at least one whole day per week.

Mrs Clements continues to look at new ways of ensuring ICT will continue to develop as it is part of the core curriculum and we hope to use the new interactive voting system as part of the learning scheme.

All of the teaching staff have had "E-Safety" training (lead by Wokingham Borough Council) which will be incorporated into our curriculum and E-Safety policies in an 'All in one' version.

Mrs Burgess as ever manages the whole of IT, whether it is in the ICT Suites, the classrooms or in the Offices.

We also expect to start to procure and implement a new Learning Platform in the next few months which will keep Mrs Belton, Mrs Burgess, Mrs Izquierdo and Mrs Clements very busy!

Ian Severn (Community Governor, ICT Governor)



After a commendable five years as the non-teaching staff governor Mrs Wojcik decided it was time for a change and I found myself elected. Having worked in Year 5 and predominately Year 6 over a ten year period I felt it was time to get involved in other aspects of school life and use my experience in an active way to benefit the school. So I find myself on two committees reading lots of emails and policies and putting forward my viewpoint which is always positively received. It is interesting to see the whole school picture and not just from the Year 6 perspective.

I am amazed at how active and involved our governors are in our school - not just on Governors Day but throughout the year. And finally for those children who were at the assembly on Governors day – I am still asking lots of questions just like I did when I was at school.

Mrs Bridgeman (Non-teaching Staff Governor)



As Governors we expect that we will have a few challenges and this year has been no exception. With the retirement of Mr Hempson-Jones we have spent a lot of time and care finding a new Head Teacher and we look forward to welcoming Mrs Kerton when she joins us in September. In the meantime we know that our school is in safe hands as Mr Norbury has done so much to keep our school moving forward.

Apart from the more formal role of Governor, being part of the Hawthorns team gives us the opportunity and privilege of taking part in various



school activities. Governors' Day is always a highlight when we sit in on class lessons and take part in assembly. I have also been on several school visits with different year-groups including Brooklands Motor Museum, the Reading Synagogue, the RHS Gardens at Wisley and the Cole Museum, as well as helping with the Year 5 carol concert at Kennet Court. On each occasion I have been impressed by how well-prepared and knowledgeable the children have been and how much they have gained from these experiences. Seeing the children involved in active learning is a useful insight when, as members of the Learning and Teaching Committee, we are looking at areas such as the curriculum and children's progress.



As Special Educational Needs Governor I keep up to date with developments by attending briefings provided by Wokingham Governor Services. We are fortunate to have so many opportunities for training to help us in our governors' roles.

I still spend some time each week helping in the school library with Mrs Hales who works very hard

and has many good ideas for making it an inspiring place to be.

I am looking forward to another exciting and challenging year!

Rosie Beech (Local Authority Governor, SEN and PSHE Governor)



This is my final contribution to the Hawthorns Governors' Newsletter which has been one of the highlights of the past 15 years along with the 12 Year 6 residential trips that I've been fortunate enough to accompany as an additional child. I could either fill the newsletter or opt for short and sweet; you'll be glad to hear that I've opted for the latter! I'd just like to say that it's been an absolute pleasure and privilege to work with all staff, parents, pupils and fellow governors throughout that time and I wish you all continued success for the future.

Dave Fisher (Local Authority Governor, Vice Chair)



I am now coming to the end of my second year as a Community Governor, and can honestly say I have enjoyed it as much as the first!

As well as attending all the Full Governor meetings, I am a member of the Sites and Buildings Committee and the newly formed Health and Safety Committee, both chaired by Emma Wells. These meetings are interesting and decisions are made, policies and procedures are put in place to ensure a happy, healthy and safe environment for all the children and staff at the Hawthorns.

I also make the most of being involved with a variety of school activities. Some highlights for me this year, in no particular order.....

- being involved in the recruitment of the new Head Teacher,
- Governors' Day in February, when I spent an enjoyable morning with Mrs Walker's Year 3 class, joining in the lessons, and was very proud to be presented with a certificate for getting all my times tables correct!



- helping with the Athletics Club and watching the children put heart and soul into their efforts,
- the Year 2 trip to the National Gallery in London,
- the Year 3 trip to RHS Wisley,
- carol singing at Kennett Court with Year 5,
- visiting the After School Club and seeing how happy the children are there. I must say a big 'well done' to the Committee and Staff that run the Breakfast and After School Clubs. They do a fantastic job!
- the May Ball, celebrating The Hawthorns 30th Anniversary. As always the PTA came up trumps, with a night thoroughly enjoyed by everyone there. A big thank you to the PTA for all they do for the school.



- Fairtrade cooking with Year 1. The most delicious banana cake ever!

As another school year comes to an end, I look forward to the next one and all that it brings.

Judith Ellis (Community Governor, After-Schools Liaison, Eco-Schools Governor and Sports Governor)

Mrs Coffield and Mrs McKay have been teacher governors since September 2012, and represent the teaching staff on the School's Governing Body. Part of their role is feeding back any relevant information to the teaching staff and supporting their fellow governors in understanding the everyday workings of the school.

In her role as teacher governor Mrs Coffield attends all the Personnel and Finance meetings and Mrs McKay attends all the Sites and Buildings meetings. The two teachers share the responsibility for attending the Learning and Teaching meetings.

Mrs Coffield and Mrs McKay (Teacher Governors)



This is my second year as a Parent Governor and my how that time has flown. I am enjoying my roles and looking forward to spending more time in the school as the Humanities Governor.



There have been many changes over the last year and we have all had some challenging times both personally and professionally.

I am looking forward to welcoming Mrs Kerton to her new role as Head Teacher in September 2012 as I am sure you all are.

As well as the full Governors meetings, I sit on the Learning and Teaching committee where we review the school policies. This last year we have had presentations from the teachers on various subjects such as Art, History, RE and Maths - these have been so interesting.

My favourite event so far has been the Governors' Day in February. I spent the day in the school and joined some of the classes - it was brilliant to sit with the children and have them explain what they were doing (especially the year 6 maths class where



I had to have things explained a bit too much!). It was also great to take part in the assembly where we talked about the Aspirational Qualities - the highlight was Dave Fisher's slot where he showed slides about finding humour - he didn't even need to speak! It was so lovely seeing and hearing the children laughing so much - in the end we were all laughing.

I feel very lucky to be a parent and a Governor of this school.

Debbie Banbury (Parent Governor, Humanities Governor)



How quickly time flies with another very enjoyable year having passed and so much that has happened in our highly sought after school! Following the departure of Mr Hempson-Jones at the end of last year, as governors one of our top priorities was to appoint a new Head Teacher to the school which I am pleased to say we were able to do! That said, since January, we have also had the great privilege of Mr Brian Norbury and he has worked hard alongside the teachers, staff, governors and children of the school to ensure that we continue to strive for excellence and ensure the success and well-being of all the children in school.

There has been a tremendous amount of positive feedback from parents, who very much like seeing Mr Norbury at the school gate come rain, shine (not much sunshine!) and even snow, and as governors we are considering putting a cardboard cut-out of him at the school gate following his departure at the end of term!!

As numeracy governor and following the departure of Miss Morris who was maths co-ordinator for the school, I have been closely involved with the considerable amount of work that has been undertaken by the new co-ordinators who are extremely passionate about their subject and have developed detailed plans to ensure that the children continue to succeed, and in many cases excel, in the area of numeracy.



I have also got to know a number of children across the school during the past year and earlier in the year very much enjoyed my time spent with Year 5 during their maths lesson. More recently I was invited to accompany Year 2 on their trip to the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, and was very impressed - as was the gallery guide Ben - with the range of questions raised by the children during the visit. I was also impressed with their impeccable behaviour - a credit to the teachers and the school and of course the children themselves!

We look forward to seeing you at the Open
Afternoon on 4th July.

The Hawthorns Governing Body would like to say
“Thank You” to everyone who works so hard for the
benefit of the children at The Hawthorns Primary
School, especially...

The Senior Leadership Team,
teaching staff
non-teaching staff
office staff,
Mr Pass the Site Manager,
the lunchtime controllers and kitchen staff.

I am very much looking forward to the times ahead and hope to meet some of you at the forthcoming open afternoon.

Karen Blake (Parent Governor, Numeracy Governor)

I hope you have enjoyed reading this year's Governors' Newsletter, and that it has given you some insight into all the work going on 'behind the scenes' at Hawthorns, as well as perhaps reminding you of many of the events and activities the children have been involved with over the year.

For my part I have continued chairing the Learning and Teaching Committee, where a band of enthusiastic governors pore over and approve many of the policies which define the curriculum and learning across the school. We also have responsibilities for performance and monitoring – areas where we are never complacent and where we are always looking for ways to improve the already high standards!

A regular highlight of my week is Imagineering Club on a Thursday afternoon, where a dozen budding Year 6 engineers have made their own telescopes, model helicopters and rocket racing cars amongst other projects. This term we have been constructing some electronic circuits. I am sure the children will have gained new skills and knowledge which we hope will spur their interest in science and technology as they move to secondary school next year.

Andrew Kensley (Local Authority Governor, Chair of
Learning and Teaching Committee)

