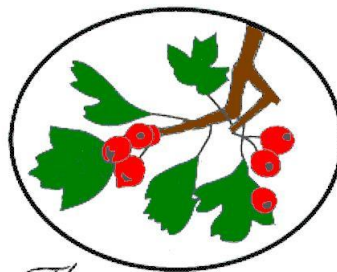


Welcome to the Hawthorns Primary School Governors' Newsletter 2016.

It has been another excellent year at The Hawthorns School with a broad range of learning and development opportunities for all our pupils, of whom we should be very proud!

As we approach the end of the year though, the school budget continues to occupy our thoughts. Wokingham remains one of the lowest funded Local Authorities in the country, and we have again submitted a deficit budget this year. There is no certainty that our funding will improve, and it is vitally important that we control costs. As parents and carers you can help here by ensuring for example that school trip payments are not missed if at all possible. Schools cannot insist upon payment for trips which are part of the curriculum delivery, which is why the accompanying letter for trips always asks for donations. Quite correctly, no child should be excluded from one of these trips due to an inability to pay.



The
Hawthorns
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However, the school does not have the financial resources to significantly subsidise school trips and while none of us wants to see pupils miss out due to a cancellation, we do need costs to be covered in order for the trips to go ahead.

Another way in which you can, and do, help tremendously is in the support of PTA events. This is an increasingly important source of income which the school greatly appreciates. Thank you for your continued support. Thank you too to the PTA officers and many helpers who make these events possible.



You will have heard the Secretary of State for Education announce that all schools must convert to academy status, and heard her subsequently reverse that decision. The government does still expect that all schools will become academies. Local Authority (LA) funding is being squeezed, leaving the LA less able to support maintained schools, leading those schools to consider academy conversion. Each time a school converts to academy status the LA loses further funding, and eventually a tipping point will be reached at which the LA can no longer support the remaining maintained schools. These schools will then have no choice but to become an academy.

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In order to realise all the advantages of academy status, smaller schools including the majority of primary schools will need to join with other academies within a Multi Academy Trust. There is flexibility about how this is done in practice, with options to retain local governing bodies and to delegate varying levels of responsibilities to them. Schools often wish to retain their individuality whilst gaining benefit from closer working and collaboration with other schools within the trust. Work will take place this year within the Hawthorns governing body and in cooperation with other schools to determine the best model and the best partners for this school. We will also consult the wider school community on this matter.

Two of our long standing higher level teaching assistants, Mrs Helen Helliwell and Mrs Fiona Fisher have left us in recent months, with our thanks and best wishes. Both of them will be well known to many current and ex-pupils, and a lot of those children will also have benefitted from the time Helen has spent at various sporting clubs and events with them.

I must also thank my fellow governors who give their time freely and generously to the school. Two of our number, Mr John Howarth and Mrs Doreen Murgatroyd will be leaving us at the end of this term. Thank you to you both. This does also mean we will have governor vacancies in September; information on becoming a governor is available on the school website.

Finally, we have had another successful year of high academic achievement and high quality all round education for our pupils. Thank you to you all as members of the school community. Whether you are staff, parent, carer, pupil, helper, leadership team, PTA officer, governor or any combination of the above you all have a role in making The Hawthorns School a safe happy place, where our children can belong, believe, achieve and grow!

Chris Shaw

Chair of Governors



This has been my 6th year as a Governor. Again it has been a busy and enjoyable twelve months.

I remain as Chair of the Sites and Buildings / Health and Safety Committee. To explain in full detail what the committee does, would take up most of the newsletter, so here are just a few of the areas we are responsible for..... Our meetings are held at least once per term, where we make decisions on how the money we are allocated by the Personnel and Finance Committee, is best used to improve and enhance the school building and the grounds. We also undertake a review of all policies under our responsibility, including Statutory Policies required by law. We carry out a Health and Safety Grounds Audit twice a year which involves walking around the inside of the school building and the grounds, followed by preparing a detailed statement of priorities, resulting from any findings during the inspection. The Committee ensures that the Schools Health and Safety Policy, with due regard to Wokingham Borough Council Guidelines and relevant regulations is implemented, this includes reviewing Risk Assessments each year and amending if necessary.

I think that all the staff within the school should be so proud of how good the school and grounds are looking. It is such a happy and safe environment for the children to grow and learn.

Twice a year I attend Wokingham Councils Health and Safety Forum. Here I get to meet with fellow Governors from other schools and listen to speakers who are experts in their field. I then report back to the Full Governing Body, so they too are up to date on any changes and briefed on specialised subjects.



As well as all the meetings I attend, I really enjoy spending time with the children on some of their trips and activities. To pick a few from this year.....

I accompanied Year 5 to Kennett Court in October, where the children handed out gifts of harvest boxes to the residents. It was a joy to watch. Drinks and biscuits were served in their lounge and the children had the opportunity to chat with them. Oh, and there was also a wonderful impromptu sing song!!!



As Sports Governor I have once again travelled with the Cross Country Runners to their various events, where I take up my position as a race marshal. A huge congratulations to all those who ran for the school, you had such a great season and I am very proud of you all. I have been helping Mrs Pritchard after school, to train the Athletics Team for the upcoming District Sports at Palmer Park, which this year is on July 1st. Around twenty schools from the Wokingham and the surrounding areas take part..... Come On Hawthorns!!!!!!



I went with Year 5 in May on their trip to Ufton Court. The Elizabethan Manor House and the extensive grounds are stunning, and the children enjoyed photo mapping, orienteering, insect hunting and pond dipping. The weather was perfect and the children enjoyed all the activities.

At the end of May, I went for my third time to Little Canada on the Isle of Wight, to join Year 6 on their residential trip. I can't begin to tell you how enjoyable it was. It was a joy to observe the children on their activities. They grew in confidence, they laughed, they challenged themselves and were a pleasure to be with. My highlight was going on the giant swing with Mrs Kerton. I am not sure that everyone was ready for our screams, I am convinced they could hear us in Wokingham!!! I am so looking forward to going again next year, when I will be with 'my class'. Happy days!!

Judith Shepherd

(Co-opted Governor, Chair of Sites and Buildings, Health and Safety Governor and Sports Governor)

As Staff Governor it has been another eventful year with lots of staff moving on and others joining us. We are lucky to have such committed staff with such a wide range of interests and skills to help develop our children. The run a mile campaign at which I have been seen (walking) is one of the many developments this year alongside the fantastic Forest Schools project lead by Mrs McKay and Mrs Graham. Both received great feedback at the recent Parent Forum which I attended and reflect how the school promotes the whole child philosophy. I was also lucky enough to be at the WASMA rehearsal in March where our children behaved so well and showed off their musical ability. The summer concert should be really impressive. We have so much musical talent here.



As Staff governor I have been able to attend the Parent Forum and would like to thank those parents who have made up the Forum. Their approach, support and hard work is really appreciated by us all. It is so good to see us all working together for the benefit of our school. The efforts of the PTA continue to be fantastic. Organising all the events is a lot of work and the committee have done a great job this year.

The fairs in particular should be mentioned as they are such an important part of our school calendar and so many people help in so many ways. Events like these stay in the minds of our children for years. There is truly nothing like a Hawthorns school fair. So a big thank you to the PTA for helping to fund us through these challenging times and creating those memories.

On this year's Open afternoon you will have seen the displays linked to the Olympics in Rio. As Humanities Governor I worked alongside Miss Alsop (the Humanities organiser) to bring a Geographical approach to the displays. Each class has produced a display based on a country which has hosted the Summer Olympics (excluding the UK) and I think you will agree the results have been great. (I was hoping more classes would do food tasting for their chosen country which as Governor I would have felt compelled to attend.) It was lovely to see such a variety in the work produced and I know the children have enjoyed the project.

Lastly a big thank you to the Governors who each year attend the Year 6 Residential trip. Their help and support helps ensure the children have a great time and this year was no exception. Again our children were a credit to you and the school. AND we had good weather.

Elizabeth Bridgeman



I have just completed my second year as a co-opted governor, giving governors an insight into how the school works on a day to day basis. I have been on the Personnel and Finance committee and attended the full governing body meetings. It has been an interesting year as we have had to look at where and how we can best save money and I am able to say how this has affected or could affect the teaching staff directly. Another of my roles is to regularly check that the school website is compliant with regulations and showcases what a fantastic school The Hawthorns is.

From a staff perspective, I would like to thank the governors for the time they volunteer, both to attend the meetings and also for what they add to the school by volunteering their time to help classes, attending trips and meeting with the teaching staff to discuss their subject areas and how we can improve further.

Matt Jex (Co-opted governor, website compliance)

When I was approached by some members of the governing body to join as co-opted governor I felt a little hesitant. However, having previously been on the governing body, I knew how rewarding it can be and decided to take it on.

I am again serving on the sites and buildings committee. I feel this is a great position to be in as, being on the lunchtime team as well as a Year 2 TA, I get a good insight into where issues in and around the building can occur. I have been very lucky to be able to adopt 5PB as my class. This was especially great for me as I was a TA in reception class when these pupils started at Hawthorns. It has been very rewarding to be able to visit the class and see how they are developing and growing into wonderful boys and girls. I look forward to spending more time with them as they reach their final year in Hawthorns in 2016/17. I also look forward to working with the new governors and staff in the coming year.

Dawn Wojcik



I am in my first year as a Co-opted Governor, having been appointed four months ago. Serving as a Governor is one of the various ways I can contribute to the school and community.

This has been a busy and also quite informative period for me. I remember starting off with a half day training session on school inspection followed by my first Governor's meeting.

During these four months, I have completed Governor's induction organised by the Wokingham borough governor services. I have also managed to attend all the three sub-committee meetings- personnel & finance, Sites & Buildings and Learning & Teaching, aware that it will give me a wider perspective as a first time governor. My plan is to continue to attend as many sub-committee meetings as I can in this first year.

I have been assigned an adopted class-2MA and I hope to meet the class in the coming weeks.

The educational jargons used are becoming clearer and many thanks go to all the other Governors, who have been very helpful and supportive.

I look forward to continue to work with the rest of the Governors, the School management and staff to positively impact The Hawthorns Primary School.

Dozie Nnabuife
(Co-opted Governor)





It has been another busy year for Governors with not only routine responsibilities to undertake but also having the opportunity to examine new possibilities. I have attended training sessions on future funding for schools and am becoming familiar with the word 'academisation' and all that it entails!

As the school's SEND Governor I have had meetings with Mrs Allott, our SEND Co-ordinator, who joined us last September and has done such a lot to ensure that our SEND pupils have the best possible support in school to help their learning. She and the staff constantly monitor what interventions are useful and what can be discarded as they look for innovative ways to help with particular problems. Evidence shows that the progress and well-being of both SEND and Pupil Premium children are always given detailed attention.

Seeing the children during the school day is one of the delights and privileges of being a School Governor. I often have interesting conversations with some of them as they walk through the school library while I am working there. I have also been on visits to Reading Museum and to one of the Mosques in Reading with the Year 4 class to which I am attached. On both occasions the children were well-behaved and showed a great interest in what they could see and learn. In December I helped the Year 5 classes with their carol concerts for the residents of Kennet Court and for parents, as I have done for several years, and this time the performances were exceptionally good! It is always a pleasure to see children taking on responsibilities and this was well demonstrated at a School Council meeting I attended.

I have been fortunate enough to see at first-hand how everyone involved, both adults and children, work hard to make Hawthorns the successful school that it is.

Rosie Beech (SEND and LAC Governor)

I'm now into my 6th year as governor here at Hawthorns School and it has once again been a very busy year for children, staff and governors alike but also very enjoyable. It is always a pleasure to be involved in school life and I am proud of the achievement and successes of the children across school.

I sit on a number of the governor committees which includes Personnel and Finance, The Pay Review Committee and now Chair Learning and Teaching. In addition, and as the school enters its next stage of development, I am part of the newly established working party looking at the school's future perhaps as part of an academy.

One of the many highlights for me this year was the time was spent with my adopted class, Mrs Graham's in year 4. I always receive a fabulous welcome and was very impressed with their poetry recitals followed by a science experiment which everyone enthusiastically joined in with!!

Governors day is another great opportunity for governors to come into school and spend time with the children. You see first-hand the children having fun learning and as both parent and governor, we remind ourselves what a very special school we have.

Even the new SATs tests couldn't phase our children and that is true testimony to the enthusiasm and dedication of our staffing team and fantastic children - well done!

I look forward to another highly successful and rewarding year.

Karen Blake
Chair of Learning & Teaching



I can't believe I'm almost at the end of my 2nd year as a governor already. Being a parent governor continues to be an extremely interesting and rewarding role, and I remain in awe of how hard the team at Hawthorns work to do the best for our children.

This has been my first year as maths governor, and I have worked alongside the maths subject leaders who, with their fellow colleagues, work tirelessly to ensure that the maths curriculum is fully incorporated across the school. Thanks to Mrs Nicola Prebble and Mrs Sarah Cottrell for doing such a fantastic job!

For me a highlight of being a governor is being able to spend time in school with the children. I thoroughly enjoyed governor's day, and even enjoyed taking part in the governor's assembly (presenting to people has always been my worst nightmare!) I also got to attend a lesson on modal verbs with my adopted class 6CW, who are a lovely group of young people, and I wish them all every success as they move on to Secondary school in September.

I'm looking forward to another enjoyable and successful year ahead for our children.

Emma Kerr
Maths Governor



The PTA continue to be very supportive by supplying yet more interactive whiteboards. But the major changes to our IT environment is the introduction of a wireless network. We are therefore beginning to look to the future and to see how we can introduce mobile devices into the classroom. Children in the Early Years are coming into school with a new set of IT skills that makes them unfamiliar with the traditional PC world. We therefore need to ensure that the most appropriate devices are available in school that will help with their educational development.

We continue to be concerned about the e-Safety of the children - whilst we are very conscientious in school to ensure that the children have safe access to the Internet - we hope that this is true when they are at home where YOU as parents and guardians have overall control of their IT environment?

Ian Severn
(Co-opted Governor, IT and e-Safety Governor)

This is my last year as a governor at Hawthorns; I am giving up for health reasons. I have really enjoyed being part of the school and especially watching my adopted class growing up through the school. I hope I will not completely lose touch with Hawthorns and will still have some involvement through the links between the school and Woollahill church.

Doreen Murgatroyd
(Co-opted Governor)

Governor vacancy

The Hawthorns school governors would like to appoint a new governor from the local community in the autumn term. Would you be interested, or do you know anyone in the local area who might be interested? There is no requirement for educational expertise neither do you need to be a parent of a child at the school. What you do need is an interest in local education and some time, energy and enthusiasm. Being a governor can be a really rewarding experience and there is a range of free training available.

More information will be made available in September.

If you think you may be interested email: governors@hawthorns.wokingham.sch.uk

The School Governors look forward to seeing you at the Open Afternoon on 7th July!

We 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 Gill the Site Manager, lunchtime controllers, kitchen staff and the PTA