

July 2021

Welcome to the Hawthorns Primary Governors' Newsletter 2021

Judith Shepherd



Chair of Governors. Co-opted Governor, Sports/PSHE & RE Governor, Designated Safeguarding Governor

Another school year is almost over. A year which I don't think any of us could have imagined in a million years!

This time last year when I was writing my contribution to our newsletter, like everyone else I was looking forward to September, a new school year and life being back to normality. Instead, it arrived with yet more restrictions and uncertainty.

I would like to say a huge thank you to every single member of staff who worked tirelessly as a team to ensure that the children's learning, whether it be at school or at home online, was the absolute best it could be. This was all led by our headteacher, Ms Razeghi, who has done an exceptional job since she was took on the Headship in March 2019, just a week before the first lockdown! A huge well done and, of course, thanks to all the parents and carers for supporting and encouraging their children.

It was of paramount importance that all the staff and children were safe in school. The Hawthorns Covid-19 Risk Assessment was updated each time the Government and Department for Education issued updated guidelines. I reviewed and signed the document numerous times during the year. It was reassuring to know how well everything had been planned for and put into place.

During lockdown when the school was only open for our vulnerable children and those of key workers, home learning was put in place for those pupils not attending school. I am in no doubt of the pressure the increased workload put on our teaching and support staff. They rose to the challenge, did a splendid job and I am very proud of them. Of course, none of this could have happened without the support of the admin staff, lunchtime controllers, the Site Manager and our team of cleaners. The dedication of each and every person shone through. Thank you.

I was invited to attend a live virtual maths and science lesson with Year 2 Cuckoos. The children were engaged, happy and showed great enthusiasm for the subject of 'Volume and Capacity'. The pupils could enter their answers on line. It was a joy to watch!

I also joined a Year 6 English lesson which was excellent. This was followed by one of their 'catch up' sessions. Awards were given out for work done previously, and in true Hawthorns fashion the children were congratulating classmates for their achievements. They really enjoyed seeing their friends, albeit it on a screen.

A huge thank you as always to our PTA. To say that their plans were thwarted by Covid-19 is an understatement. Faced with adversity they rose above the situation and found new ways to raise money. Well done and thank you to you all.

The Covid-19 restrictions dictated that Governors could not visit school. This is a part of the role that I really enjoy and have missed spending time with the children in class and joining in with their activities. Fingers crossed for next year! I did accompany Year 5 in December when they sang carols to the residents of Kennet Court. It was outside instead of inside. Some watched from a distance and others through the windows. The children certainly brightened everyone's day with their singing and huge smiles. Then over the last few weeks (as restrictions lifted slightly) I have been able to join three school trips to help with adult numbers, as unfortunately the restrictions still didn't allow parents to help.

Firstly to Butser Ancient Farm with Year 3 where the children made jewellery, spun wool and completed an archaeological dig. The farm features reconstructions of ancient buildings from the Stone Age, Iron Age, Roman Britain and Anglo-Saxon period and has been used in many films and television programmes. Check out the website. It is certainly worth a visit. The children, and adults, had a memorable day.

Next was the Year 2 trip to Woolly Firs near Maidenhead, which is a 300-year-old arable farm run by the Wildlife Trust. Another fabulous day seeing the children enjoy themselves looking at the habitats of different animals and insects, which tied in with their current topic. They had great fun hunting for and identifying bugs, and then pond dipping. Also, the children were close up to some preserved animals and birds.

Then it was off to Marwell Zoo with Year 4. I do love a zoo! We went in search of the 'Big Five', linking in with their Africa topic and to look which animals were around during the Ancient Maya. The trip also linked with Science looking at food chains and habitats. A wonderful day was had by all. On all the trips the children were engaged, polite (very vocal on the coach!!) and a credit to the school.

As a Governing Body it was business as usual. We continued to hold all our meetings virtually. We said farewell and thank you to Nicola Carr who completed her 4 year term as a Parent Governor. We have two new Governors this year. Ms Adrienne Hunter who is a new Parent Governor and Ms Natasha Lamb-Guhren, a Co-opted Governor. A huge welcome to them both.

Thank you to all my fellow Governors for their continued commitment to the school and for their time which they give freely. We couldn't function without our clerk, Pippa West. She has the enormous task of organising us, sending reminders, writing agendas, minuting every meeting and ensuring everything is up to date. You are a star. Thank you.





I was involved twice this year in the recruitment of our new Deputy Headteacher. Our first set of interviews in November did not produce a suitable candidate. In February we had sixteen applications for the role. We shortlisted six candidates who were put through a rigorous two days of interviews and tasks. Three then went through to the third day and we appointed Mrs Nicola Wallace, who starts with us in September. On behalf of the Governors I would like to welcome her to Hawthorns and look forward to working with her in the future.

I feel so disappointed for the Year 6 children. Their final year at Hawthorns has not turned out at all as planned. I am sure they will enjoy the week planned for them at the end of term, and leave with many happy memories of their years at Hawthorns. I wish each and every one of them happiness and success at their chosen secondary school.

I will end by wishing you and your families a very happy and hopefully sunny summer break.



Mrs Shepherd helping Year 2 at Woolley Firs

Dozie Nnabuife

Vice Chair of Governors, Co-opted Governor, Chair of Learning & Teaching Committee, Designated Safeguarding Governor, Maths Governor KS2



Cllr Tony Lack talking to the Year 4 children about Bees

It has always been a pleasure to see the conclusion of a school year. However, the joy of seeing this through is significant as we faced challenging and unprecedented times nationally due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The school year was a mixture of remote learning during the lock down and return to school for face to face schooling when lockdown was lifted.

I would like to appreciate the enormous efforts of the teachers and school management during this period and how they have rallied despite the huge challenges posed by the pandemic.

The school governing body continued to meet virtually as a full governing body and in various associated committee meetings.

I continued to attend all the committee meetings - Learning & Teaching, Sites & Buildings and Personnel & Finance. I chaired the Learning & Teaching committee meetings, as a team we continued to challenge the school leadership team to ensure better outcomes for the children.

I took on the role of the Vice Chair of the Governors during this period.

I was honoured to be part of the team that recruited the Deputy Head Teacher. It was a 3-day virtual recruitment process that I thought brought out ingenuity in how we could adapt and use technology. It was a thorough process with the candidates going through various tasks spaced throughout periods until we selected the right candidate. I would like to appreciate the efforts of the Head Teacher Ms. Razeghi and her team who planned this through and the perfection in executing the process. I look forward to the new Deputy Head joining the school in September.

Looking forward, I am sending my best wishes to the outgoing year 6s as they move on to new adventures in secondary school. I know they will be great ambassadors of The Hawthorns Primary school.

As always, I intend to continue working with the rest of the Governors, the School management and staff to positively impact The Hawthorns Primary School.

My warm wishes to the Hawthorns family as we hopefully return to normal life.



Year 6 Shelter Building





Phillipa Dunn

LA Governor, SEND Governor, LAC Governor



Tree Planting Day

I know that there will be a common theme running through all the governors' observations in this summer newsletter - what a strange year this has been! A surreal and challenging year in many different ways for all of us but also one that we should reflect on all the amazing things that have been achieved. I have again been really impressed and proud at how everyone involved at the school have risen to the challenges presented over the last 12 months. Hawthorns is really a very caring and special place where everyone - staff and pupils go that extra bit to help each other!

As a member of 2 committees (Personnel & Finance and Learning & Teaching) I have attended a range of meetings which continue to give me a valuable insight into the strategic planning that goes into running a successful school. I have also attended the Full Governing Body meetings held on a regular basis. All our meetings have been virtual and we are now all quite used to communicating via a screen! I am, however, really looking forward to getting back to face to face meetings and to be able to come back into school to see all the amazing things going on!

Lockdown meant a return to home teaching and again great work and support was provided by staff but the huge praise must go out to all the parents who had hoped that their earlier teaching experience was a 'one - off'!

As a parent, grandparent (and retired teacher) I have huge respect for what you are doing! The examples of work sent in displayed on the weekly bulletin were amazing!

Lockdown is particularly challenging for a number of children and in my role of SEND link Governor I continue to be amazed and impressed by the sheer hard work and dedication shown by Charlotte Irving and her team. The difference they make to the children in their care is so important but often involves many unseen hours of work outside the classroom. Thank you - you really do make a difference!

I am now approaching my fourth year as a governor and I am really hopeful that the next twelve months will bring a return to a more normal way of life in school and in our community.



Year 5 Carols at Kennet Court

John Wilkins

Co-opted Governor, Computing and e-Safety Governor, Website Compliance

The senior leadership team and teachers worked very hard to develop a remote learning strategy which is both appropriate and manageable for the children at Hawthorns as well as their families (though I do wish I had bought shares in print toner prior to the pandemic!).

This new way of working required innovation and creativity to deliver the curriculum and governors are exceptionally grateful to all the staff who have continued to work tirelessly to ensure the same quality of education and support for all pupils wherever they were learning from.

Governors have continued to fulfil their responsibilities to provide support and challenge to the school remotely and, like everyone else, have had to adapt ways of working.





Sarah Mapleston

Co-opted Governor, Early Years Governor



Quentin Blake display by Year 2

This is the end of my fourth academic year as a governor and I am now at the end of my first full term. Although this year has had some similarities to last year unfortunately, I have still continued to enjoy my role as a governor. I have attended all of my meetings virtually which still continues to be the most effective and efficient way for the meetings to go ahead. This year, I joined the Personnel and Finance committee alongside the Sites, Buildings and Health and Safety committee. Both of these committees are extremely effective and the discussions that are had are interesting to be involved with.

This year, within my governor role, I have been promoting eco-travel across the school community and by the beginning of the spring term our new School Travel Plan had been finished. Alongside this, we achieved our green accreditation status with Modeshift and are currently waiting for our bronze accreditation to be accepted. Another initiative that I have been helping to promote is the Beat the Street competition. It has been amazing to see the buzz around this game that has encouraged our community to travel in environmentally friendly ways. I would love to say a big thank you to all parents and children for their support!

Finally, I would like to say a massive thank you to all of the staff who have worked endlessly to ensure that the children were given excellent teaching and support through the most recent lock down. They provided live lessons, catch up sessions and clear communication on the platform of Google Classroom. They have shown dedication and all of their hard work has been appreciated. Lastly, a big thank you to you, the parents, for your support. Supporting your child/ren at home with their schooling has extremely benefitted the children, especially when they returned back to school. Your support as always is appreciated.

I hope that everyone has a restful summer holiday and look forward to seeing everyone in the autumn term!



Pond dipping at Woolley Firs

Dawn Wojcik

Co-opted Governor, Maths Governor KS1, Racial Equity Governor

A warm hello to the all the Hawthorns community.

My name is Dawn Wojcik and I am currently in my second year of my second term as a co-opted Governor. I am a TA in year 2 and also a lunchtime assistant. I have worked at Hawthorns school for many years, in many roles and have enjoyed each and every one.

This year has seen us up against many challenges but as always, in great spirit and determination we have risen to the occasion and delivered a great education and support to all our pupils. Being on both the frontline, working in the bubbles during lockdown, behind the scenes in all the zoom, teams and google meets meetings, I can honestly say it has been a great experience even though we've had many challenges. All the staff have gone above and beyond to try to deliver their very best for our children and to support all our families. I am very proud to be part of such a great team. As a governor we have been keeping a close eye on all the relevant areas to make sure everyone stays safe and secure. I have also been assigned the role as Racial equity governor and have been attending workshops and seminars to ensure we are keeping abreast of things during these changing times.

I hope you all continue to stay safe and healthy and enjoy the remaining days in school before the summer holidays are upon us.





Julian Dempster

Co-opted Governor, Chair of Sites & Buildings Committee, Health & Safety Governor, Eco-Schools/Forest School Governor



Year 3 enjoying Butser Ancient Farm

Great work has continued on COVID-19 risk assessment and mitigations - this has helped keep the whole school and wider community as safe as possible. Some real positives that come to mind:

Hot school meals safely delivered to the children whilst other schools in the area struggled

Very low numbers of cases of COVID-19 in the school and the few cases were managed effectively/efficiently in their bubbles

Effective online learning whilst school was closed AND provision for key workers and others delivered safely.

Clear regular communication - messages always delivered clearly and timely.

Well being focus on return to school - the children all did brilliantly.

Thank you to everyone in the school (children, staff, parents and governors) for their contribution to making Hawthorns a safe and healthy environment - and really going the extra mile in these difficult times!

Charlotte Hampton

Staff Governor, English (KS1) Governor



Forest School for Year 5

I can't quite believe another academic year is coming to an end and I have now been the staff governor for over a year and half. It has been another busy and challenging year for The Hawthorns but as always, the staff have rallied round, supporting one another. Governor meetings have continued to take place virtually and although the governing body have got this down to a fine art, all of us are looking forward to time when we are able to hold meetings in person.

I have continued to be a member of the Personal and Finance committee, working to support the school to manage the financial running of the school. I was also privileged enough to have been part of the team of governors who were involved in the rigorous process of interviewing for a new deputy head teacher. We are very much looking forward to welcoming Nicola Wallace when she starts in September.

As well as the Personal and Finance committee, I also joined the Teaching and Learning Committee. As a teacher myself, it has been a great opportunity for me to explore assessment data across the school in more depth and gain more knowledge of how the governors support the teaching and learning within our school.

Hopefully, I can enjoy more of the 'hands on' role of a governor within school next year as it is always good fun presenting the governors assembly and manning the food and drink at the Christmas fair and the BBQ at the summer fair as well! Finally, it just leaves me to say a massive thank you to all the dedicated and hardworking staff at Hawthorns for their brilliant work this year, both remotely and in the classroom.





Natasha Lamb-Guhren

Co-opted Governor

I have very much enjoyed my first 6 months as a Governor at The Hawthorns. It has been a fantastic learning experience and I have enjoyed meeting everyone (albeit virtually). It is a very strange time to have joined as a Governor, but the other Governors and the school have been brilliant and very welcoming.

I have attended a number of meetings giving me valuable insight into the role of a Governor and understanding the challenges faced by schools. I have unfortunately been unable to properly visit the school yet due to the unusual times we have been living in, but I look forward to doing so hopefully very soon whenever we are allowed.

It is a privilege to be part of The Hawthorns Governing Board and I am very much looking forward to the next year ahead.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of the other Governors and the staff at The Hawthorns for the great work. Everyone is extremely dedicated and I am looking forward to participating in more events and opportunities during the next academic year.



Science Display

Adrienne Hunter

Parent Governor

Hi everyone. I am mother to two children at the school in EYFS and Year 2 and was excited to be appointed as a parent governor at the end of February. I love the growth mindset and whole-child approach of the school in particular and what has stood out to me are the amazing teachers that my children have been lucky enough to have. I've been so impressed with how child-focussed and passionate they are in supporting all of the children and bringing out the best in them.

Although the pandemic has brought many restrictions this year, what I've really enjoyed about being a school governor so far is learning more about the school and being involved at a more strategic level. I have (virtually) attended two full governing committees, which provides a great overview of and insight to the school.

For instance, I get to see behind the scenes and feed into how we market and promote the school to new parents, consider how inclusive we are as a school in terms of equality (e.g. 36% of our pupils have English as a second language) and understand the plan for how children can progress through exposure to a wide range of technology and artistic experiences across the year groups.

I've also attended each of the three sub-committees, which cover more detailed reports on performance and finance, learning and teaching, and sites and buildings within the school.

As Covid restrictions further ease, I'm looking forward to getting more involved and contributing more to the school as a Governor both through formal committees and through various school activities to support our vision to 'belong, believe, achieve and grow'.



Roman Army day for Year 4





Diane Hampton

Co-opted Governor, Chair of Finance and Personnel Committee, Development Governor and Admin Governor

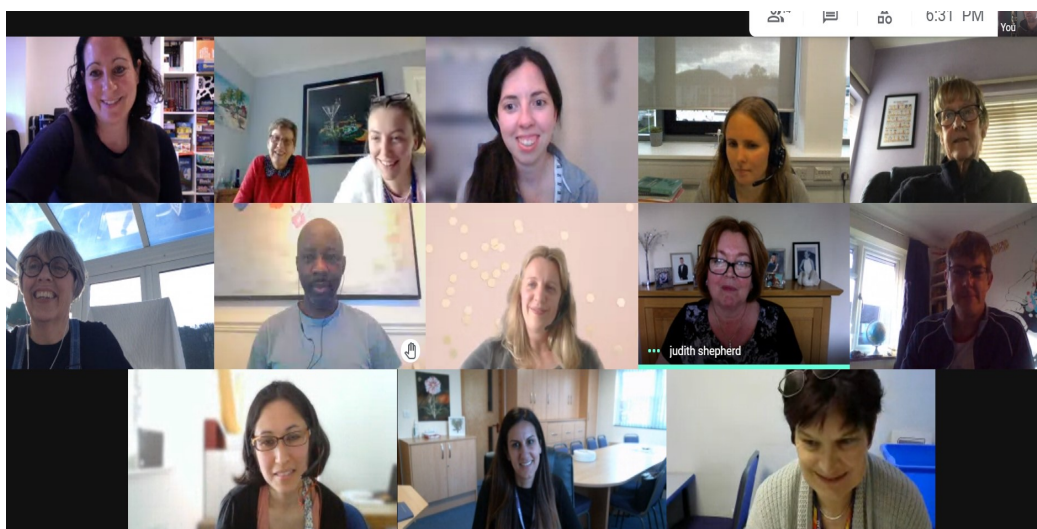
It has been a busy year for the committee. We continue holding our meetings virtually and on the whole it has been very successful so thank you to the staff for making this an easy process.

The work of the committee is to review our systems to make sure that we ensure “sound, proper and effective use of the school’s financial resources”. We do this in various ways including self-evaluation processes and commissioning external audits. We also look at financial benchmarking data supplied locally and nationally. This allows us to make informed decisions and ask relevant probing questions. Thank you to all the staff who provide, or sign post us to the information we use.

I have been delighted to be involved, along with members of the Governing body this year, mainly virtually, in the recruiting of staff. The resourcefulness and creativity of the candidates never ceases to amaze me, successfully teaching a class of Year 1 pupils virtually that you have just met leaves me in awe. I can confirm it is always a very rigorous process. The recruitment timetable for the Deputy Headteacher post involved candidates taking part in several intensive activities and being probed in all aspects of education over two days.

We have a very committed staff who have successfully navigated a year like no other. We are very mindful of our staff wellbeing and to that end I have been pleased to be involved with various initiatives helping all staff to look after their mental health. I thank them all for their dedication and service.

Finally it just leaves me to say that I am just so sorry that I have not been able to come into school this year. It is always a joy to meet the children, hear them read, listen to what they have to say and cheer them on at sports meetings. Hopefully I will be able to return to these visits in the new academic year.



Virtual Governor Meeting

