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Welcome to the Hawthorns Primary Governors' Newsletter 2022

Judith Shepherd



Chair of Governors. Co-opted Governor, Designated Safeguarding Governor, Early Years Governor

I hope our newsletter finds you all safe and well.

Another school year is almost over. A year which has seen all the children return to school where they belong. To continue their learning and embracing everything our wonderful school has to offer.

This is my twelfth year as a Governor and my fourth as Chair. It is a role I thoroughly enjoy and am proud to be part of a school which continues to adapt to a rapidly developing education system and strives to succeed in every aspect of school life, putting the children first and foremost at all times.

In May, our Full Governing Body meeting was the first to be held face to face in school since February 2020. All our other meetings during this time have been virtual.

People often ask what the role of the Governors is.

There are many aspects to Governance, here are a few...

It involves ensuring the vision for the future is clear forming a basis for the Hawthorns 'School Improvement and Development Plan' which contains objectives and strategic plans for the upcoming terms/years. It is a working document which is presented to us at the beginning of each school year and then included in our Full Governing Body meetings, the Learning & Teaching, Personnel & Finance and Sites & Buildings/Health and Safety committees, where we are informed of progress and we make sure everything is on track, challenging if we have any concerns.

We ensure the curriculum is well planned and implemented, following the guidelines from the Department of Education. This includes subjects to be taught and the standards children are expected to reach in each subject. Governors are linked to subject leaders which gives them the opportunity to meet up and discuss current topics and how they are being taught. This is then reported back to fellow Governors. We receive Data reports on progress and it is our role to hold the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils. We want every child in the school to get the best possible education.

We want all our children to be safe. We have regular Safeguarding Training and all read the 'Keeping children Safe in Education' document which is renewed annually. We have a Safeguarding Policy which is updated in line with the Department of Education, this is reviewed regularly with the Headteacher and we monitor all guidelines are being followed.

Overseeing the school budget and financial performance of the school is continuous. We receive the budget monitoring document regularly throughout the year. This is scrutinised and it is our responsibility to see that money is well spent.

Our role is strategic and we do not get involved in the day to day running of the school, but support and challenge the Leadership Team to ensure school improvement.

I would like to thank my fellow Governors as always for their commitment this year and for their time which is given freely.

A special thank you to our Clerk to the Governors Pippa West for her tireless work organising meetings, writing agendas, taking and typing up minutes and ensuring we do what we do when we need to do it!



Due to Covid restrictions Governors had been instructed not to visit school. This was eventually lifted in January this year. I have always enjoyed visiting school and missed going to spend time with the children and teachers. I have since visited Early Years on several occasions and it was a joy to see the enthusiasm that the children had as they start their school life, making new friends and exploring a whole new world of education. The school has purchased a new scheme and resources called Read Write Inc, which is a complete phonics programme to teach early reading and writing. I was looking forward to seeing it being taught in EYFS. I was not disappointed. The children were attentive, enthusiastic, and worked hard in what is a regular daily lesson. I am sure that the scheme will further improve reading, spelling and writing from an early age.

I was delighted to see a new PTA Committee formed who have already been busy fundraising. The PTA is an integral part of school life, not only for the monies raised but for all the activities they organise for the children, their families, and the wider school Community. Their big Summer Fundraiser was Happy's





Circus in May. The sun shone and the afternoon was filled with joy and laughter. The Governors were asked to run the BBQ as we usually do at the Summer Fairs. It was such a pleasure, having not done so since the summer of 2019. Trade was brisk and we all enjoyed talking to everyone. Thank you to the PTA for all your hard work.

I would, on behalf of all the Governors, like to say a massive thank you to every single member of staff at school for their hard work and dedication in a year which was challenging to say the least. We are so lucky to have such a fantastic team working in school and we wish you all a well-deserved and much needed summer break.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a very happy summer holiday. I hope the sun shines for everyone and look forward to returning to school in September for the next school year.



Dozie Nnabuife

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

This school year has gone on so quickly and it has been great joy to see the country reopen after the pandemic, going back to near normal. The school settings have returned to a normal academic year with school trips going on normal.

My highlights this academic year include going to the circus organised by the PTA. It was a wonderful experience to see activities return. I joined other Governors to host the Barbeque stand in the school field to support the PTA activities during the circus.

The Full Governing Body and committee meetings continued virtually but we later decided to continue the committee meetings virtually while the Full Governing Body meeting should be in person. We had the first in person Full Governing Body meeting in May 2022 and it was a wonderful experience after 2 years of meeting online. It was the first time of meeting some of the Governors that joined during the pandemic.

I attended all the committee meeting - 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 was also in the school for the Annual Safeguarding Audit with the Deputy Head Teacher, Mrs Nicola Wallace and a chat with the Science Lead, Mrs Graham on how we can support the teaching and learning of Science in the school.

I would like to appreciate the enormous efforts of the Leadership team led by Ms Razeghi, the teachers, the PTA, parents and everyone for what we have all achieved for the children this academic year.

As we have another set of boys and girls move on to new adventures in secondary schools, I send my best wishes to them knowing 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.





Diane Hampton

Co-opted Governor, Chair of Peronnel & Finance Committee, Development Governor, Admin Governor

It has been another busy year for the committee. We continue to meet virtually as this helps colleagues who incorporate their Governor role with their working lives.

We welcomed two new Governors and Claire Martin as School Business Manager to help us with the work of the committee ensuring "sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources". Claire helps us with our remit to have a three year and current detailed annual budget plan incorporating the agreed priorities of the school's development strategy in place. This is partly achieved with Claire working with a group of schools to maximise our purchasing powers and achieve best value. I would like to thank Claire for all her work this year.

It has been another difficult year for staff and they have faced many challenges as a result of Covid. We have a very committed and hardworking staff and I thank them for their dedication and service. I hope that the coming academic year will be better.

I have again been invited to help with the recruitment of staff. It has been so much nicer to meet candidates and carry out the interviews in person again. The process continues to be very rigorous enabling the school to recruit the best possible staff.

I was lucky enough to be asked to help with the Year 6 visit to the Milestones Museum in the Autumn term to compliment their study of "children's experiences in WWII". The children took part in the activities with great enthusiasm, asking lots of very interesting questions. They were a credit to the school. I look forward to coming into school again to help with activities next year.



Y6 Milestones Visit

Paula Anderson

Staff Governor, English & Library Governor

At the start of this year in January I became Staff Governor. These last 7 months have flown past and so I have only had a small amount of time to discover all the amazing opportunities governors have here at The Hawthorns.

Since becoming staff governor, I have joined the Personal and Finance Committee and Sites and Building Committee. Every meeting has enlightened me and helped me discover more about the school and what goes on 'behind the scenes' to help make the school run.

I have loved having another role in school and I am looking forward to participating in more opportunities as a governor and continuing to support the staff as we move into another academic year.

This year has seen a sense of 'normal' return for staff, pupils and parents. The school diary has been filled with trips, performances, assemblies and visitors. This has been an incredibly busy year and the staff have continued to shine! Every staff member of the school has shown just what a fantastic team we all are. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff at The Hawthorns for all the wonderful work they have done this year.



Senior Choir singing Christmas carols at Morrisons





Phillipa Dunn

Local Authority Governor, SEND Governor, LAC & PPG Governor



Pancake Day



Y3 trip to the football Dome at The Forest School



St Neots Cross Country Event



Y3 & Y5 Reading Buddies

This year has certainly had its challenges but it has been brilliant to see the school gradually returning to 'normal'. We, as Governors, are now welcomed back in person into the school - something we have all missed. We even had our first 'face to face' Governors meeting - the first for 2 years! I went into school to support the SATs examinations and I was so impressed by the calm and focussed approach the children had to these tests. Hopefully all their hard work (and the teachers and support staff's hard work) will be rewarded with deserved excellent results!

It was also wonderful to see the school field full of parents, friends and children (and a big tent!) when the circus came! It was great to be back on the BBQ serving burgers and hot dogs in the hot sun! Thank you also to the PTA for all their hard work and organisation.

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 a number of courses relating to my role as Governor including 2 courses preparing us for a looming OFSTED inspection! More specifically, as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Governor I have attended forums and courses with SEND as their focus. I should also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the Hawthorns SENDCo Charlotte Irving and her team of support staff for all the work they do. The challenges left by the lockdowns have been huge but they have worked tirelessly to support our pupils who make really good progress.

My time as governor has certainly seen many challenges and I have been really proud and impressed at how the whole school - staff, pupils, governors and parents have met, coped with and progressed in the difficult times by working together and being there for each other.

Adrienne Hunter

Parent Governor, Art, DT & Modern Foreign Languages Governor

Hi everyone, I've been a Parent Governor for almost 18 months, with two children at the Hawthorns (year 1 and year 3). Being a Governor means I attend Governor's meetings every term, I also attend the Learning and Teaching sub-committee, various training modules, and I'm a subject lead for Art, DT, Music & Modern Foreign Languages.

As a Parent Governor it's a good insight into the school - getting to see things from a different angle and better understanding how the school is being run. This year I've particularly enjoyed being able to come into the school more, as I've been able to volunteer for forest school for both my children, which has been so lovely. A highlight from this term has also been meeting with Mrs. Hopkins where I got a really good overview of the music curriculum and was really impressed with all the activities and opportunities the children are able to access when it comes to music.





Sarah Mapleston

Co-opted Governor, Sports/RE & PSHE Governor

This year it has been great to return back to some sort of normality. We have held our full governing body meetings in person which has been wonderful as it is a very different experience to using Microsoft Teams, especially when you no longer need to remember to unmute yourself!

I have now enjoyed my fifth year of being a governor and continue to enjoy the roles that I play. I have attended all the meetings that I have needed to for Sites, Building, Health and Safety as well as Personnel and Finance. I enjoy being a part of both committees.

Similar to last year, I have been promoting eco-travel across the school community. We achieved our Bronze Modeshift accreditation (which has also been renewed this year) and we are close to achieving our Silver Modeshift accreditation which means we have access to more funding to continue to promote active travel across the school community. Over the last four years of working on this area for the governors, our car usage has dropped by at least 10% which was one of our targets on the school travel plan. A massive thank you to you, the parents who are actively travelling to school with your child/ren whether that's by walking, scooting, cycling or park and striding (parking away from the school and walking the rest of the distance). Please keep an eye open for more promotions and developments!

This year as a governor, I returned to volunteering at the PTA's Circus event where I helped with the BBQ. It was great to see so many families support the event. It had been over 2 years since we had held a large event but it returned with a fantastic bang! Well done to the new PTA team for putting on such a successful event.

Finally, I would like to say a massive thank you to all of the staff who consistently work hard and are dedicated to their jobs. It has been great to now be able to have workshops take place in school and have school trips for the children to experience. Also a big thank you to yourselves, the parents, for continually supporting your children outside of school.

I hope that everyone has a wonderful summer holiday and look forward to welcoming everyone back in the autumn term.



Scooting sessions



Skateboarding sessions



Y6 Bikeability

Natasha Lamb-Guhren

Co-opted Governor, History & Geography Governor

What another great year! I can't believe a year and a half has already gone by since I first joined as a Governor. I have enjoyed another year of supporting the school and working with a fantastic team.

I have also continued to gain important insight into the role of a Governor, having joined the Personnel & Finance Committee during this year. The level of engagement and enthusiasm from the team always amazes me, with everyone positively contributing each meeting and thereafter.

I'm very much looking forward to the year ahead, and would like to thank all the other Governors, school management and staff for their continued hard work and dedication to a wonderful school.





Staff on the Y6 Residential



Miss Mapleston and Mrs Wojcik helping with the BBQ at the Circus



Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

Dawn Wojcik

Co-opted Governor, Maths Governor, Racial Equity Governor

As another school year draws to a close it's good to reflect on what a different year it's been to the last one. We have finally been able to complete an academic year without lockdowns, bubbles and strict restrictions in place. I have entered my 3rd year in my second term as co opted governor as well as continuing in my role as TA in year 2 and lunchtime controller 3-4 days a week.

Last half term we were able to meet in person as a full governing body and Covid seems to be retreating for now. Our committee meetings have still remained remote but always well attended and proactive. On a personal note I have been lucky to be able to help at the fantastic Circus event which took place in May. Myself and several other governors and family members helped with the barbecue which was a roaring success. Very recently I went along to the Isle of Wight with the year 6 children to help on their residential trip. We had a most fantastic time and everyone seemed to really enjoy the challenges and activities that PGL do so well. I am looking forward to having a good rest over the summer break and aim to come back to yet another great year at Hawthorns school as I'm sure there'll be lots more exciting trips and projects ahead of us all.

Have a wonderful safe, fun holiday break.

Asmita Gore

Parent Governor, IT, Computing & Website Compliance Governor, e-Safety Governor

I have joined as a Parent Governor in Dec 2021 and since joining, I can understand the hard work the head teacher, teachers and school staff put in to make sure the Hawthorns is one of the 'best primary schools in Wokingham. I am glad to be part of this community.

I have taken up the role of ICT Governor, and will be working towards the strategic plans for ICT in school, ensuring teachers and staff are receiving adequate trainings to use technology (white boards, video conferencing, google classrooms, different software and applications) and it used in best possible ways for the benefit of students and at the same time with complete security and safety.

In my short tenure as a Parent Governor, I also participated as a Judge in writing competition and I was surprised to see how lovely is the writing even for the little kids who have just embarked on the school journey (EYFS and KS1) and the creativity of the older kids. Kudos to the whole school for making the learning journey so special and enjoyable for the kids.

