

July 2020

Welcome to the Hawthorns Primary Governors' Newsletter 2020

Judith Shepherd



Chair of Governors and Chair of Sites & Buildings Committee, Co-opted Governor, H&S Governor, Sports Governor, Designated Safeguarding Governor

I hope our newsletter finds you safe and well.

I would like to start by saying a big thank you to my fellow governors for their commitment this year. For their time, which they have given freely and the commitment they have shown to the school.

We have our Full Governing Body meetings twice a term and the Learning and Teaching, Sites and Buildings and Personnel and Finance Committees hold their meetings once each term. Since March we have been holding our meetings virtually, which has worked perfectly.

As well as being Chair of Governors, I have, for the past seven years been Chair of the Sites and Buildings Committee. I am stepping down from this role at the end of term and handing the reins into the safe hands of Mr Julian Dempster.

We are about to say farewell to one of our governors. The Reverend Patrick Mukholi is taking up a new post as interim minister in the benefice of Winkfield, Cranbourne and Chavey Down in Bracknell. We thank him for all he has done for the school and wish him every happiness as he moves to pastures new.

Sadly we said a fond farewell to our Headteacher Mrs Pat Kerton at the end of December, who retired due to ill health. Her years at Hawthorns were filled with happiness and her contribution to the school priceless. I know that she is keeping busy, having time to pursue her interests and has even become a school governor at High Close School, who must be thrilled to have someone with such extensive knowledge of the education system.

We then had the job of recruiting a new Headteacher. We advertised nationwide and ended up with a shortlist of three people at the interview stage. Over two days, Governors, with guidance from members of the Education Department at Wokingham Borough Council and input from staff members put the candidates through a rigorous interviewing process. It was a unanimous decision in the end to appoint Ms Raha Razeghi, who had been deputy head at Hawthorns for nine years and more recently stepped up as 'acting head' during Mrs Kerton's absence in 2019.

Huge congratulations to Ms Razeghi who officially took over the Headship in April. We all look forward to working with her over the coming years and sharing her exciting plans for the school.

The school is now the proud owner of magnificent Chrome Books, providing the children with the latest technology to enhance their learning. A massive thank you to the dedicated and hardworking PTA for providing the money to purchase these. Thanks to all of you too, for supporting the various PTA events, without which support the funds would not be raised.

As a result of the Covid19 outbreak, school closed, and opened just for those that were eligible to attend. Come June we welcomed back EYFS, Year 1 and Year 6. From the start of lockdown everyone had to adapt to new ways of working. Educating the children continued at home, timetables were uploaded using eSchools and Google Classroom, the school website and Facebook page proved invaluable. Thank goodness for technology !!

I know that you were informed of all that was available for your childrens' home learning. The dedicated staff worked tirelessly to ensure it worked. Feedback received was truly heartwarming. It has been lovely seeing pictures of the work the children have produced. The planning involved in making the school safe to open in June was monumental. I walked round the empty school and saw the amount of work that had been put in, and was very happy with the result. To this end I would like to say well done and thank you to each and every member of staff for their hard work during this unprecedented time. We are very proud of you.

A well done to all parents and carers for supporting and encouraging their children, goes without saying.

In February we held our annual Governors Day which commenced with us taking the school assembly. Our theme this year was 'Things that make us happy'. We asked the children afterwards to complete a piece of writing about what makes them happy. Such wonderful work was produced by the children, it definitely made us so happy to read them!

One of the things that makes me happy, which I shared with everyone in our assembly, is blue sky. I hope you like my photograph of Windsor Castle looking magnificent against the sky. I took this when I joined Year 1 on their trip to the castle in January.

I wish you all a safe and happy Summer break, hopefully with lots of blue sky!





Emma Kerr

Vice Chair of Governors, Maths Governor KS2,

This has certainly been a school year like no other, and we've all seen our lives radically changed. Like all of you, the governors have been adjusting to the 'new normal': staying distanced, home-schooling and meetings being held via google hangouts.

I'd like to thank our wonderful staff for all their hard work supporting our children during this time. I think the structured time-tabled days, and variety of subjects they have provided to maintain our children's interest and focus has been excellent.

The Maths subject leaders have been working closely with the NCETM (National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics) this year, which has ensured that all classes are taught using the mastery approach. On my subject governor visit in the Spring term evidence of this was clearly visible.

This term has been tough for everyone, but I particularly feel for our year 6 students who have missed out on so much of their final year at Hawthorns, especially their residential week and Year 6 play. I'd like to wish them all every success at their chosen secondary school and am confident that they'll be leaving Hawthorns well prepared for their next adventure.

Diane Hampton

Co-opted Governor, Chair of Personnel & Finance Committee,

Development Governor

It has been another busy year for the Personnel & Finance Committee. As with all other organisations during this difficult time we have been able to continue with our work holding our meetings virtually and I would like to thank the staff and governors who have worked hard to enable this to happen. The remit of the committee is to ensure the "sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources".

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff for their tremendous efforts in helping the school to work within a constrained budget and to help us meet our responsibilities. Another part of the committee's work is to support the school in the area of personnel. This can involve a wide range of activities one of which is being part of recruitment panels. I was delighted to be part of the team that undertook the Headteacher interviews this year. The process was very rigorous, and I think was just as stressful for the interview panel as the candidates. It is one of the most important decisions that Governors ever make.

I was lucky to be asked to accompany the Cross-Country competition trips that took place during the Autumn and Winter terms. I am so proud of the pupils that took part, they certainly exhibited the many elements of the vision statement including resilience, aim high and persistence. Their sense of sportsmanship was amazing.

I was also able to attend Governor day this year and took part in the assembly telling the pupils about "what makes me happy" as part of Mental health week. Helping to judge the pupil's stories, diaries, reports on what makes them happy was fantastic.

I have also enjoyed helping with other sports trips, Christmas lunch and listening to pupils read. I greatly enjoyed hearing their thoughts on what had just been read. They always had such great ideas.

We are very lucky at Hawthorns to have very talented and conscientious staff and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their work during this year and this difficult time.



Art Club



Police Visit





Phillipa Dunn

LA Governor, SEND Governor, LAC Governor

Reflecting on my second year as a governor has reinforced my view of just how special and caring Hawthorns is. These are very surreal times for all of us but I have been really impressed and proud at how everyone involved at the school has risen to the challenges presented over the last 4 months. A highlight for me is the video clip on the website from the staff showing the sense of community - here for you, working together to stay safe and carry on learning (and smiling!).

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.

Governors Day is a highlight of the year as it is great to be able to spend the whole day in school meeting, chatting to and lunching with the children (and staff!) in their environment. Assembly is a bit scary but it was great to share what makes us happy with all the children and then to read about what makes them happy in the writing competition. Judging this was really hard and I was amazed at the fantastic standard of all the entries.

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 particularly in these difficult times is so important but often involves many unseen hours of work outside the classroom. Thank you - you really do make a difference!

The role of a school governor is very varied and this year, in my role of Looked After Children (LAC) governor I attended the LAC forum run by Wokingham LA. This was a very informative meeting and I fed back its key points to the full governing body. I also completed training in Safer Recruitment in Education and was involved in the recruitment of our new Headteacher. Although I am sad to say goodbye to Mrs Kerton, a wonderful Headteacher, I know that the schools future is in good hands with Ms Razeghi. At the parent consultation evenings it was lovely to meet and greet parents and point them in the right direction to meet their son's or daughter's teacher as well as serving vital tea, coffee and biscuits to staff during the evening! I have also spent a number of mornings doing traffic observations in the roads around the school at morning drop-off time. I know it is difficult in the winter when the weather is bad but I did see some frightening potential accident situations particularly parking half on pavements and reversing onto the pavements. Please do think about the children (and parents) around your car as you drop off your children.

Finally a big thank you to all parents and their home teaching. The challenges of lockdown and suddenly becoming a teacher in your own home - 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 are amazing!

I am looking forward to my third year as governor with hopefully a more normal start to the new school year in September!



Lockdown Baking



VE Day Bunting





Sarah Mapleston

Co-opted Governor, Early Years Governor



School CD Recording

A year ago I would not have thought we would be in the position that we are in now. Since the end of March, Hawthorns has gone from physically teaching the children to virtually teaching and providing care for keyworker children. I believe there are many people that need to be given thanks for all of their hard work, support and dedication such as the teachers, teaching assistants, cleaners, admin, parents (for supporting your child/ren) and of course Ms Razeghi who has been thrown in the deep end at the beginning of her first headship! Clear communication has been given throughout this unsettling time and I believe at Hawthorns we have upheld our expectations and beliefs.

I am now nearly at the end of my third year as a governor (or as my class like to call me, the government!). I thoroughly enjoy having another role in school. In my governor role I have attended all of the sites and buildings meetings as well as all of the full governing body meetings (in person and virtually).

This year I have had the pleasure of helping serve food to the volunteers at the Winter Fair, attend the PTA's AGM as well as having an active role within governor's day. Due to no longer having assigned year groups, I was able to spend valuable time with EYFS as I am their assigned governor. It was lovely to see them having a go with running a mile and completing various activities.

Although we're coming to the end of a very different academic year, I am sure that we can agree that we have become a closer, supportive community during this time. I hope this continues as we enter September.

Dawn Wojcik

Co-opted Governor, Maths Governor KS1

Hello all,



EYFS & Year 1 World Book Day

Here we are again in the summer term of this academic year. I was re-elected last term as a co-opted governor for another 4 years and continue to sit on two committees, Learning and Teaching and sites and buildings. I am also supporting KS1 maths. The year started well and I enjoyed getting involved with the maths morning back in October, helping out at parents evening and of course our wonderful PTA Christmas fair. I helped on the school trip with Year 3 to the Cole museum in Reading university. The trip was really good and the children had a fantastic time and were very well behaved as always.

Governors day was also a highlight this year and the writing challenge we set on the topic of "What makes me happy" yielded some incredible written work. I was so impressed by the quality of work and the imagination and enthusiasm that the children showed for this task. It was really valid having it during Mental Health Week and a lovely experience to look back on.

After half term in February brought World book day and it was great fun seeing all the colourful outfits and joining in with the dressing up part. As a TA and governor I really appreciate being involved in different sides of the how the school operates. It's been strange not being in school for the spring term and beyond but we have all been very busy keeping the cogs turning from our own homes and home offices. The senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and all the office staff have been so fantastic at keeping the connection between our families and our school during the school closure, we are so very lucky. I really hope to be all together again soon and in the meantime I'm looking forward to joining the year 1 bubble. Next academic year will hopefully be a little more normal again. Best wishes to you all





Kerry Martin

Parent Governor, Humanities Governor

This is the end of my second academic year as a governor and I am thoroughly enjoying the opportunity to contribute to the success of our wonderful school.

The highlight of the year for me was helping with my daughters' class on the year 1 trip to Windsor Castle. This was the children's first school coach trip and they were incredibly excited when we set off and most impatient to reach the castle! Upon arrival we were lucky enough to make it in time to see the changing of the guards and then we had plenty of time to explore the castle ourselves. The children then had a group session learning about the lives of squires, knights and damsels and finally it was time for a well deserved lunch break. We then explored some other areas of the castle (including St George's Chapel and the state rooms). It was then time to head back to school, with some rather tired looking little faces on the coach home.

I also thoroughly enjoyed governors' day, which offers governors the chance to spend a full day in the school. The standard of the written work in the writing challenge that we set for the children was very high and it was a pleasure to read the work and to choose the winners. I also loved having lunch with the children and listening to their questions and comments.

The summer term has obviously brought huge and unprecedented challenges to the school, teachers, parents and children alike. Lets hope we are all enjoying a more normal life by the start of next school year.



Open Air Lockdown Classrooms

Charlotte Hampton

Staff Governor

As you may be aware, I took over from Elizabeth Bridgeman and became Staff Governor in October 2019 and so I have only had a small amount of time to find out about all the exciting opportunities you have as a Governor at The Hawthorns. So far I have loved every minute of it! As a staff governor, my role is to represent the staff at full governing body meetings. As I am also a member of the Personal and Finance Committee, I have also begun to learn lots about the school budget and what goes on 'behind the scenes' to help make the school run. It has been great for me to have another role in the school, even if this has meant virtually rather than in person!

My first official Governors 'duty' was the Governors assembly where we spoke about 'what makes us happy'. It was so lovely to share the things that make me happy as well listening to the ideas that all the other Governors have. I also enjoyed reading some of the children's writing from different year groups about what makes them happy. In addition, I was also privileged to be involved in the head teacher interviews and the thorough process that was carried out.

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff at The Hawthorns for the amazing work they have done this year. Particularly under very difficult circumstances that we faced in the second half of the year. It showed just how much of a dedicated team we are!

I am definitely looking forward to participating in more opportunities as a governor including school fairs, governors day and continuing to support the staff as we move into another academic year!



NHS Rainbow





Chromebooks

Dozie Nnabuife

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

Governor, Science Governor

As we approach the end of this academic year, I look back with gratitude and pride in what we have achieved so far, together. One of the major highlights being the smooth transition to a new Head teacher. It was a herculean task, which took a lot of planning, meetings and interviewing to get the right person for the school community.

On a personal level, this academic year marked the completion of a four-year term as a school governor (4 years already!). I was re-elected to another four term by the governing body.

The winter fair was another exciting and successful event where we manned the kitchen as usual. In supporting the PTA, we raised money for the school. I was so keen and looking forward to the summer event which will never be due to the current lockdown.

The lock down due to Covid-19 was another challenge which was never envisaged. The governor's meetings continued virtually. The lockdown increased my attendance as it ensured that I was always at home and had no excuses to miss meetings.

At the committee level, we continued to challenge ourselves and the school for better outcomes for the children at the Learning and Teaching committee.

As a result of the Covid-19 lockdown, the school had to add addendum to the Safeguarding Policy to accommodate the additional challenges introduced.

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 Hawthorn family as we hopefully return to normal life amidst the ongoing global epidemic challenge.

Nicola Carr

Parent Governor, English Governor

I have thoroughly enjoyed being a parent governor, again this year, although the year has ended very differently to how anyone expected.

Instead of highlighting the visits and meetings I've attended as normal, I would like to use this as an opportunity as both a parent and governor to say a massive thank you to all of the staff at Hawthorns.

COVID 19 has meant we have all had to adapt to a new working normal, parents and children alike. As a governor I know how much time and effort the school has put in to keep the school open and the learning process moving forward. As a parent I can't thank you enough for all of your efforts with the home learning, support and guidance you have given us.

I'm sure I say this on behalf of all the Hawthorns parents, thank you very much for helping to make this process as painless as possible.



Home Learning





Rev'd Patrick Mukholi

Co-opted Governor, RE and SMSC Governor

It has been my big privilege to be a governor at this great school. I think I have been impacted more than perhaps I have been able to input. I would like to thank everyone for their support and encouragement and for the key service you all are giving to lay the foundation for our young ones. I have had some head cracking conversations as the Governors and teachers have set the discussions for the development of each child in the school.

Coming in once a month to pray for the school with some of the staff has been very fulfilling. I am glad to leave a little mark of a Reflection Board for the children at the Hawthorns. I will not forget the times of loss and will as much as I can remember to pray for the Hawthorns children and staff. I have enjoyed the assemblies with you as we came in every month for the Open The Book sessions. The children remember my best performance, when I played Goliath.

I have also enjoyed the more relaxed activities when we've had the Summer and winter fayres. Manning a barbeque set to feed so many was a challenge but it was made to look ordinary by my governor colleagues who were there with me. All in all very enjoyable.

By God's grace and favour I have now been offered and accepted the post of an interim minister in the benefice of Winkfield, Cranbourne and Chavey Down in Bracknell beginning 1st July 2020. The new minister for Wooshill Revd. Soba Sinnathamby will be here from August. I pray and wish you all well and that the children and the school will continue the school's set strategic direction.



Mrs Kerton's Leaving Presentation

