

## **Governance Newsletter - December 2019**

Welcome to the first Governing Body newsletter of this school year. We aim to distribute this newsletter once every term to update parents, families and carers on the work of the Governing Body at Halfway Nursery Infant School.

The governing body provides strategic leadership and accountability in schools. It has three key functions:

- \* Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent;
- \* Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
- \* Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.

### **What have the GB been doing this term?**

At our September meeting we agreed our plans for the year, including allocating members of the Governing Body to School Improvement Priorities. These are:

Priority A - To embed improvements to the teaching of reading and phonics so that pupils' outcomes are consistently above national averages, particularly boys and Pupil Premium children

Priority B - To further develop the quality of maths teaching and leadership in order to narrow the gap in attainment for Pupil Premium children at end of KS1

Priority C - To improve outcomes pastorally, academically and holistically

Priority D - To raise the profile of physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of pupils and staff

Priority E - To become more outward facing, strengthening capacity in school and across our Family of Schools

All Governors have key roles which will require liaison with staff and time in school. We also agreed that Liz Booth will be continuing as Chair with Jo Wallace and Jenny Thorne as Co-Vice Chairs.

In November we received a detailed report from the Headteacher on the 2018/19 achievements and challenges, teaching profile and appraisal, behaviour and welfare, premises, and key funding rationales. We particularly noted:

- Excellent outcomes for last year's Y2 children in Reading, Writing and Maths;
- A strengthened focus on Phonics learning for 2019/2020;
- The need to increase support for the Headteacher in her work to improve the quality of buildings and premises;

- A somewhat positive outlook for school finances in a climate where school resources are stretched;
- Reports of beneficial networking across the Family of Schools (all schools located within the Westfield catchment area).

*Friends of Halfway Nursery Infant School* - the governing body was disappointed to hear that the Winter Fayre had to be cancelled this year due to the lack of parental volunteers. The Friends group provides many essential resources for the school that we as Governors are not able to provide through the school budget.

*Rotherham Road North Turning Head* - many parents have been following the development of the road outside school and will have seen the Planning Notification for the reinstatement of a turning head at the side of our main school entrance. Our Chair of Governors, Liz Booth, has been in constant communication with Sheffield Council and recently attended a Council meeting to object on the ground of threats to the safety of our children. The details can be viewed here:

[http://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s36711/19-02364-](http://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s36711/19-02364-FUL%20Rotherham%20Road.pdf)

[FUL%20Rotherham%20Road.pdf](http://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s36711/19-02364-FUL%20Rotherham%20Road.pdf). At this meeting the Council agreed to require the developer to move the footpath and install railings around the proposed turning head. We have also asked that any highways work is carried out when the school is closed.

### **Governor Spotlight - James Rolstone**

Each newsletter will feature an overview of one of our Governors. Here's an overview of our new Co-opted Governor, James Rolstone.



“I joined the board of governors towards the end of the last academic year, as a co-opted governor. My interest in education and being a school governor has come from a few areas. This has come partly from my role working for the Department for Education, partly from my postgraduate studies, which touched on this area from a public understanding of science perspective, and partly from my eldest child starting school last September in south west Sheffield. From a personal perspective, I am a firm believer that every child is entitled to a good quality education – no matter what his/her background or personal circumstances - and in my role as a governor I hope to be able to play a part in making that a reality.

Professionally, I am a civil servant and have worked on a wide range of government policy areas over the past 10 or more years. The past 3 years have been spent at the Department for Education (DfE) working on the Free Schools' Programme where I lead on areas of funding policy and programme finance. I hope that my experience working in government, and in particular at DfE, will be an asset to the school's governing body. From my current role, I have a detailed understanding of how schools are funded, and have had the opportunity to interact with a range of schools on financial issues over the past few years. I hope that this experience will allow me to contribute constructively to the governing process, and to steering the school to continue to improve in its great performance.

In my role as a governor, I have taken on the lead for School Improvement Priority D, which is to raise the profile of physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of the school's pupils and staff. In addition, I am the finance lead and I hope that my experience will be a valuable asset in scrutinising the school's finances and agreeing the budget for the year. I am very excited to have the opportunity to be part of this governing body, and to meet and work with the teachers, parents and pupils."