

Governance Newsletter - Summer Term 1 2018

Welcome to the latest Governing Body newsletter. We aim to distribute a newsletter once every half term to update parents, families and carers on the work of the Governing Body at Halfway Nursery Infant School.

The three main roles of the governing body are:

- * agreeing the strategic direction for the school;
- * acting as a 'critical friend';
- * ensuring accountability.

What has the Governing Body been doing this half term (and a bit of last term)?

It was a busy Spring Term at Halfway Nursery Infant School (so busy that we forgot our Governance Newsletter in April).

OFSTED? Oh (s)no(w)!



It snowed, and then Ofsted came – and the school coped with both marvellously!

For parents and carers who might not be aware, the Chair of Governors and any other key governance roles (e.g. Vice Chair and Safeguarding Governor) are invited to meet the Ofsted Inspector on the day of the inspection.

We were scheduled for the end of the day and spent about 45 minutes discussing the school in detail. This was the first time any of the governors had experienced Ofsted and we really felt the pressure of needing to know the school data in detail, understand the school policies, and defend governance processes – it was like revising for an exam! Whilst in-school staff spend time preparing for Ofsted almost from the day they start work, governors tend to learn by doing (with the odd bit of training), and often fit the visits and the preparation around their paid employment.

On the day of the Ofsted visit the governors saw: happy children playing before lessons; perfect behaviour of the children walking down from Superkids; parents eager to tell their story about their school; well-maintained school grounds; learning spaces clean and inviting; volunteers supporting children to read; and confident and enthusiastic teachers and teaching assistants. Behind all of that was the practical and emotional support of the senior leadership team and the sharp administration of our office staff.

The school had a great day and a great outcome, and the Governing Body appreciates the hard work of all staff, parents and carers who are involved in making Halfway Nursery Infants a great school. The Governing Body will be monitoring the

creation of action plans for 2018/19 so that the school can focus on areas for development and sustain, and hopefully improve, this outcome in the future.

New beginnings



Last half term we also said a fond farewell to Mr Varnam, and recently welcomed our new Headteacher, Mrs Bestall, to the school. Paula is a fantastic appointment for our school, and we have already spent lots of time together discussing school budgets, school improvements, updating policies, and discovering ways of working with our Westfield Family of Schools.

We shall resume our governance monitoring next half term and governors will be in school focusing on our school priorities: literacy outcomes (especially for boys); maths outcomes (especially girls); outcomes for our most vulnerable children; the development of Personal Social Health Education in school; and the development of our Middle Leaders (teaching staff).

Governor Spotlight – Carol Ions

Each newsletter features an overview of one of our governors – this time it is the turn of our Co-Opted Governor, Carol Ions.



“I have been a Governor at the school since September 2017 and my daughter, Neve, is currently in F2. I have lived in Sheffield since 2009 after many years following my husband (a member of the Armed Forces) around the county. We are originally from Richmond in North Yorkshire and, after lots of travel, I am happy finally to have settled in Sheffield.

I work for the Department for Education in Sheffield and have been in a post for the last 8 years supporting the growth and wider school improvement capacity of the academy sector. My main role involves supporting over 170 Multi-Academy Trusts across East Midlands and Humber. This encompasses 17 local authorities, from York right the way down to Leicester.

This is my first governor role and it is a privilege to be part of the Governing Body. I bring wider governance knowledge alongside all of the experience gained from my day job. I truly believe that all children deserve to have a great start in life, and I am committed to doing everything we can for all children at Halfway Nursery Infant School.

I spend all of my spare time with my husband and Neve. We are currently working our way around all the outside parks in Sheffield/NE Derbyshire while Neve practices her gymnastics routine! We are also avid travellers and love holidays.

I am in school every Monday, so please come and say hello.”