



## **HALFWAY NURSERY INFANT SCHOOL - GOVERNOR NEWSLETTER no 2**

Welcome to our latest governor newsletter. In the last edition, we promised to give you more information about the "Pupil Premium" and what it means, and also how we "hold the headteacher to account"! It may sound painful, but I can assure you that Mr Varnam is not harmed by this in any way!

### **How do we support Mr Varnam as governors?**

A key role of the governing body is to support and strengthen the leadership of the headteacher, and hold him to account for the day-to-day running of the school, including the performance management of teachers. The governing body plays a strategic role, avoiding routine involvement in operational matters.

However, since the governing body is responsible in law for the school, it may need to intervene in operational matters if a circumstance arises where, because of the actions or inactions of the headteacher, the school may be in breach of a duty if the governing body did not intervene.

We support the headteacher by providing an 'additional pair of eyes' on how the school is meeting its key priorities e.g. by conducting governor 'learning walks', looking, for example, at the how the school is supporting children with special educational needs, or is approaching the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The governors also look at how well the school is meeting its health and safety and safeguarding requirements.

### **Pupil Premium - what is it, and how do we use it?**

The Pupil Premium (PP) is an additional pot of money from the Department for Education that is allocated to the school, based on the number of children who fall into one or more of the following categories:

- are from families who are currently eligible, or have been eligible at any time during the past 6 years, for income-based free school meals;
- have been 'looked after' continuously for more than six months ('Looked after' children are those who have become the responsibility of the local authority);
- are adopted;
- are from families with a parent in one of the Armed Services.

The school is free to spend the Pupil Premium as it sees fit. However, we are held accountable for how the school uses the additional funding to support pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium. We always publish this information on the school website.

The governing body is involved in decisions on how the Pupil Premium funding is to be used, and closely monitors the impact of the funded activities on the attainment and progress of our 'Pupil Premium' children. The Pupil Premium monies make an important contribution to the costs of devoting teaching assistant time to providing a wide range of learning interventions with children who have additional

needs - and to ensuring that staff are equipped with all the skills needed to administer the interventions effectively.

Governors were delighted to hear that an overwhelming majority of children in receipt of Pupil Premium funding make expected progress and attain significantly higher than their national peers in reading, writing and maths. Our latest Ofsted data dashboard recognises this as an area of strength for our school. From September, there has been even greater focus on using Pupil Premium funding to enrich learning of those in the above categories, ensuring equal opportunities for all children, and for stretching the more able of these children. The school has a Pupil Premium champion who leads on ensuring that our plans for supporting children eligible for Pupil Premium are implemented effectively.

### **Governor Spotlight no 1 - John Beazer**



A recording star (available on iTunes and on vinyl!), occupational psychologist, adviser to government ministers, book publisher and website developer, who has run his own successful consultancy company - yes, we really do have a governor who can claim all this experience! It is our venerable school clerk, John Beazer. Mr Varnam claims that he is on an OAP 'care in the community' scheme, but don't believe a word of it!!! John actually came to the school over four years ago to provide one month's part time cover, when the flow of his consultancy work from government agencies dried up, following the banking crisis. He has been here full time ever since! As soon as we learnt about John's wide ranging experience, we recruited him onto the governing body, of which he's been an active and valuable member.

When not beavering away in school, John can be found playing rock and jazz drums for 'Redback' and 'Music and Lyrics' respectively (you probably heard 'Music and Lyrics' at the summer fayre!). He is a director of Rhubarb Farm, a dynamic horticulture based social enterprise. He develops and manages a number of commercial websites, and has created his own brewery-based model railway (well, if Rod Stewart can have his own model railway, why not our Mr Beazer!).

### **A 'Goodbye'**

Due to personal circumstances, Emily Davies has decided to step down from the governing body. We would like to thank Emily for her contribution and support over the last couple of years that she has been a member of the governing body.

### **An 'Hello'**

We would like to welcome Jody Turner to our governing body as a co-opted member. Jody is the mother of Eleanor, one of the children in our nursery. When asked why she wanted to become one of our governors, Jody told us, "I applied to become a school governor because I wanted to make a difference to the area in which my family and I live. I wanted to contribute to the betterment of my child's (soon to be children's!) experience as a resident in Westfield. I felt that, as a school governor, I could make a contribution not only to my children's experiences but to those of many more children besides. I am keen to influence the opportunities and experiences that the children receive. My primary objective is to ensure that the children receive a wealth of different experiences, and maintain an open mind with regards their future selves, so that their potential isn't curbed at an early age."

### Are you interested in joining our team?

We are currently looking for a parent of a child in school/nursery to join the governing body. Are you interested? You don't have to be an expert in educational theory - what you do need is an interest in the education provided at Halfway Nursery & Infant School - and sufficient time, energy and enthusiasm. I can honestly say that being a governor has given me some of the most rewarding experiences in my life. We really can make a difference to the children in our community.

I would love to hear from anyone who would like to find out more about us, and would also welcome feedback on the newsletter. Is there anything you would like to know about that we can address in the next issue? You can email me at [governors@halfway-inf.sheffield.sch.uk](mailto:governors@halfway-inf.sheffield.sch.uk).

Gina Berry

Chair of Governors

### OUR GOVERNING BODY

(Our pictures are displayed in the main school reception area)

Gina Berry (Chair)	Tony Downing
Steve Varnam	Esther Richards
Claire Ball	Liz Booth
Jo Heery	Karen Roberts
Jody Turner	John Beazer