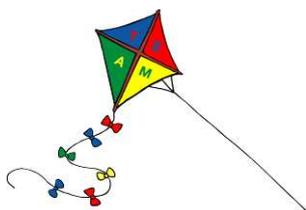


# Twyford St Mary's Governors' Newsletter



## Summer Term 2011

Welcome to the second of our new Governors' Newsletters!

We hope to keep you updated on any current issues and all the exciting things happening at Twyford St Mary's.

### **What has the Governing Body been doing?**

The Governing body as a whole meets every half term to discuss the current challenges and opportunities that face the school, forging strategies that ensure the best possible education for our children. Each committee also meet half-termly. We also have additional meetings to discuss the school Self Evaluation Form (SEF).

Tough times are now upon public sector spending, so it is pleasing that the **Resources Committee** has been able to continue to agree a sustainable budget.

**The Environment & Curriculum committee** has again had a busy year. We have been working hard keeping school policies up to date in line with Ofsted and curriculum requirements and some have been published on the website – (Policies can be updated at any time, so please let us have any comments for consideration). Before every meeting we carry out a Health & Safety inspection and fire alarm check and agree any actions needed. Through briefing sessions and Learning Walks governors have been kept up to date with the latest developments, seeing the children throughout the school putting their active learning into practice.

It has been another busy year for **Governor Training**. Governors have attended courses on Understanding Finance in Schools, Protecting Children, Induction Course for New Governors, Data, Performance Management Training, Resolving Complaints, How to Support and Challenge to Ensure Accountability, School Buildings - Ensuring an Effective Educational Environment, Briefing for Governors - Overview & Implications of the White Paper, Selecting and Interviewing Staff, Safer Recruitment Workshop, Strategic Personnel and Employment Practices, Strategic Finance and Financial Standards.

### **And what about the fun stuff?**

Here is a quick list of exciting school activities that Governors have been able to help with: Day trips eg Intech with Ash & Beech Class, Blue Reef Aquarium with Beech Class, British Museum with Oak Class, Visiting local business with Sycamore Class and The Lion King with Willow Class Residential Trips eg Minstead with Years 4 and 5 and Fairthorne Manor with Year 6.

Many of the Governors also come in regularly to assist in the classrooms by listening to children read etc.

Charlotte Parry – Parent Governor.

## Being a School Governor



When I was elected as a parent governor it would be fair to say that I had no idea what the role actually entailed.

What is being a governor? Is it running the school? Can you change things?

Nearly the first thing that happened was that I met the Chair and Vice-Chair of governors and was let into the secrets of being a school governor at Twyford St Mary's. It is the essence of that meeting that I describe here.

The school governing body has two roles: To maintain probity and to ensure standards.

A quick sentence about each of these two roles:

- ⤴ Probity: We check that resources are well spent and properly spent within the school. We look over and agree the school budget and expenditure decisions. We are involved in recruitment of new staff. By keeping up to date with the needs of the school we plan the use of resources into the future. This is not just salaries - which are of course the lion's share of any budget - it is also the spend on buildings, computers, lighting, school trips etc
- ⤴ Standards: The school has a School Improvement Plan (SIP) and a Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and we get children's targets from the government in a RaiseOnLine report and from the Rowntrees charity foundation. We use these data sources to try to find out how we are doing as a school. How well are we doing across the curriculum and for all types of learner? We also set the standards for the school by helping the school to keep up to date school policies: these range from a policy of bullying, to one on school uniform to a fire safety policy etc., etc., We can alter the School Improvement Plan to take into account what we have discovered.

We keep things going by having two committees: Environment and Resources. These committees meet at least twice a term and report to the whole governing body which also meets twice a term. We also have individual responsibilities: Governor Training, Special Educational Needs, Safeguarding etc.,

To summarise: We are a collection of critical friends that oversee the running of the school.

We are not: -

- ⤴ The parent representatives on the governing body. This was the biggest surprise to me! We can of course take up issues but the whole governing body makes decisions together so we cannot give individual opinions in the playground.
- ⤴ Involved in the day-to-day administration of any part of the school. The Head and teachers run the school. We can help, if asked to. Otherwise since we are not actually qualified, we are not involved.
- ⤴ In any way involved in teaching, learning and curriculum matters, except as they might affect school standards.
- ⤴ Are not independent. In the way of things we can get to know things about staff members or other sensitive information. We have to keep this confidential.

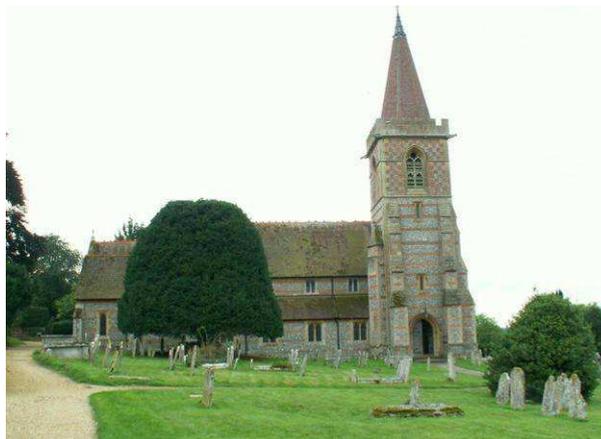
We do sometimes go on school residential trips, and we are very often asked (expected?) to help at school events.

Oh, and we go on training courses to learn about how a school is run and governed.

Being a governor has not taken over my life. But it is quite a commitment.

Dave Cohen, Parent Governor

## Foundation Governors



Foundation governors are appointed by the Parochial Church Council (P.C.C.) of St Mary's Church. At present there are three foundation governors on the governing body of Twyford St. Mary's: -

- Nigel Close is the Training Liaison Governor and has been a governor for eight years.
- Cynthia English, a governor for thirty-six years, is Health and Safety Governor.
- Sarah Hawkins is the Safeguarding Governor and has been a governor for three years.

We are all members of the Environment Committee and Sarah is on the Head Teacher's Performance Review Committee.

It has recently been announced that our new vicar has been appointed – Revd. Jonah Watts. Once he has been inducted in October we hope that he will join the governing body as a foundation governor ex-officio.

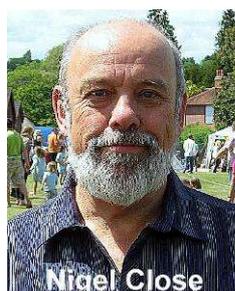
Foundation governors have a special responsibility for securing that the character of the school as a Church of England Voluntary Controlled (V.C) School is preserved and developed and that the school is conducted in accordance with the provisions of the school's Trust Deed.

A Trust Deed is a document that relates to the Christian principles on which the school was founded. There is a Trust Deed for the school dated 11th August 1843 and one dated 4th August 1859. We have a copy of the 1859 Trust Deed.

At our V.C. School St. Mary's Church owns the buildings and land. The local education authority (L.E.A.) is responsible for running and funding the school. Religious Education follows the L.E.A. Agreed Syllabus. The foundation governors control the use of the premises on Sundays.

Even though there was an earlier school elsewhere in the village, our present school has been on the site since 1861.

So this year we can sing "Happy Birthday Twyford St. Mary's" and we look forward to the 150 years celebrations in September. What a proud occasion for our beautiful village school and many thanks to all those who work so hard to make it such a special place.



## **Twyford St. Mary's – a Hampshire Lead Curriculum School**

The governors were extremely pleased when our school gained the accolade earlier this year of becoming a Lead Curriculum School for the local authority.

This means that Twyford St. Mary's supports and advises other schools in the area that are trying to update and transform their teaching and learning. This is a real accolade for our Leadership team, Mrs Chapman, Mrs Durkin, Mrs Williams, and all the staff who have been so active in developing techniques to foster high level thinking skills in the children.

The culture within the school has become characterised by the children's enthusiasm and preparedness to take responsibility for their learning.



This is being encouraged by techniques such as the use of the Learning Keys based on the TASC wheel, and recognition that the school is in the vanguard of those using these ideas is what has given us the 'LCS' status. Well done, Twyford St. Mary's!

Jennifer Hawkins – Foundation Governor

### **Fairthorne Residential Trip**

In September, Miss Roberts and I took the year 6 children to Fairthorne Manor for a fun-packed week, full of activities.



Each day we had four different activities including canoeing, sailing, kayaking, archery, zip wire, abseiling and more. The weather was kind apart from the Thursday morning when heavy rain came as the gang hit the assault course. Everyone threw themselves into it, including crawling on their stomachs through the large puddle under the cargo net. The enthusiasm of our children shone through all week and particularly through their smiling faces in the mud and the rain.

Every one of us had a fantastic time and we all left richer for the experience.

Richard Croucher – Parent Governor

## White Paper Training – Feb 2011, Brockenhurst College



'The Importance of Teaching', the Schools White Paper 2010, was published on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2010 with its aim to enact whole-system reform of education in England. There are many proposed changes and anyone interested in getting more information can visit <http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/index/about-us/national-college-role/national-college-whitepaper2010/whitepaper-summary?source=emailafriend> to read a summary of the proposals.

In February Vicky Fisher and Sarah Hawkins attended an information evening to explain the implication of this to schools. This was presented by John Clarke (Deputy Director, Education and Inclusion, Children's Services Department) and was attended by governors, staff and head teachers from schools across Hampshire. There were several areas of debate throughout the evening, but the planned radical reform of school funding stood out as a hot topic of conversation!

Schools get their revenue from two streams:

- Revenue funding – for the day to day expenses needed to run a school
- Capital funding – for specific building and improvement projects

Funding reform will see Hampshire schools overall revenue funding cut, but 'pupil premiums'- a payment made specifically for vulnerable pupils - increase. Our budget plan has just been agreed for the next year and our school's total projected revenue funding looks about equal to this year's. We will watch carefully what happens to this funding in the future and of course manage our costs with prudence.

Capital funding for Hampshire schools is set to decrease - by 60% in real terms over the next four years, with a plan that this will be balanced by cutting bureaucracy and securing significantly better value for money. Our school has anticipated this change and has carefully managed previous capital funding to prepare for the future. We have also carried out a series of significant school improvements throughout the last couple of years and so are not anticipating any major capital costs for several years at least.

Overall, this was a very interesting evening, providing an insight not only in to the White Paper but also the areas seen as concerns and opportunities by other schools in our county. We will continue to follow the progress of the White Paper and plan ahead for the ongoing development of our school.

Vicky Fisher – Parent Governor

# Appendix

## Roles & Responsibilities of the Governing Body

### **Governors are appointed to provide:**

- Strong links between the school, the church and the wider community it serves
- A wide experience of the outside world
- An independent view
- A visible form of accountability for the Head Teacher and staff of the school
- A team focusing on long term development and improvement
- Support for the Head Teacher and staff.

Governors must act with integrity, objectivity & honesty and in the best interests of the school. They must be open about & prepared to explain, their decisions & actions.

### **Governing bodies are the strategic planners of schools & have a responsibility to:**

- Set up a strategic framework for the school, setting its aims and objectives
- Agree policies and practices, which allows the Head Teacher the necessary tools to carry out their responsibilities (and meet statutory & Ofsted requirements.)
- Agree principles and targets for improvement.
- Discuss reports on the resulting practice and conduct of the school.
- Set the budget and high level monitoring.
- Act as the critical friend of the school and head teacher.

In addition, governors are involved in some of the following activities, often through committees, which report back to the full governing body.

- Financial management of the school, pupil discipline, the curriculum, Senior staff appointments, liaising with parents & other stakeholders and Community links.

Governors cannot take decisions relating to day-to-day management of the school. The day-to-day management of the school is the responsibility of the Head Teacher.

- This includes, appointment of staff, allocations of resources e.g. teachers to classes, allocation of pupils to classes, individual pupil discipline & number of pupils.

All governing bodies have committees that carry out tasks to aid the work of the governing body and report back to the whole governing body.

In Twyford St Mary's we have an Environment Committee - addressing the physical & the learning environment and the curriculum, a Resources Committee - dealing with financial & personnel matters and a Head teacher's Performance Management Committee.

Decisions of the governing body are made in formal meetings, either with the full governing body, or in committees & then ratified by the full governing body. The Full Governing Body and the three committees each meet twice a term.

Joan Sallis, governor and regular contributor to the Times Educational Supplement says that the role of the school governor is to:

- Support the school, but not uncritically
- Explain its policies to parents and the community, but not blindly
- Watch its standards, but with care, humility and an open mind
- Help settle its disputes fairly and conscientiously
- Oversee its policies and its use of the resources, but not in tiresome detail.

## School Governors

<b>Representation</b>	<b>Name of governor</b>	<b>Committees &amp; Responsibilities</b>
Community	Mrs Jennifer Lomas	Chair of Governors, Chair of Resources
	Vacancy	
Foundation	Mrs Cynthia English	Environment, Health & Safety Governor
	Mr Nigel Close	Environment, Training Liaison Governor
	Mrs Sarah Hawkins	Environment, Head Teachers Performance Management, Safeguarding Governor
	Diocese vacancy	
Local Education Authority	Mrs Jennifer Laute	Chair of Environment, Resources, Head Teachers Performance Management
	Mrs Wendy Sullivan	Environment, Special Educational Needs Governor
Parent	Mrs Charlotte Parry	Environment, Resources, Governor Forum Representative
	Mr Richard Croucher	Resources
	Professor David Cohen	Deputy Chair of Governors, Environment, Resources
	Mrs Victoria Fisher	Environment, Resources, Head Teachers Performance Management
	Mr Bruce Greig	Environment, Resources
Staff	Miss Kelly Durkin	Environment
	Mrs Lin Brewer	Resources
Staff (HT)	Ms Louise Chapman	Environment, Resources