



GOVERNOR BULLETIN

ISSUE 11 DECEMBER 2021

Governors	Roles	Type	Terms of Office
Peter Parkin-Child	Chair History link	Co-opted	24/09/2019 - 23/09/2023
Cilla Hollman	Vice Chair EYFS, Geography link	Co-opted	09/07/2019 – 08/07/2023
Jessica McFarlane	Anti - bullying & PREVENT link	Co-opted	25/09/2018 – 24/09/2022
Deborah Walker	Vice-Chair Literacy (writing) link	Foundation	01/05/2019 - 30/04/2023
Roger Wilkinson	Health & Safety link	Local Authority	20/03/2018 – 19/03/2022
Rev. David Mundy	RE, Pastoral link	Ex-officio foundation	01/10/2018 -
Michelle Massey	Pupil Premium, SEND link	Parent	30/01/2018 – 29/01/2022
Jonathan Lingham	Numeracy link	Parent	15/11/2018 – 14/11/2022
Victoria Freiss	ICT/e-safety link	Parent	11/11/2019 – 10/11/2023
Tom Plant	Literacy (reading) link	Parent	25/05/2021 – 24/05/2025
Esther Bland	Headteacher	Staff	01/09/2018 -
Kellie Wilson	Deputy Headteacher	Co-opted	13/07/2021 – 12/07/2025
Olivia Cousen	Teacher	Staff	02/09/2021 – 01/09/2025

The aim of this Governor Bulletin is to give you some insight into what our role as a governor is within the school, as well as updating you on the issues we get involved with. But, most importantly, I want these bulletins to reinforce that we, as a Governing Body, are here to work with all those who have a vested interest in the success of Dukes – and so please feel free to stop and chat to us when you see us around and about.

Well, what a first term of the academic year it has been! Whilst it was not quite as free from pandemic restrictions as we had all hoped for, it has been great to see all of our pupils back in classrooms and surrounded by their friends. It has certainly been a busy time at Dukes, not least due to the Ofsted inspection that took place back in October – more on that later.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome our new members of the Dukes family – I hope your children (and you) have settled in well and have been able to get a feel of what a special place our school is. As for those of us with children who returned to school in September, I'm sure you will join me in saying how lovely it has been for the children to have access to the (almost) full range of activities that we usually offer; be this Forest School, after school clubs, school trips etc. The teachers and staff have done an amazing job at making life as normal, fun and educational for our children as possible – and we should never underestimate how much time and energy it has taken to achieve this. So, on behalf of the Governing Body and the wider parent/carer population – thank you! You are all brilliant!

So, what do Governors do?

The Governing Body is made up of a mixture of volunteers - members of the community, church and local authority, parents and staff. We meet as a Full Governing Body (FGB) six times a year and these meetings usually take place after key school data becomes available. Our aim is to work closely with the Headteacher to raise standards and make sure the school provides a good quality education. We do not manage the day to day running of the school - we help shape its focus and direction. We ensure accountability to parents, staff, and others for the school's overall performance, support the Head and staff, as well as offer constructive challenge.

Governor Changes

I am pleased to welcome **Miss Cousen** to the Governing Body as our staff governor. For those of you whose children have not had the pleasure of being taught by Miss Cousen, she currently teaches one of our Y1/Y2 classes and is the Computing Lead for the school. She has already made some valuable contributions to the governing body, and we are thrilled to have her as part of the team.

Ofsted

As mentioned above, we had our Ofsted inspection back in October. Whilst the judgment was not what we were hoping for, as we (the Governing Body) did not feel it fully reflected the improvements that had been made to the school and the energy/commitment shown by the school staff, we did accept that that the recommendations made by the Inspectors were both useful and fair. As outlined in my letter (which can be found on the school website under Statutory Information > Ofsted Reports), the main development points raised by the inspectors were already contained within our School Improvement Plan; and so, are issues that the school is already working on.

As we have come to expect, the school leadership team responded quickly to these development points and have developed an action plan that is already being implemented. This plan seeks to address the three key issues that were highlighted by the inspectors (reading/phonics, curriculum and subject leadership) and we have full confidence in the entire teaching staff that they will both rise to the challenge and exceed expectations. We are very optimistic about the progress that will be made in time for our next inspection.

Recent Meetings / Strategic Direction

Since lockdown began, and given the ever-changing restrictions, we have continued to hold virtual governors' meetings – with two having taken place since the beginning of term. As you would expect, a large part of these meetings continues to be discussing the school's continuing response to the COVID-19 situation; however, we have also been fully focussed on our School Improvement Plan for 2021/22. Full details can be found on the website under 'Statutory Information', but a summary of the main objectives is outlined below:

- **Relationships:** Promoting positive physical and mental health and supporting those facing difficulties as a result of the pandemic. The key actions here focus on speaking, listening and vocabulary, student voice and wellbeing.
- **Solid Foundations:** Ensuring children have a solid educational foundation in the early stages and throughout their Dukes journey. The key actions here focus on Early Years, Phonics, Reading, Writing, and Maths
- **Plugging the Gaps:** Early identification of any gaps, difficulties, disadvantages and or Additional Need, and implementing any necessary support and interventions to maximise progress. The key actions here focus on the catch-up curriculum, our Sports Premium and our children with Pupil Premium and/or SEND.
- **Lifelong Learners:** Developing a curriculum that teaches core principles but also attributes and skills needed for when our children leave Dukes. The key actions here focus on our curriculum, subject action plans, transition and evaluation.

In terms of closing gaps in learning, the school continues to build upon a series of baseline assessments in reading, writing and maths; and the data we receive in relation to these key areas is helping both the school and the governing body to focus our attention where needed. The main aim of all this work is to not only ensure that pupils are on track but are fulfilling their potential.

Pupil Numbers

As I mentioned earlier, we have welcomed new children into the Dukes family and we look forward to watching them develop and grow during their time with us. It is encouraging to see the excellent take-up of places within our Nursery and Reception year group and, as I have mentioned in previous bulletins, healthy pupil numbers are good for the school; not only as a reflection of our reputation in the local community but also in terms of funding.

Buildings / Investments

As mentioned in my last report, the pace of improvements to the school has slowed this year due to a combination of a change of focus, as well as availability of services. However, the following investments/improvements to the school have recently taken place:

- Repairs to the toilets adjacent to the KS1 classrooms have been made
- The removal of a non-weight bearing wall in Miss Bynon's classroom has created a more open learning environment and a better use of space
- The purchase and installation of a new electronic entry system in the reception area has greatly improved the health and safety aspects of having visitors in the school
- We were successful in a bid for an upgrade of our IT infrastructure worth c£15,500, and this was completed in November.
- We still require a complete rewire of the hall in order to allow us to free up more space by moving the current circuit box. This funding request has been submitted to Cabinet and we will keep you posted with our progress

Parent/Carer Survey

Thank you to those parents/carers that submitted their responses to our survey. It was great to hear your feedback which confirmed what we already know – that Dukes is place where our children enjoying coming to. There were also some very useful comments about various topics and this feedback has enabled us to have some very useful discussions with the senior management team. You can find the full report on the school website under Parents' Information > Governor Bulletins.

Merry Christmas

So, that just leaves me to wish you all very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Thank you for all your support over the last year and here's hoping 2022 marks the year where we begin to return to sense of normality.

Stay safe.

Peter Parkin-Child
Chair of Governors