



GOVERNOR BULLETIN

ISSUE 10
JULY 2021

Governors	Roles	Type	Terms of Office
Peter Parkin-Child	Chair History link	Co-opted	24/09/2019 - 23/09/2023
Deborah Walker	Vice-Chair Literacy (writing) link	Foundation	01/05/2019 - 30/04/2023
Jessica McFarlane	Anti - bullying & PREVENT link	Co-opted	25/09/2018 – 24/09/2022
Cilla Hollman	EYFS, Geography link	Co-opted	09/07/2019 – 08/07/2023
Roger Wilkinson	Health & Safety link	Local Authority	25/09/2017 – 24/09/2021
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
Anita Birchall	Safeguarding link	Co-opted	22/10/2020 – 21/10/2024
Esther Bland	Headteacher	Staff	01/09/2018 -
Kellie Wilson	Deputy Headteacher	Co-opted	26/09/2017 – 25/09/2021
Claire Daniels	Teacher	Staff	01/12/2020 – 30/11/2024
Tom Plant	Literacy (reading) link	Parent	25/05/2021 – 24/05/2025

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.

So, we've come to the end of what has to be the most challenging academic year in recent memory. It has been a rollercoaster of emotions and experiences for all parts of the Dukes family; be that from remote learning to missing out on trips and activities to bubbles and social distancing. However, through this all, 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!

I also have to mention how exceptional all the children have been during this past year. The way in which they have handled such challenging and disruptive events has been inspirational, and they should all be very proud of themselves. The school has invested a lot of time in considering how to address and maintain their emotional wellbeing in such a changing landscape. The Governing Body has been fully supportive of this being a priority focus, and we hope that this has gone some way to allay fears and anxieties as we begin to return to normal.

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 **Tom Plant** to the Governing Body as a parent governor. Tom brings a wealth of experience gained within the public sector, in particular project management and multi-agency coordination, and has already made an impact on the governing body by agreeing to act as our reading link governor and being a member of our Performance Committee. I look forward to working with Tom as he settles into the role.

We are sad to say goodbye to **Miss Daniels** who is leaving the school and her role as our staff governor. We wish her all the best in her new role and we will let you know who will be appointed in her place in due course.

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, the main focus of these meetings continues to be discussing the school's continuing response to the COVID-19 situation; however, we are also planning for the next academic year and the fact that we are likely to have an (overdue) inspection from Ofsted. We are confident that we, as a school, have risen to the challenges outlined at the last inspection and are well prepared to evidence what a great school we are.

Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 continues to present challenges to the school and, as a Governing Body, we continue to work with the Senior Leadership team to ensure we have the right policies and processes in place to both minimise the risk and maximise the education of our children. However, with government guidance relaxing in August, we are hopeful that next academic year will resemble something that we all will be more familiar with; and we can get back to holding events that both celebrate the children's achievements and bring the Dukes family together (of which the excellent school Euros tournament has given us a taste).

Work is being finalised on our School Improvement Plan for 2021/22 and I will be able to share more about this with you in my first bulletin of next year. In terms of closing gaps in learning, the school continues to build upon a series of baseline assessments in reading, writing and maths; and these will form a key part of our improvement plan moving forwards. Formative assessments are continually carried out in lessons, and evaluation of pupil progress will continue to be undertaken on a termly basis to ensure that pupils are on track.

Pupil Behaviour

It was highlighted to governors in our last meeting that, whilst the issues referenced in my last bulletin in relation to Manor Park appear to have quietened, there continue to be some concerning cases in relation to the language choices that some children are making in school. Whilst these have been addressed and dealt with swiftly by the school, we would ask all parents/carers to be mindful of the media sources that their children are subject to.

It was also distressing to hear that some teachers have had to deal with verbal abuse and threatening behaviour from some ex-pupils of Dukes. Whilst none of our current pupils were involved, and the matters have been escalated to the appropriate authorities, we would reiterate the school's message to please ensure that any children are appropriately supervised outside of school (especially in Manor Park) and any older children briefed on staying safe and behaving well.

Pupil Numbers

It has come to that time of year where we say goodbye to our Year 6 pupils, and we wish them continued success as they move into their period of secondary education. We had a large cohort of pupils in this year group and so our pupil numbers have fallen slightly due to this. However, we have a good pipeline of enquiries and applications for places with the school and so are confident that we will be in a good place for the start of the next academic year. As I mentioned in my last bulletin, 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 was to be expected, 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 school has still found time to make improvements and I thought it would be worth highlighting those that have been made (or are in progress) over the last year:

- The opening of our revamped library, complete with over £4,000 worth of new books and a new check in/out system
- A complete rewire of the hall is needed 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
- We purchased a number of additional iPads that have been made available to those children who have no/limited access to IT provision at home
- Repairs to the Lower Key Stage 2 block and new PE store, following the theft of lead, were made. A more permanent, lead-free replacement is now being arranged via our insurance policy

Parent/Carer Survey

Thank you to those parents/carers that submitted their responses to our survey. We are now in the process of collating and analysing the results, and I will be able to share the outcomes with you next term. This survey provides the Governing Body with a great insight into how the school is perceived and will help inform our objectives/focus for the coming year.

So, that just leaves me to sign off until next year. I wish all of our incredible staff an enjoyable and well-deserved break, and hope the sun shines all summer-long so that we all get to make the most of the outdoors!

Peter Parkin-Child
Chair of Governors