



GOVERNOR BULLETIN

ISSUE 4
JULY 2019

Governors	Roles	Type	Terms of Office
Peter Parkin-Child	Chair	Parent	01/09/2015 - 31/08/2019
Deborah Finney	Vice-Chair Writing link governor	Foundation	01/09/2015 - 31/08/2019
Jessica McFarlane	Safeguarding, Anti - bullying & PREVENT link	Co-opted	25/09/2018 – 24/09/2022
Cilla Hollman	EYFS link	Co-opted	01/09/2015 – 31/08/2019
Roger Wilkinson	Health & Safety link	Local Authority	25/09/2017 – 24/09/2021
Rev. David Mundy	Church link	Ex-officio foundation	01/10/2018 -
Michelle Massey	Pupil Premium & SEND link	Parent	30/01/2018 – 29/01/2022
Esther Bland	Headteacher	Staff	01/09/2018 -
Kellie Wilson	Deputy Headteacher	Co-opted	26/09/2017 – 25/09/2021
Jill Ford		Staff	18/09/2018 – 17/09/2022
Jennifer Godwin	Reading link governor	Parent	15/11/2018 – 14/11/2022
Jonathan Lingham	Numeracy link governor	Parent	15/11/2018 – 14/11/2022

Howzat?! Four for Four

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 made it to the end of the 2018/19 year – and what a year it has been! When I first put myself forward for the role of Chair, my aim was to make the Governing Body more visible (through the introduction of these bulletins), and to support the changes that Mrs Bland wanted to make to the school. And she has certainly delivered in that respect! There is a real energy surrounding the school – and I don't just mean in terms of the visible changes, but also in the way both staff and children are engaging with other new initiatives. In this bulletin, I will be reflecting on some of these initiatives and will also update you on the outcome of the two Governing Body meetings held since my last bulletin; along with details of our recent Parent/Carer Survey.

So, what do Governors do?

The Governing Body is made up of a mixture of volunteers - parents, staff, members of the community, church and local authority representatives. We meet as a Full Governing Body (FGB) six times a year and these meetings usually take place after key school data become 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.

Parent/Carer Survey

Thank you to those parents/carers who took the time to complete our recent Governors' survey of parents' and carers' views - the responses certainly made for some interesting reading! The main issues that came up were school communication, the role of the governing body and extra-curricular activities. Whilst we have passed a summary of the issues over to the school's senior management team (who will respond in due course), I wanted to address the comments regarding the governing body.

28% of respondents stated that they didn't know if school governance was effective, whilst 16% stated that they were not kept informed about the work of the governing body. I must admit that I was disappointed with these results as one of my aims as Chair (as per my initial opening comments) was to make the Governing Body more visible. Whilst we will take these views on board and seek to improve in these areas, I wanted to highlight the following:

- We have a dedicated section of the school website where you will find a welcome letter from me, details of our structure, register of attendance and some lovely photos/details of who we all are. You can find all of this by visiting "About Us > Governing Body Information"; alternatively, you can click [here](#).
- You can find both current and past Governor Bulletins on the school website by visiting "Parents Information > Governor Bulletins" or by clicking [here](#). These provide you with an insight as to what we do as governors and how we seek to ensure the best outcomes for our children.

School Funding

As a Governing Body, it is our role to ensure the school is run as effectively as it can be using available resources; and a large focus of this is how the school budget is managed. A significant proportion of school funding is based on pupil numbers, and so we were pleased to hear that the number of pupils enrolled at Dukes for next year has risen; particularly given we had a large Year 6 cohort who will be leaving this year. This is a reflection of the strong reputation Dukes already has as a great school, combined with the changes that are being embedded to further enhance our standing as THE best school in the Glossop area.

One issue that has been raised to governors is the funding of school trips and, in particular, the frequency of requests for contributions from parents/carers. As mentioned above, we need to manage the school budget as best we can and as governors, we are expected to challenge how and where money is spent. Whilst our budget has remained consistent, we have seen an 8% reduction in real terms due to inflation and rising costs. We have done what we can to mitigate this cut in funding, but we need the help of parents/carers to ensure that we continue to provide curriculum-enhancing / pupil-enriching experiences. It does come down to a simple choice of where we are able to spend the school budget, and where we can seek to gain support from other sources.

New Curriculum / School Focus

At our recent meeting, Mrs Bland took us briefly through details of the new curriculum that will come into effect next school year. The focus is about depth, and not just breath, of understanding; and schools have been given the opportunity to tailor content to reflect local issues and environments. Mrs Bland stated that the theme of social justice will run through all areas of the curriculum, as it is not just about ensuring our children leave Dukes with a brilliant educational grounding but that they go out and make the world a better place! It was evident how excited and passionate Mrs Bland was about this, and we are looking forward to receiving a full update at our next meeting in September where we will dedicate the whole session to this issue.

Ofsted Update

We continue to be mindful of Ofsted and remain focussed on addressing the outcomes of our most recent Ofsted report. In our last meeting on 9th July, we reviewed Year End pupil attainment and progress data; along with the Year 6 SAT results. I am pleased to report that we continue to perform above the National Average in Reading, Maths and Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS); and whilst Writing was slightly below National Average, we were provided with encouraging data that shows on-track attainment and progress across Key Stage 1 (Y1/Y2) and Lower Key Stage 2 (Y3/Y4) classes in this area. Great things are happening at Dukes, and this is being shown in both the data and pupil observations.

School Improvements

We were pleased to hear that the school is seeking to update its IT infrastructure through the purchase of new SmartScreens in its classrooms. These will add real value to the learning of our children and, given they will be taken on lease, represent a cost-efficient way to ensure they remain technologically current and in good repair. In addition, the school has had its super-fast broadband installed and is now seeking to review other aspects of its IT hardware to ensure this makes best use of this great new service.

I am pleased to advise that our application to improve and extend the school hall was approved by Cabinet. Work will begin over summer to build the new annexe next to the current PE store, where we will be able to store all the current hall furniture. The rest of the hall requires a rewire and so whilst work on that may be delayed beyond summer, we will seek to keep you posted on development.

School Initiatives

I wanted to highlight a couple of recent initiatives that have taken place; and that have the governing body's full support and thanks:

- **Diversity Week:** The themes of this week were focussed on how life is not fair for minority groups and celebrating our own uniqueness. Workshops were run around disability, race, religion and gender; with the grand finale being a Pride march. We heard great things about this initiative, so well done to Miss Wilson (our chief organiser) and all involved.
- **Aldi:** Mrs Bland advised that the school has signed up to an initiative whereby Aldi donates food bags to the school, which in turn are offered out to families in need. This is an amazing scheme which fully supports the themes of social justice, as well as embodying the ethos of the Dukes family.

The end of an era

I couldn't possibly end this bulletin without mentioning the fact that Dukes is saying goodbye to its long-serving teacher, **Ms Wall**. She has been at Dukes for an incredible 31 years, and I am proud to say that I was in her class when she first joined the school those many years ago. The fact that I, along with many others, remember our time with Ms Wall is testament to her incredible career.

We wish her all the best in her retirement, and we hope she enjoys her final week with Dukes. I suspect it will be one she will remember with great fondness. Thank you, Ms Wall, for all your hard work and dedication!!

That just leaves me to wish the rest of you all a very happy summer break!

Best regards

Peter Parkin-Child
Chair of Governors