

Federation of Boldmere Schools

Governor update | summer term 2019

Chair's message

Welcome to the latest governor update.

The 2018-19 academic year has been another busy year for the Federation of Boldmere Schools governing board. I would like to thank all our governors for their precious time, effort and support in taking on these voluntary roles.

As most of you will be aware from the news, schools continue to face extremely challenging times financially. Unfortunately, Boldmere Schools are not isolated from this pressure.

The most recent allocation of government funding for schools saw all but seven of the 445 schools in Birmingham lose out. Schools in the West Midlands have lost almost £142 million from their budgets whilst pupil numbers have risen by almost 50,000 in just three years.

Simultaneously, schools are bearing the brunt of unfunded rises in pay, pension and National Insurance contributions, which will account for 6-11% of their budgets by 2019-20. The challenge of balancing the budget is intensifying year on year and the current direction of travel is ultimately unsustainable.

The situation is such that having now exhausted all opportunities to reduce resource, facilities, premises, ICT and supplied services costs, head teachers are now being forced to make impossible choices, including staff redundancies and the implementation of a 4.5 day teaching week.

Thanks to the extremely strong leadership of the governing board and Senior Leadership Team and steps taken in recent years, Boldmere Schools' financial position is better than many comparable schools both here in Birmingham and nationally.

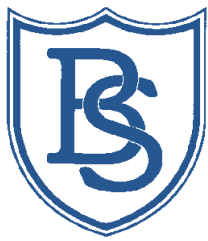
But we cannot be complacent and face making some difficult but important decisions in the coming months and years. Our collective priority – as ever – is to continue to provide the outstanding educational outcomes for our children despite these financial pressures.

And finally, I would like to welcome four new associate members to the governing board: Peter Donovan, Holly Birkett, Roxana Willis and Karen Armitage. Karen is the school's business manager and has performed the role of clerk for the last 14 years. She has now stepped aside from her clerking role but agreed to join the governing board where her intimate knowledge of the schools' operations and finances will be invaluable. Peter, Holly and Roxana are all parents with children at Boldmere Schools and bring vital skills to the board. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank former chair Chris Hindle for his dedicated and diligent service as he steps away from his role at Boldmere, and congratulate Dan Mortiboys on his appointment as Local Authority governor.

Greg Bloom
Chair of Governors

Mrs Wendy Halfpenny

The governors would like to extend their thanks and best wishes to Wendy Halfpenny, founder and manager of Busy Bodies, who is retiring at the end of this academic year after 24 years of impeccable service. Under Wendy's leadership, Busy Bodies has become an integral and valuable part of the Boldmere Schools' provision. At the request of the governing board, Wendy established Busy Bodies in 1995 and over the years has worked diligently and passionately in growing 'Busy's' provision, caring for thousands of Boldmere children, and attracting praise from Social Services, an 'outstanding' Ofsted review and numerous awards. Wendy, we wish you a long, happy and no doubt active retirement!



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MAT update

In September, we advised parents of our intention to start the formal process of applying to the Department for Education (DfE) for potential conversion to Multi-Academy Trust status.

This is a formal process that provides the framework and funding necessary to complete a thorough due diligence process, including stakeholder consultation.

It is not the conversion itself; this can only follow the completion of this process and is also subject to a vote by the governing board.

This application to the DfE is yet to be made. We will keep parents informed as and when there is an update.

Additional information about the MAT is available on the school website.

Parental contributions

We would like to thank all parents who have chosen to make a voluntary contribution to the school fund. To date, £1,658 has been donated. Any parent wishing to make a contribution can do so via the ParentPay website.

The role of school governors

A common question asked of governors is 'what is your role?'. The purpose of the governing body is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance. Specifically, governors are responsible for:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

Boldmere Inclusion Base (BIB)

The BIB opened to pupils in January and we are delighted with how the building and the pupils it accommodates have settled in.

The building was put into place in between the junior and infant school during the summer holidays and the link corridor was built to the junior school during the first half of the autumn term. The building was clad, new windows installed and a variety of internal adjustments were made including ensuring the toilets were the right height, new carpets and a fresh coat of paint. Lots of new resources were bought to support the children with their learning!

Whilst this was happening, Miss Parsons was busy reviewing Education, Health and Care plans sent to her by SENAR and visiting children in their settings to establish if the provision the BIB will meet the needs of the children.

The first four children started school on 8th January and have made terrific progress in their short time with us, spending increasing amounts of time in the mainstream school, building friendships and accessing their learning. By September, there will be 11 children in our care.

Amazing PTA (again)!

Our PTA continues to be a force to be reckoned with.

This academic year alone, the PTA team have now raised just over £14,500 which has funded the following:

- Science workshops
- Theatre productions
- Christmas pantomimes
- Playground markings
- Chick hatching programme
- School library development
- Accelerated reading programmes
- Quiet corner area development in playgrounds
- Additional parking signs at front of school (due to be installed)

The importance of the PTA cannot be underestimated; with school finances under pressure and only able to pay for the 'essentials', the PTA's work allows school to maintain the provision of vital extra-curricular activities and improvements to our facilities and equipment.

The governing board would like to thank all the parents and staff who work so hard to deliver a range of fundraising initiatives, and the Boldmere Schools family for repeatedly supporting them – please keep it up!

Get in touch

The governors welcome feedback and questions from all parents/carers. Please contact either of the school offices or email enquiry@boldmere.bham.sch.uk marking the email for the attention of the FGB.