



Changes to the Governing Board

Two newly elected parent governors and a new staff governor joined the governing board in January 2024

Alice Hiley

Alice Hiley (Parent Governor) Dr Alice Hiley is a freshwater ecologist, with one son at Framwellgate School Durham. She has 30 years of experience assessing river health and shaping ecological monitoring standards. Alice now holds a national strategy and policy role with a focus on climate change adaptation for wildlife. She is a trained facilitator, with experience of managing conflict and difficult conversations. Alice is a STEM ambassador, passionate about access to opportunities for young people and creating a stronger connection to the natural environment. Alice has a wide range of experience and is keen to use this to support the Governing Board and school.

Helen O'Brien

Helen O'Brien (Parent Governor) Helen has over 15 years' experience working within pastoral roles in local secondary schools, covering safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and welfare. Her current role involves overseeing the behaviour, attendance and welfare of a KS4 year group. Helen has four children, all of whom have attended Framwellgate School Durham, and her youngest daughter is currently in Year 7. As a parent, Helen has experienced first-hand the support provided by Fram for her own children and is keen to use her experience to help ensure that pastoral care continues to remain one of the strengths at Framwellgate School.

Jamie Sands

Jamie Sands started his teaching career at Framwellgate School Durham in 2013 as a Newly Qualified Teacher. He is currently the Curriculum Leader for PE, Sport and Health. Jamie also works for the AQA exam board as an A level moderator, working alongside many different schools in the area. In his spare time, Jamie is the manager of Durham County Schools FA U16 football team, providing opportunities for players in the Durham area to play representative football on a national level, helping to develop many players who have now made it into the professional game.

Governor Up-date

February 2024

Governors meet Bridget Phillipson, Shadow Education Secretary

The letter to parents, from Mr Byers, on attendance was referred to in the House of Commons and Bridget Phillipson, Shadow Education Secretary, visited the school on Feb. 13th. This visit was featured on BBC Look North.

Four governors, three of whom are parents of students at Framwellgate, explained their concerns. These included:-

- Teacher recruitment and retention.
- School transport: particularly important when so many of our students rely on buses.
- Poverty and the cost-of-living difficulties facing many of our families.
- The increased pressures on teachers, who are now seen as the "4th emergency service", dealing with welfare and demanding mental health issues.
- The need for a review of the curriculum and accountability measures such as Progress 8.

The responses from Ms Phillipson were impressive and she came across as a politician who knows her brief well. She listened carefully and was genuinely interested in the views expressed. She understands the pressures schools are under. Free Breakfast clubs for all primary pupils, a focus on early years and support for families are her initial priorities if she is elected.

An extract from Mr Byers letter to parents:-

17 January 2024

Dear Parent / Carer

Today 10% of our students are absent from school. **17% of Year 11 students, those in the most important examination year of their lives, are absent.**

We have become used to these statistics and sadly, these patterns of absence are now considered normal in schools.

I have spoken before about the significant correlation between absence and exam results. Put simply, students who miss school regularly, reduce their lifetime earning potential because they achieve worse exam results than their peers, and develop poor habits to take into the workplace where levels of absence, poor punctuality, or an indifferent attitude to responsibility can result in dismissal.

You may think I am over-dramatizing, but my experience tells me that this is a real concern, and the Government agrees because they have highlighted the issue in recent weeks.