

Orton CofE Primary School

Governors' report to parents, staff and friends, July 2018

Previous reports at this time of year seem to have been appreciated so I hope that the following report will be useful. It will be brief and you are welcome to respond with any questions or comments via the website, via Parent Governors or whatever works best for you. Thank you.

Consolidation and action

There've been lots of changes in the past year, many of them relating to issues raised in the Parents' Questionnaire. It's felt like consolidation after Mrs Pomfret looked at school with fresh eyes in her first year and recognised some of the priorities for the future.

Thank you to the governors, staff and parents (and children) who contributed to the review of school dinners. This was already planned and then got a fresh impetus from the Food for Life project. The new menus, choices and crockery all seem to have settled in and the governors are looking forward to this year's feedback from parents in the hope that the changes are going in the right direction.

Another promised change was a review of school residentials and, by the time you read this, Class 4 may well be in or recently returned from the Isle of Man. In future years, this residential will be more city-based, giving the children in school all the outdoors experience of a Class 3 residential and then something even more out of their comfort zones in Class 4. This all takes a lot of organising, paperwork and planning for school staff and I'd like to thank them all for making these times out of school so useful, challenging and enjoyable for the children.

Governing body changes

We've had several changes in the governing body with Di Green ending her commitment as a co-opted governor early in 2017 and leaving a vacancy and then, this school year, the arrival of Rev Alun Hurd and, most recently, Hayley Dixon's resignation as a parent governor because of her new job and house move. There's so much support in our school community and village and it's great to be able to welcome Richard Petty as the new co-opted governor and Glen Watson as a parent governor plus Rev Sandra Ward as our ex-officio church member. All this plus Ian Simpson's shift from being a parent governor to a foundation governor means that we have just one vacancy at the moment and we'll be looking for a second parent governor when the new school year starts in September.

Thank you to everyone involved in governance – it can be a time-consuming job at times and particular thanks go to Nigel Coward, Phil Woodmass and Julian Thorpe who chair our committees, to Vicky Percival, our amazingly efficient Clerk and also to Barbara Dunning. Barbara does a great job of pulling together the figures, budgets and information for our Finance and Staffing Committee as the basis for a lot of the important decisions that we need to make –more of Barbara later!

Changes in school

This school year was the first one with Breakfast and After School Clubs incorporated into school and I'd like to thank the committee, particularly Pat Alexander, for their support during the transition and also Amy, Pat, Di, Ann and Marian for their continued work and energy – especially when it's either so early in the day or at the end of a long day in school!

More visible changes happened over the summer and then during various weekends.

Class 1 returned in September to an amazing new mural on the wall of their classroom (with thanks to the Bawdens and the Thorpes) and there's more to come over the summer holidays this year too. The younger children and After School Club have a new storage shed for outdoor toys and equipment and the new raised garden beds are looking amazing at the moment with lots of healthy growth and plenty of vegetables for harvesting very soon. While all that planting's been going on, there was a weekend of destruction and uprooting too with the removal of the Trim trail (condemned as unsafe during a safety inspection). We've good news on funding for a replacement and hope to be using that area of the playground again very soon.

Thank you to everyone who has worked on the outdoor (and indoor) spaces of school in the past year– it's very rare for anyone to visit and not comment on the grounds and that wouldn't be the case without so much effort and work.

Two other changing roles

During this school year, Julie Watson took on the chairing of Friends of Orton School and she's been a whirl wind of fundraising ever since. A huge thank you goes to Julie and to everyone involved in FoOS, including Jill and Andrew Bawden. Without the support of all Orton School's very good Friends, we'd be in a completely different financial position and struggling to provide everything that we want to offer the children in our school.

And, finally, a big thank you to Barbara Dunning for her work in school over many years, some of it obvious but a lot of it behind the scenes. Barbara's been the first friendly face that people see in reception as well as tackling budgets, making security checks and chasing invoices. When she gave in her notice earlier this year, there were sharp intakes of breath and a few sleepless nights. It was a relief then to be able to appoint Vicky Percival to the role after interviewing a number of possible candidates and I'm sure everyone will help in welcoming Vicky into her new job in September.

So that more or less sums up another busy year from the governors' perspective. Congratulations to staff and children on their achievements and very best wishes to the Year 6s who are moving up and on to secondary school and to others who are moving with their families too.

Thank you too for your continued support and for everything that you all do in and around school throughout the year. And have a great summer.

Sally Seed on behalf of the Governing Body
9 July 2018