



Oxfordshire County Council

HAILEY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hailey, Witney, Oxon, OX29 9UB

Hailey School Governing Body Newsletter

May 2016

Introduction

Welcome to this term's Hailey School Governors' newsletter. In this edition we will be covering our recent SIAMS Inspection and extra-curricular activities, an update on our school vision and our new Nursery Class, and our plans for collaboration.

Outstanding SIAMS Report

We are absolutely delighted with the result from our recent SIAMS Inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) which judged our school to be Outstanding. The governors want to thank the staff for all their hard work, the pupils for being so beautifully behaved and the parents for their ongoing support of the school, and for making our school community so special. The collaborative, caring culture of the school was a key element that the Inspector noted in her report. We think her description of Hailey School as 'a small school with a big heart' was spot on! Achieving a judgement of Outstanding is no mean feat, and the whole school community should feel very proud.

A full copy of the report is available on the website under 'parent information'.

Extra-curricular activities

One of the key strengths cited in our Inspection was the range of cultural and spiritual activities we provide above and beyond the national curriculum to engage the children and build their understanding of diversity. We know from our surveys that parents and children value these and we believe the children really benefit from these activities in their personal development. The school staff work hard to source and put on different events each term and these are planned in carefully across the year.

These include events with the church like the Harvest Festival & Carol concert, themed days like Children in Need, Sports Relief & World Book Day where the staff and children dress up and do special activities, as well as whole themed weeks of activity such as Anti-bullying week, One World Week & Health & Safety Week where the school invites a range of external visitors to come into the school and run sessions with the children, giving them new experiences and insights as well as organising visits to other places of worship and cultural venues.

In addition to this, the school organises a range of class visits each term to museums, zoos and galleries which enrich the topic work as well as Residential trips like PGL.

A huge amount of work goes into running all these different events, some of which require additional funding. Sadly, funding for schools is under increasing pressure, which means we have to raise most of the money ourselves. The Friends play an important role in financing some of these activities, such as the music lessons and the pantomime visits, as well as

contributing to the costs of equipment such as the Trim Trail, using the funds they generate from the parent and village community. The school is very grateful for all their hard work and to the parents who come along and support them.

The school also relies on parents to part-fund many of the activities via voluntary donations. We appreciate that household budgets are getting ever tighter but in order to continue to run events, we would ask you to give what you can, even if it is not the full amount, as we have noticed a slight drop off in voluntary donations recently, and we really want to be able to continue to provide a wealth of experiences for our children. Thank you.

For those parents who would like more information, a full schedule of events is listed in our SMSC plan (which stands for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development). This is on our website under 'Our Approach: Moral Education & Development'.

School Vision and Values

We wanted to update parents and staff about the school vision which we recently reviewed as a governing body to check that the aims and values we developed three years ago with parents, staff and governors are still relevant and meet their needs. We looked back at the recent parent, staff and pupil surveys and at our five year plan and concluded that our vision and values are still absolutely right for our school, but with a few minor updates. The new vision is on the website and will be included in future Home School Agreements.

The school's Christian values of love and tolerance continue to be at the heart of our approach to education at Hailey School.

Collaboration and Academisation.

You will no doubt have read in the press about the government's various U-turns on proposals to make all schools convert to academies over the next six years. Although at one point we were told that good and outstanding schools would not be forced to convert, there have since been further dictates, saying that if 'a critical mass' of schools in the Local Authority area have converted, with the result that the LA can no longer viably support its remaining schools then even good and outstanding schools will have to become academies. Likewise if the Local Authority consistently fails to meet a minimum performance threshold across its schools, all schools in that LA will be forced to convert.

As you know from previous newsletters, the governing body had already been investigating various collaboration options for Hailey School, including academisation. Ultimately, any decision we make must be based on whether we believe it will improve the provision for our pupils, because that is our mission: to provide the best education for our children in a learning environment which reflects our values.

Research shows that academisation by itself is no 'magic bullet' to raise standards in schools. However reports published by the Education Select Committee, drawing on research with school leaders across the country, found significant evidence of the benefits of formal partnerships between schools: not just financial but also in terms of school improvement. The report found that the benefits of being part of a formal group were particularly strong for primary schools, whose smaller size and greater reliance on local authority support were making life for stand-alone schools increasingly difficult. Some of these formal groups were multi-academy trusts (known as MATs).

The governing body and leadership team believe it is in the best interests of Hailey School to become part of a formal partnership with other schools. We are ambitious for our pupils and we want to achieve our vision of becoming Outstanding in all areas. In order to do this, we need to find ways to make our budget work harder, and seek out opportunities to expand our staff's training and professional development. Sharing resources with other schools, gaining access to additional expertise and providing stability of governance are key objectives for us as we search for the best solution in increasingly volatile times, particularly as our own local authority is ceasing to provide many of the services we require.

The school is currently evaluating a number of different options using success criteria based on our vision and five year plan. A key consideration is a fit with our school's values and Christian ethos: we are committed to retaining our school's caring, supportive community. Because we are already working closely with other schools in the Witney partnership and beyond, we have been able to research different collaboration approaches and discuss the pros and cons of each with other schools' governors and head teachers who have already been through this process. We hope to complete our discussions about different options by the end of the summer term.

Once a favoured route has been chosen, Mrs Davies and the governing body will hold two Q&A forums: one for staff and one for parents, to give people a chance to raise any questions or concerns they may have. Parents and staff can find out about what this means for them and the children, what changes they can expect and ask any other questions they may have. As this is a decision that will affect the school and its community for the long term, we would encourage as many people as possible to attend. In the meantime, if you have any questions then do please feel free to make an appointment with Mrs Davies or a member of the governing body.

New Nursery Class

Our new nursery class has had a great start to the year, and feedback from parents so far has been very positive. Parents have enjoyed the open mornings where they get to see their children's work and valued the parent consultation meetings last term. We will be sending out a short survey to Nursery parents before the end of the summer term to get feedback about your experience and any areas for improvement.

We still have availability for places next year and would like to fill the class so if you know of any parents in the Hailey or Witney area who are looking for childcare please do mention Hailey School. Depending on demand, we would like to be able to offer afternoon sessions as well as Lunch Club so that we can provide parents with a full school day's care, and the Earlybirds Club is also available to nursery children from 8.00am.

SATS

The governors would like to congratulate all the year 2 and 6 children who worked so hard this week and last week on their SATS, and we would like to thank parents and staff for all their help and support. As you know, the standards expected for keystage one and two children have risen quite dramatically across English and Maths this year, so no one really

knows what the national picture will look like, but we are confident that the children have been as well prepared as they could be and that they will do well.

Staff changes

Whilst we are sad to lose her, we are very pleased that Mrs Bradbury has secured a headship after her hard work here at Hailey School for so many years. The governing body would like to wish her the very best of luck. Recruitment is well under way and Mrs Davies will advise parents and staff of our new Deputy Head and Lower Juniors teacher when the position has been filled.

Governing Body Membership

Current members of the governing body are listed below. We are also pleased to welcome Helen Bridge as an associate member who joins us from the Hailey community.

Hailey School Governing Body

Chair (& co-opted governor)

Sue Haywood

Staff

vacancy

Co-opted

Roger Cantwell
Reka Balogh
Sorcha Dyer
Ann Gibson

Foundation

Anne Marie Fisher
Rev Neil Traynor

County

Marjorie Ottley

Head Teacher

Debbie Davies

Parent

Eve Smith
Matteo Convento
Nola Kinnear
Matthew Anderson

Associate Member

Helen Bridge

Clerk

Liz Jarrett

We hope you found this newsletter informative. Any comments on how it could be improved would be gratefully received; please email office.3123@hailey.oxon.sch.uk fao Eve Smith.