Oxfordshire County Council

# HAILEY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hailey, Witney, Oxon, OX29 9UB

**Hailey School Governing Body Newsletter July 2017**

**Introduction**Welcome to the last newsletter of the academic year for our parent and staff community from Hailey School’s Governing Body. In this edition we will be covering SATS & test results, our parent survey, an update to the funding crisis and some changes in the staff team and the governing body.

**SATS & Tests**The results from SATS and the EYFS & phonics tests are in, and we are delighted to report that Hailey School has outperformed the national average in virtually all areas, and in many areas, by a considerable margin. The governors would like to congratulate all the children who worked so hard, and we would like to thank parents and staff for all their help and support. As you know, the standards expected for these pupils have risen quite dramatically in the last two years but we were confident that the children were well prepared, and this is borne out by the excellent results which are available on our website. A full report will appear in the autumn newsletter.

**Parent Survey Results**
A huge thank you to those parents who filled in the parent survey. We are really pleased with the results which are a testament to the superb provision by the staff and leadership at the school, and to whom we offer our gratitude for their dedication and hard work. The National Governors Association recommends how schools should interpret survey data, noting that “*a good satisfaction score in a Primary school would be above 70%, above 80% is outstanding*”.

We received a total of 24 questionnaires back which represents 30% of the families at the school. This year we used a slightly shorter questionnaire for our nursery parents, as many have had less than a year to get to know the school.

We are absolutely delighted that all the questions asked in the survey gave no lower than a “good” satisfaction result (above 70%), and 5 of the 6 questions marked most important by parents above gave a satisfaction response that is considered **outstanding***.*

*Strengths*We are very pleased to see that many strengths, noted in our Ofsted and SIAMS inspections last year, continue to be recognised and acknowledged by parents and carers. These include

***Staff and Leadership***100% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that staff are available and respond to any concerns they have and felt that their child was well looked after at the school. 100% of parents also agreed their child was taught well, encouraged to read regularly and 96% agreed that they were provided with a range of activities that engaged the pupils. For the question ranked as the second most important to parents, a massive 95% agree or strongly agree *“My child makes good progress at this school”.* Specific comments praised staff for their caring nature and for their enthusiasm and dedication whilst encouraging the children to do their best. Leadership – head teacher and staff, and the governing body - was considered to be strong and professional with 88% saying they strongly agree or agree *“The school is led and managed well by staff and the Head Teacher”* and 83% strongly agree or agree *“The school is led well by the school governors”* and both questions being ranked in the top six most important issues to parents.

***Behaviour of Children***100% of parents strongly agreed or agreed that the school makes sure the children are well behaved, and no respondent indicated that their child had been bullied or harassed at the school. For a question ranked a joint third as most important to parents, 100% agree or strongly agree *“My child feels safe at this school”.* This is an extremely good result compared with most other schools and is testimony to Hailey’s approach putting its values of love and tolerance at the heart of its teaching and care. Specific parent comments noted the caring nature of the children towards each other, across year groups, and the care of the younger ones by the older ones. ‘Safe and friendly’ were the words continually used.

***Values/Ethos***We are delighted to have 100% of parents strongly agree or agree, for the question marked by them as the most important to them, that *“My child is happy at this school”.* The whole child ethos, and evidence of our school values was endorsed, born out by the way children played together, with support for extra-curricular events like One World Week and Science Week and the use of the school’s wonderful outdoor space. The atmosphere was praised for being friendly and caring with a ‘family-like’ feel and strong sense of community across parents, staff and children where people know each other and support each other. In terms of the school actively seeking parent views and suggestions, 79% of parents strongly agree or agree.100% of respondents felt their children were encouraged to become confident and independent and that the school provided a good balance between teaching and nurturing.

***Before and After School Clubs***These were seen as a strength and the school intends to continue this provision. Some parents wanted more sports clubs for specific age groups, but this is dependent on attracting sufficient numbers – see below.

*Areas suggested for further development*No metric surveyed fell below 75% satisfaction, which is fantastic. But in the survey we welcome constructive suggestions for development, and both staff and governors are already discussing these to see what could be successfully introduced. The feedback we received was in the following areas:

***Information and feedback about children’s progress***Although 79% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they received valuable information and feedback, a very small number in the comments section requested changes in the way the school gives feedback, for example regarding its format and frequency, and details about how the child was settling in. Feedback always requires a balance between what needs to be written down and reported and what should be discussed with the class teacher informally or at parent consultation evenings. Last year Mrs Davies held a parent session to explain more about our reporting processes and to give an opportunity to hear and understand your needs for this.

Some of you will have noticed several changes this year already: the way homework is marked and reported on each week and a change to the school reports which provide a good range of information about your child’s progress. Our topic mornings also provide an opportunity for families to view their child’s work and talk to staff. Mrs Davies is looking at repeating a parent session on reporting as she and we feel this could be helpful, especially with new families joining us in September. In the meantime, we would encourage parents to make use of the open door policy, as teachers are happy to give feedback about both academic and non-academic progress.
 ***Homework***Mixed views here. Past surveys suggest that this is one of those “marmite” areas and attitudes vary by family. Only two families disagreed that appropriate homework was set for their children, but there were a few comments that gave conflicting feedback. Some felt there was too much homework, and there shouldn’t be any during school holidays, and others felt there wasn’t enough homework, that it could be more stretching and that there should be specific homework for school holidays.

As a governing body we trust our staff to be setting the right balance for your child. Mrs Davies and each of the teachers have a carefully worked out programme, tracking the progress and needs of each individual child. We are continually reviewing best practice in this area to ensure Hailey School provides the right balance. As a result, the staff team have already been considering setting homework that includes an expected activity and providing additional optional extension activities and resources for families to use during school and the holidays. As ever, if you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your class teacher.

***Participation in sports***75% of parents strongly agreed or agreed that their children were encouraged to be active and participate in a range of outdoor activities or sports, but a small number of comments suggested that some parents feel the school could do more here. Our aim is to provide a broad and balanced curriculum where we include all subjects which is why we have been offering additional sports activities during break and lunchtime using our sports ambassadors so we can continue to give focus to other subjects such as music and science in the already squeezed school day. We have managed to protect and extend our sports and outdoor activities despite budget constraints, including introducing Forest School, during the school day.

We want to reassure you that we continue to look for opportunities where we can, and we are particularly thankful to Miss Purves for the wonderful inter-school sports opportunities she has been instrumental in providing for the children. Some opportunities, however, are reliant on parent support, especially after school sports clubs which can only run if we get sufficient numbers signing up. Other extracurricular opportunities are also reliant on receiving sufficient voluntary contributions.

***Communication***Whilst the survey results show that all parents find the school newsletter useful and most parents (92%) find the governor newsletter useful, the majority of parents (88%) would like more electronic communication. This is good news as this is much more efficient for the school and for parents; in past surveys, there has not been a strong desire from the majority of parents for e-comms.

As you will have seen from the weekly newsletter, the school tested a communications platform called “Homeroom” in the Foundation class this year, and the feedback has been positive from both staff and parents, so the school intends to roll this out in all classes from September. This will be another means of communicating with parents, as well as the website which is used by three quarters of parents to access information. Key features of Homeroom are topics for the forthcoming term, photos of class activities, information from the class teacher about upcoming trips and the things the children will need etc.

The school also intends to open Facebook and Twitter accounts, although these sites will not be interactive and will be mainly aimed at prospective parents, as a way of marketing the school. An update will be sent out when these are live and we would encourage all parents to share the pages with friends.

One view was expressed that surveys should be sought more than once a year: experience suggests that more frequent surveys can generate “survey fatigue” and instead we would encourage parents not to wait for a survey but to give feedback to class teachers and/or the head teacher, as we have an open door policy and also a suggestions box in reception.

***Other issues: Parking***There were concerns about other parents parking on the lined areas at pick-up and drop-off and a request for speed humps or a pedestrian crossing. Sadly, the school has no control over traffic restrictions, and it was only thanks to the Friends, the Parish Council and a third party grant that we were able to put in the flashing 20 signs that were installed after funding for our lollipop lady was cut. We continue to raise the topic with the Parish Council who are very supportive, but with regret there is little else we can do. We would remind parents to park responsibly as parking on lines obstructs the visibility of other drivers which is a danger to pedestrians: both residents and other members of the school community.

Thanks again to all those parents who have given this feedback, it is much appreciated. We hope that even more parents will give feedback next year!

**Oxfordshire Schools Funding Update**We recently sent out a letter about the funding crisis affecting schools. Since then we have received further information about how this is affecting provision. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has estimated that when rising pupil numbers and inflationary costs are taken into account, even the Conservative manifesto pledge of an additional £4 billion of funding over the next five years will still lead to a real term cut of 2.8% per pupil. This represents a serious amount of money. The way the funding is calculated means that Hailey School will suffer a much greater cut per pupil than even that.

In a recent survey of over 750 Headteachers, 45% confirmed that 2 or more teaching posts were being cut from September, 92% said school funding was inadequate or at crisis point and 90% stated that recruitment of teaching staff was difficult or extremely challenging.
The only way schools can function effectively is with proper investment in teaching staff, training and resources and capital investment in its buildings and grounds.

At Hailey School, we are fortunate that we have not had to make any redundancies in our three year plan so far to balance our books. But the pressure on our budget is real. In the parent survey, we were delighted to see that 95% of parents would recommend our school to another parent. We would strongly urge you to do so. Because of the way income is allocated to schools, every pupil place makes a huge difference. If you can help us fill up all our classes, it will put us in the best possible position to weather the financial storms ahead. A personal recommendation from you, either on social media, on childcare sites or in person with friends or at toddler groups, could make the difference we need. As already communicated, leaflets are available at the school office and we have included some here. Please, hand some out.

If you would also like to add your voice to the campaign for fairer funding, there is a website: [www.fairerfundingforallschools.org](http://www.fairerfundingforallschools.org). You can join regional and national parent groups who are keen to lobby the government about this crucial issue. As a school, we are already lobbying our local MP and we are working with the local authority on the best way to tackle these challenges and defend our funding. Thank you for your support.

**Staff changes**The governing body want to say a fond farewell to two much loved members of staff: Mrs Ritchie, who has been a TA at our school for many years, and to Mr Ferguson, who is moving back to Northern Ireland. Both staff members have contributed significantly to our school community and will be missed. We wish them all the best in their next endeavours.

We are very pleased to welcome our new Upper Juniors Teacher, Mrs Droy to the school. As well as teaching experience, Mrs Droy has a wide variety of experience in conservation and environmental work, and she will be bringing those skills to Hailey School. I am sure you will all give her a warm welcome.

**Changes to Governing Body Membership**

Several governors are reaching the ends of their terms this year, and we are saying very fond farewells to some extremely long-serving members.

Roger Cantwell and Anne-Marie Fisher have between them dedicated over 50 years’ service as governors to Hailey School. This has been a huge commitment of their time to the school for which we are deeply grateful. We want to thank them for all their services to the school and support through so many different challenges. We are delighted that Anne-Marie has kindly offered to remain with us in a slightly different capacity, as an Associate Member to the Governing Body, providing an important link role with the church DCC and the school’s Trustees.

In addition we are saying farewell and thank you to our current Chair of governors, Sue Haywood. Sue has given over 6 years of service to our governing body, all but a few months of which were served as Chair which is an extremely demanding role. She has steered us through successful Ofsted and SIAMS Inspections and her experience has really helped make the governing body a strong and cohesive team that is able to support the school. You may well see Sue around a little still though as she is kindly going to help support a smooth handover to our new governors and to our new chair: Steve Alman who takes up the post from September.

Two more governors are also moving on. Marjorie Ottley, who has spent 4 years on our team, giving us the benefit of all her teaching and headteacher years, and Matteo Convento, who has spent 3 years as a parent governor, helping us with health & safety and using his Italian skills to oversee our school’s healthy food! Huge thanks to both of them.

The good news is that we now have five new governing body members joining us:

* Torica Back, who has both legal experience as a barrister and education experience as a director of a group of schools,
* Tony Hubbard, previously a director for the Independent Schools Inspectorate, a district schools inspector for HMI and a teacher,
* Glinys Weller, who has 30 years’ experience of working in education including two headships and senior roles in different local authorities,
* Jane Carr, recently retired diagnostic radiology consultant with considerable analysis and QA training and experience.
* Finally, on her appointment in September, Reverend Ness Whiffin will join our governing body as an Associate Member with particular responsibility supporting Mrs Davies with the school’s RE and Collective Worship programme.

As you can see, they all bring an incredible set of skills and valuable experience to our school and governing body and we look forward to welcoming them to our team.

We are still looking for one parent governor, and one foundation governor (who can be recruited from the school community on approval by Diocese) so please, if you are interested, do come forward. We will be holding another parent election at the start of next term. We noted that 9 parents on the school survey said they would consider becoming a school governor now or in the future, so please do get in touch!

**Hailey School Governing Body from Sept 2017**

**Co-opted Foundation Staff**Jane Carr Glinys Weller *TBC staff election Sept*
Tony Hubbard *vacant*
Sorcha Dyer
Eve Smith
Graham Simpson
Sam Amy

**Parent  Head Teacher LA Governor**
Steve Alman Debbie Davies Torica Back
Judie Miskimmin-Jones
Matt Anderson
*Vacant*

**Associate Members** **Clerk**
Reverend Ness Whiffin Liz Jarrett
Anne-Marie Fisher

*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.*