



Governor Newsletter

April 2016

Welcome to this term's newsletter written for parents and carers by members of the Governing Body

Our Governors

Sue Haggerwood-Bullen Local Authority Governor - Chair

Elizabeth Godwin- Community Governor- Chair of Finance and Personnel

Peter Davy- Community Governor- Chair of Premises

Justine Doherty Parent Governor

Iain Rankin-Parent Governor

Andrew Carrett Parent Governor

Andy Kay- Community Governor – Vice Chair & Chair of Curriculum Committee

Mrs Helen Coop Head Teacher

Ofsted Update - Local Authority Report

Following the Ofsted inspection February 2015, the school received a follow up inspection from the Local Authority 7th March 2016. In order to keep you informed of the school's progress we would highlight the following findings:

- The school is improving rapidly and is currently well placed to be judged as good at the next inspection;
- The momentum of change needs to be maintained and the improvements to date built upon;
- The headteacher enjoys the confidence of all stakeholders including parents and staff, and her commitment to professional development has led to significant improvements across the school since the Ofsted inspection;
- Governors present as an effective group of people who are well organised and fulfil their duties conscientiously;
- Governors know their school very well, have a good grasp of up-to-date performance information and have appropriate knowledge of the quality of teaching in the school;
- The leadership of special education needs provision is effective, with good systems for identification of vulnerable pupils in place and provision is appropriate;
- The school demonstrates good capacity to improve;
- It is evident that pupils enjoy their lessons and have good attitudes to learning and understand the growth mind-set approach;
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and have no worries about bullying;
- The majority of parents support the work of the school and feel that their children receive a good education and are kept safe;
- The school judges teaching and learning as good overall and observations on the day of the review would support this self-evaluation judgement;
- Teachers are energetic and enthusiastic and make learning fun for the children;
- Teaching assistants provide good support for the children in their care;
- Pupils show pride in their work in all areas.

Mrs Coop and the Governing Body were delighted with the LA report and would like to thank all of the school staff for their hard work to date. However, there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that we are graded as 'good' in the next Ofsted review, but please be assured that the focus continues as well as ensuring that we get the balance right between results and making school enjoyable for the children.

SATS - The Governing Body would like to wish all the Year 6 students 'good luck' in their upcoming SATS. We know how hard the children (and the teachers!) have been working during the build up to these exams.

Parents Evening - At the recent parents evening attendance was very close to 100% with alternative meetings arranged for those unable to attend on the night. These meetings are an important forum for parents to find out how their child is doing at school as well as an opportunity for the parents and teachers to flag any issues or concerns. Parental engagement plays an important part in supporting pupils learning so we are delighted with the level of attendance.

Social Media – We all recognise the benefits of social media and this can be seen at Birchanger with the PTA and Birchanger Parent Groups on Facebook. These two groups are used informally by parents and carers of the school to keep up to date on what is happening at the school, as well as a social forum which allows much greater interaction between parents. It is important for parents to remember that these sites are not official school sites and are not managed or monitored by the school.

However, we would like to ask all parents and carers to resist from using Social Media as a means to complain or criticise the school. All compliments, complaints and constructive criticism are welcome but they should be channelled in the correct way. If any parent(s) have any concerns or issues then please contact the school via the office or directly to Mrs Coop. Mrs Coop is always happy to communicate with individuals in person or via email. Often small queries can be answered with a quick chat on the playground or a more private meeting can be easily arranged. All concerns will be addressed and can, and often do, help to improve our school. A copy of the school complaints policy is available from the school office or on the website.

Teacher Focus – Miss Lucas by Miss Lucas



As I enter my third term at Birchanger Primary school, I would like to thank all of the staff, pupils and parents who are part of this warm, ambitious school. I have been sincerely welcomed and supported by an enthusiastic group of people who are as equally interested in ensuring that Birchanger Primary School is the best that it can be. I have been offered great opportunities to exert my enthusiasm toward teaching by becoming the Literacy Lead within the School.

Before I started teaching I completed a degree in Early Childhood and Education studies at Anglia Ruskin. Previously, I had volunteered at local primary schools within the Private and Public sectors. It was from this voluntary experience that I decided to continue my own education to learn about child development, theorists and the agencies involved around the child. Throughout my three year degree, I continued to volunteer at primary schools while also working part time in the Private school.

After my degree, I decided to spend a year working as a learning support assistant and working 1:1 with children with special educational needs. I thoroughly enjoyed this year and I could see the impact I was having working and developing the child I worked with.

I completed my final year of teacher training and completed my placements in EYFS and year 2. Although both were very different, they were equally as rewarding with preparation for SATS and child initiated play. I was offered a job at my EYFS placement and this is where I completed my NQT year and worked an additional year after, both years in year 1. I loved working in year 1 and was lucky enough to work with some fantastic teachers who were supportive and strived for excellence. I had learnt a lot in my 2 years at my previous job, however when I came to look around Birchanger – I knew something was missing.

I had previously been to look around Birchanger School before being offered my first job in Harlow. I started to look for a new position and I was thrilled to see that Birchanger were advertising again. I had been offered 2 interviews for the same day but there was no contest. I really wanted to work at this School and I was determined to become a part of the close, loving community that we see every day.

We are not alone - There is increasing evidence of a crisis in teacher recruitment and retention just as the number of pupils and the demand for new teachers begins to increase sharply. Excessive workload and attacks on pay are driving away teachers and deterring new recruits. Department of Education figures show that in the 12 months to November 2014 (the most recent year for which statistics are available) almost 50,000 qualified teachers in England left the state sector. This equates to one in 10 teachers leaving the profession – the highest for 10 years, and an increase of more than 25 per cent over five years. A survey carried out by The Guardian newspaper in March 2015 found that 79% of schools were struggling to recruit or retain teachers, with 88% predicting that things were going to get worse.

Over the last two to three years we, at Birchanger, have had a number of teachers leave our school and we do monitor patterns in staff turnover in order to develop our recruitment and retention of staff. Over the last three years, teachers have left Birchanger due to:

- 14% retirement
- 42% family reasons (e.g. maternity, family relocation)
- 28% temporary teachers who left at the end of contract
- 14% to leave full time teaching

Mrs Coop and the Governing Body have high standards and expectations of teachers in our school. We have always maintained these high standards during the recruitment process even if that has meant waiting for the right person. We are fortunate to have found good supply teachers who are able to provide cover until that person can be found, even utilising Mrs Coop's teaching skills in the past! Whilst this can be unsettling for everyone, please be assured that the school is committed to recruiting the best possible teachers and every effort is made to retain them.

Welcome Andrew Carrett, Parent Governor - Originally from Brighton, I relocated to Birchanger 3 ½ years ago having spent 10 years living in North Yorkshire. I currently work in the City of London, managing an Executive Search business, specialising in Global Financial Services. I have been working in the recruitment industry since 1996. I am a Business Studies Graduate, specialising in HR and I also have obtained the Institute of Personnel and Development Qualification.



These qualifications and professional role of running a business have given me, I hope, some useful experiences to help in my new role as a parent governor. I wanted to be a Parent Governor as I wished to give something back to the school as they have been very welcoming to my son and also very accommodating to him as he has Type 1 Diabetes. I hope to bring my experience of working in business both in the UK and internationally to help to contribute to the school's running and to continue the good work of the current governors and staff in making the school and the pupils the best they can be.

Thank You - After many years as Foundation Governor and more recently Foundation Ex-officio, Pam Lee has stepped down from her role on the Governing Body. Pam has many skills and provided invaluable legal advice and experience. Pam played a key part in promoting the schools Christian ethos and values through the many assemblies that she led as well supporting the Children's Society with the Christingle services held in Church. The School and the Governing Body would like to thank Pam for all her hard work. She will be missed.

You can contact the school office to make an appointment with a member of the Senior Management Team admin@birchanger.essex.sch.uk or email Sue (Chair of Governors) or any other governor on Cogb.birchanger@yahoo.co.uk