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Governors' Newsletter

Acting Chair of Governors

September has come around again and the new school year has found us welcoming to Chiltern Edge our latest Year 7 intake, along with some new teachers, and of course new parents. In the previous school year we had many new challenges but achieved a huge number of things that we should be extremely proud of as a school.

As part of the inaugural Governors' Day, the Governors spent a whole day in school visiting lessons, shadowing staff, attending assemblies and talking to students and staff. We were really impressed by what we saw from both staff and students.

Below are some extracts from Governors about what they saw and commented on:-

"The school has a positive and happy atmosphere and the pupils and staff seem to be motivated and enjoy being there. It is apparent that as a rule, behaviour is very good, and there is a strong feeling of mutual respect between staff and pupils."

"A key point that I learned from the visit is how much of a distraction the very small minority of disruptive pupils can be to a class."

"In both classes, despite being practical lessons, students were calm, engaged and worked on their own helping each other with tasks and explanations."

"All staff pushed students to develop answers – particularly in Maths."

"Student Council: *Very impressed. The children had loads of ideas and I think they are a great source of untapped potential. We, as the Governing Body, need to engage with them much more. We need to show them that their voice will be heard."*

"Bus Duty: *All children were well behaved and it seemed well organised. It is a long day for those students on the late bus."*

This visit has given us some insight into areas we can continue to support and focus on, and going forward there will be an annual Governors' Day. Behaviour will be a continued focus for us all. The school is opening a new Steps unit and we will have a new Steps Supervisor to help us ensure that we are effective and successful in monitoring the behaviour in school and that this is managed consistently and effectively.

The School is extremely pleased that all our buses will now run at the same time so pupils will no longer have what was a very long day.

2015/16 Academic Year: Schools will start to see massive changes in curriculum and exams which will have an enormous impact on the teachers, pupils and parent understanding. School will communicate these changes in the best way possible as they happen. The Governors will support the school in these changes as much as we can. Communication is really important and we would encourage you to contact the school if you have any questions or need any support.

In order for us to understand how you feel about the school, please could I also remind you to complete the Parent View Questionnaire which can be found here - <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>

Below you will find a report from each of the school's governing Committees. I hope this will give you an insight into what we are doing to support the school.

Kind Regards

Pauline Conway
Acting Chair of Governors

Children, Families and Communities

Welcome back to all the staff and students of Chiltern Edge for the 2015/16 year! We particularly welcome our new intake of Year 7 and their families and hope that you have a very happy and successful time with us. I also want to wish those starting in Years 10 and 11 the best of luck as they continue their learning journey towards achieving GCSEs.

This year you will continue to see Governors at Parents' Evenings, but you will be pleased, no doubt, to know that we have finished with the year-by-year questionnaires! Instead, we hope to ask you to help us out by seeking your suggestions in a slightly different way each time we see you. The questionnaires were our way of getting your feedback as required by OFSTED and we have loads of data for when they next visit us.

One of the comments that most often came back to us was regarding Communication. We as a Governing Body continue to work on improving our communication to parents; in addition to the weekly newsletter to parents (please make sure you let us know the best email address to send this to) we urge you to like our Facebook page – or Twitter if you prefer that platform – where we regularly post updates, reminders of forthcoming events as well as other links and facts you may find interesting.



We update our website frequently, so this is always the best place to check if you have a question. Plus – it has always been my experience that teachers respond to emails within a day or two to answer any questions that are raised. Katrina on Reception can guide you to the right email address if you just give us a call. Please do let us know if you have any other suggestions to improve our communication.

PLEASE also remember to update us with your current contact numbers, if you change jobs, move house or upgrade your mobile and get a new number, so that we can reach you in an emergency if we need to.

Thank you – and please don't hesitate to contact me or any of the Chiltern Edge Governors if you have anything that you think we can help you with.

Kind Regards

Faith Lusted

Chair of Children, Family and Community Committee of the Governing Body

Resources Committee

The Resources Committee has addressed a number of areas in the year.

The key focus has been to maintain close monitoring of cost management in the school. Budgets remain tight as the Department of Education (DfE) have introduced additional costs to the school via salary increases, pension costs and premises maintenance costs. This is a general concern for a vast majority of schools across the country and Headteachers are actively lobbying the Government with their concerns here. The Committee is satisfied that the school budget is being managed well and has discussed a number of external funding initiatives to help improve this position.

The school premises and Health & Safety are being managed well and the school has approved the installation of solar panels at the school sometime on the next academic year. Staff at Chiltern Edge continue to work very hard to achieve a high level of provision and progression for pupils. Although a number of staff have moved on to new career progression opportunities this summer, all key staff vacancies have been filled and some excellent new members of staff have joined us.

Lastly, the land sale discussions are ongoing and we are still providing information to the DfE. We are now being considered as a site by the Neighbourhood Development Plan in Sonning Common and no longer just a reserve, which will give us the best opportunity once we get permission to sell from the DfE. All proceeds will, of course, go towards enhancing the school for the benefit of the students.

Ian McGowan
Chair



Curriculum and Achievement Committee (C&A)

This committee covers the core aspects of teaching and learning as well as monitoring the performance of the school in terms of exam results and student progress against targets. Members of the committee are also linked with key curriculum areas (such as target setting, strategic planning and special education needs provision) so that they can develop a close understanding of a particular area, make reports back to the committee and raise relevant issues with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The SLT contact for this committee is the Deputy Headteacher.

In the academic year 2014/15 the Committee met six times and considered a wide range of issues and policies. The first meetings focused on the published examinations results as well as a close analysis of data which looks at the performance of groups of pupils and how well they achieved against not only our own targets, but also similar cohorts of students in other schools. The committee discussed and then monitored specific action plans related to the examination results. We also heard curriculum presentations from the Heads of Department of Design Technology, English and Modern Foreign Languages. These were very well received and allowed governors to be better informed about the quality of teaching and learning and future planning for these curriculum areas.

A key aspect of the committee's work is to also get regular updates from the Deputy Headteacher on teaching and learning across the whole school and monitor how well the school is performing compared with its development plan. This includes receiving reports on lesson observations, the outcomes of work scrutiny and effectiveness of the homework policy as well as looking at specific initiatives eg the Gifted, Aspiring, Talented and Enterprising (GATE) programme. The latter included a report detailing comprehensive student feedback on how learners view the quality of the GATE provision.

Simon Cuthbert
Chair

