
Stillington Community Primary School

Governors' Update for Parents – Spring 2019

Where has this term gone? Our previous newsletter focused on the successful recruitment of a new Headteacher, and already Mr Robinson is coming to the end of his first term at the helm. We are very pleased that he has fully committed to our high expectations for the staff and the students, breathing new life into the school and revitalising our drive for improvement. Particularly pleasing is the increasing parental and community engagement that Mr Robinson, along with the Governing Board, are committed to.

GOVERNORS.

We have welcomed three new governors this term; James Strangeway and Claire Allen via Parent Governor Elections, and Kate Thompson as a Staff Governor. After much change of personnel within the Governing Body over the past two years, this current team looks set for some stability as we head into the summer term. For more details of the Governing Board, our roles and responsibilities, please take a look at the school's website. Photos, I am told, are coming soon!

STAFFING.

Ensuring that the children receive the best education is our highest priority, therefore, with the exciting news that Mrs Speake is expecting her second baby, we have been recruiting to cover her maternity leave. The closing date for applications has now passed, and we will be interviewing for the position next week. The EYFS/KS1 children will take an active (but hopefully not too active!) part in the process.

The Governors would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication of the teaching and support staff, most especially during these recent turbulent months.

WEBSITE.

I am sure you will have spotted the recent improvements to the school website; many thanks to Mrs Speake for her excellent efforts in ensuring that 'our window to the world' better reflects the school today and the rich diversity of experiences and opportunities which the children enjoy and benefit from (and thanks, too, for updating the less exciting, but equally important statutory content.)

We have a new Twitter feed on the website! If you haven't 'followed' the school yet, then please consider doing so - encourage your friends and family too!

FINANCE.

It will surprise no one to know that the financial situation across education has been among the top issues on our strategic priority list for some time now. Reduced funding, ensuring value-for-money, thrifty spending, close analysis of contracts and robust re-negotiation, as well as regular liaison with the NYCC Schools' Finance Team, has kept us busy ensuring that, wherever humanly possible, the resources necessary to drive the children's education forward have been available. Unapologetically, we continue to be a thorn in NYCC's side on this issue.

Since HOPE's withdrawal, and it now seeming unlikely that the Regional Schools Commissioner will identify another Academy Sponsor for the school in the near future, our focus has been on the challenges we currently face as an effective and sustainable stand-alone school; it's been a tough few months – no doubt about it. We have resolved to explore whether any of the local schools would be interested in being involved in a partnership with us, which could place education in Stillington on a more secure footing. We are supported in this approach by the Strategic Planning Team within the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) at County Hall.

In order to ascertain what options may exist, we are entering into a formal consultation with local schools, to establish whether they would be interested in exploring either Federation or Amalgamation with Stillington Primary School. We have asked for initial expressions of interest by Easter.

- *Federation: a process by which two or more schools are managed by a single governing body and usually by a single Executive Headteacher. Each school continues to be a separate legal entity. There are many successful federations both in North Yorkshire and nationally, and typical benefits include the sharing of resources and expertise and wider opportunities for the children of both schools.*
- *Amalgamation: a process by which two schools come together to form a single school and legal entity, under one governing body and Headteacher. This involves the technical closure of one of the schools, its site becoming a satellite of the remaining school.*

We will keep you updated with any developments and after Easter there will be opportunities to consider any proposals

OFSTED.

It seems an age since the OFSTED inspection in January, but it can often take a while before the report is published. Until that time, the outcomes must remain confidential and so we are unable to give any further information around the inspection findings. We will of course provide you with a report, and the chance to discuss it, once it has been published.

AND FINALLY.

There are challenging times ahead across the education sector; however, as a Governing Body, we remain committed to being part of the engine that drives the strategic direction of our school.

Thank you for your continued support.

Corinne Cross
Chair of Governors
