



Cubbington C E Primary School

Dear Parent and Carers,

As we embark on a long Summer Term I wanted to write again to give you another update on the work of the Governing Body during the Spring term.

Headteacher appointment

Clearly one of the main tasks we have undertaken is the appointment of Mrs Jones as Headteacher. Her appointment was recognition of both the skills and insight she has demonstrated as acting Head, plus her future vision for the school. We are confident that in Mrs Jones we have a Headteacher who will continue to develop our school whilst maintaining the culture and ethos that is at the heart of everything that we do.

Appointing a Headteacher is one of the most significant responsibilities of a Governing body as well as being one of the most time-consuming. Throughout this process we were focused on making sure that we had a clear sense of what we wanted from our Headteacher and that this reflected the interests of everyone involved with the school. We also made sure that we put in place a rigorous selection process to find the best candidate. I hope you won't mind me thanking all my fellow Governors for the considerable time and effort that they put into this whole process.

School Improvement

In addition to the recruitment of a permanent Headteacher, Governors have also continued to work hard in other areas. For example, through our Performance and Standards Committee we have been monitoring the school learning improvement plan, visiting school to look at the teaching of maths and standards of writing in children's books. Through these activities we have begun to identify some significant developments in these priority areas; a view that has been reinforced by external reviewers from the Local Authority and Trevor Davies our School Improvement Partner. These developments would not have been possible without the dedication and commitment of all staff who continue to work extremely hard to maintain the highest standards throughout the school. One example of this would be the fantastic displays of children's work in corridors and classrooms – if you are in school at any point take a moment to look at these and the library area in particular.

Governors on the Resources Committee have also continued to analyse the school's financial position and to work closely with Mrs Jones to put in place plans for our expenditure in the next financial year. This includes maintaining the fabric of the school (buildings, windows etc.) and also how we might look to upgrade some of the school IT infrastructure. We have also looked at the impact of Pupil Premium and PE funding across the school. As well as the core work in these committees Governors have also been involved in looking at Safeguarding issues, reviewing school policies in a number of areas and, as Chair, I have also attended a meeting with Chairs from other schools in the Cluster.

So, busy times - and we don't expect this term to be any different, especially as we await an Ofsted inspection. Governors have a critical role to play in making sure that leadership and management in

the school is considered to be effective and to help with this we were subject to an external review of governance in February. This review said that as a Governing Body we have made some really significant improvements in the past couple of years and have a clearer insight into our key responsibilities. Clearly there are always ways that we can improve but this review suggests that we are well prepared to demonstrate to Ofsted inspectors how we are working with Mrs Jones and the staff to drive improvement.

Academies

Last, but far from least, I wanted to briefly touch on wider issues facing all schools. Many of you may have read about the recent [Government White Paper](#) which (amongst other things) set out plans for all schools to become academies. This means that democratically elected Local Authorities will no longer have responsibility for education, with school governance shifting to a variety of models such as multi-academy trusts. The Government argues that this will provide Headteachers with freedom from local authority control and give them more scope to make decisions within their school. [Critics](#) of the policy say that Academisation will allow groups and individuals with commercial interests to make financial gain from education provision, that there is no hard evidence that academies create better outcomes for pupils and that this will be the end of locally accountable governing bodies (indeed, the white paper proposed limiting the role of parent governors).

At Cubbington the Governing Body looked at the issue of academies some time ago and rejected it because it did not seem to offer us any specific benefits. This is in line with the majority of primary schools who have thus far not sought to become academies. Clearly we will have to re-consider our options if the white paper is put into legislation and we are closely monitoring the situation – although at the time of writing the general response seems to have been highly critical which may mean that some of these ideas are watered down.

My own view is that this represents a distracting intervention at a time when most schools are experiencing a rapidly deteriorating funding situation, are dealing with uncertainty in how to work with a new curriculum and are facing difficulties in recruiting teachers. I'm not sure how these issues can be solved by changing governance structures and so it feels that the shift to academies offers a solution to a problem that does not really exist.

Nonetheless if as Governors we feel that joining a multi-academy trust will make our school a better place for your children then we will not hesitate in pursuing this. Should this happen we would make sure this is based on an extensive consultation with everyone connected to the school. In the meantime I am always keen to hear your views so do please get in touch if you want to share your thoughts or have experiences we can learn from.

On that note I will sign-off and wish you all the best for the rest of the term.

Yours Sincerely,

Nick Wylie

Chair of Governors