



Brunswick House
Primary School

BRUNSWICK HOUSE SCHOOL
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Brunswick House School **Governors' Newsletter** **July 2018**

It's hard to know where to start after such a packed and interesting year, but here are a few reflections from our perspective as Governors.

Community

One of the joys of being part of the Governing Body is knowing that we are part of a strong and powerful school community. Our leaders, teachers, support staff, parents, PTA and the children themselves all pull together to help ensure that every pupil has a happy and fulfilling time at Brunswick House. When Governors met with the Head Girl and Head Boy earlier in the year, we were hugely impressed by the way in which they articulated this sense of community – they demonstrated a wisdom beyond their years in explaining how they and the Senior Pupil Team try to support pupils across the school, listening to everyone's ideas and trying to take them all into account when recommending to staff what changes and developments they would like to see. The Parent Forum has been a new development introduced by Mrs Skinner this year, and we try to make sure that a Governor attends each meeting if at all possible, so that we can stay closely in touch with the issues that parents are raising. The PTA continue to raise money and organise activities of real benefit to the school. So, to all of you reading this newsletter – thank you for your continuing support and teamwork in helping to make Brunswick House such a strong community. Governors are particularly excited that the new website developed this year, enables the school to communicate much more effectively, the work and life of the school.

The Arts and Sports

Once again the creative talents of pupils have been developed and showcased in many different ways during the year. The exuberant performances of *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Greatest Showkids* were a joy, as was *Brunswick's Got Talent*. The Christmas performances, involving all the children, were a wonderful reflection of our school values, and showed us the children's talents in scriptwriting, dance, acting and singing. The Arts Week demonstrated some stunning work, and we were delighted to hear recently that we have received the national Music Mark accreditation, to add to the Arts Marks accreditation already in place. The school has continued to excel in Sports with particular successes in in football, cross country running, netball and Kwik Cricket, and Governors were delighted to see all children taking part in a range of activities during Sports Week. The enthusiasm and behaviour of the EYFS children on a very warm sports day was a particular joy.

Site Security and Safeguarding

You will be very aware of the changes (in particular the electronic gates that have been installed) that have been made this year to improve site security and safeguard the children. Our thanks to parents for their support and understanding in adjusting to the new arrangements. There has also been some

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wonderful work done to raise awareness of online safety. Pupil online safety ambassadors are taking a lead in getting the message across – most recently they presented to the parents attending the Foundation Stage welcome evening and to our Parent Body. We are very proud of the way the school empowers pupils to undertake real responsibilities in the school community.

Academic Achievements

Our role as Governors includes monitoring standards achieved, and we work closely with staff throughout the year to look at progress data and to discuss strategies and developments being put in place by teachers. Various staff have given presentations to Governors about initiatives they lead, which have confirmed to us the immense commitment and passion that they bring to their work, and their determination to achieve the best outcomes for every pupil. At our latest meeting, we saw the most recent KS1 and KS2 and EYFS data, hot off the press. We congratulate staff on their hard work, which have led to some very successful outcomes: particular strengths have been Reading and Maths in Key Stage 1, and Writing and Maths at Key Stage 2. There has been huge progress at KS2 for many pupils, and we are delighted to see that the hard work they and their teachers have put in, is reflected in their SATs results. Next term staff will be sharing with us their detailed analysis of all the data, and the plans they have for the continuing development in learning over the coming year. Overall, we can safely say it has been a very successful year, and we thank the staff for all they have done to make it so.

Ofsted

Perhaps you were expecting that this would be the starting point of our report? In fact, so much good work was going on before the inspectors visited, and has continued to happen since, that we wouldn't want to let our newsletter be "all about Ofsted"! We were, however, very happy that the Inspectors confirmed that the school is doing well and saw so many of the strengths that we see throughout the year. That this was the case in the worst weather of the year was particularly gratifying, and Governors reiterate our congratulations to the staff and parents for enabling the Ofsted inspection to take place so smoothly despite the many inches of snow on the ground. Just rereading the Ofsted comments about the EYFS children working as a team in the snow makes us glow with pride in our school. Or if you want to be reminded of exactly what is so great about Brunswick House, just read the opening paragraph in the section headed *Behaviour* in the report. The children in our school really are a credit to their parents and teachers. Finally, while we are talking about Ofsted, we were very pleased that the inspectors judged the Governors to be effective, providing school leaders "with both support and challenge". We enjoyed meeting the inspectors (honestly!) and they listened carefully and fairly to what we said about the school, whilst asking us really probing questions to make sure that we, and the staff, are not complacent in settling for anything less than the the best. We are not, and will continue to work to make every child's experience, progress and achievement the best we can.

Going Forward

Staff are already well underway with some very detailed planning for next year, putting provision in place to meet all the needs of children joining in September, as well as to take forward those children that are already on their journey through the school. Governors are also looking ahead. At the end of this newsletter you can read a summary of our role. Whilst we have a stable core of Governors, we do need to recruit three more if at all possible, ideally from the community outside Brunswick. Having some outsiders who are interested in the school, but not directly involved through having children in it, ensures

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that we bring a range of skills, ideas and objectivity to our work as governors. We will be holding a Governors' information and social evening on Thursday 20th September from 6 – 8 pm, so if you know of anyone who might be interested in finding out more (without obligation) please let them know. Invitations will be available at the start of term, and we will send out a reminder then, but getting the date into people's diaries now would be useful. We are particularly keen to recruit governors with HR or legal skills and experience, and perhaps someone with an interest in sports.

Finally...

The Governors wish all the Brunswick House staff and pupils, and their families, a very well-deserved and happy summer break. To those children who are going onto new schools, we know that you carry the values of Brunswick House with you and will make a positive impact in your new environment. We, meanwhile, look forward to all that the new school year will bring to Brunswick House.



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Your Governing Body

Our governing body currently consists of 9 governors, drawn from staff, parents and professional members of the community. Our Clerk helps ensure that we keep good minutes, follow up actions identified, and fulfil all our statutory responsibilities. We have a varied range of skills and experience to enable us effectively to govern all areas of school operations and meet the Department for Education and Ofsted expectations.

What do we do?

As a governing body our main role is to make sure the school is delivering the best learning outcomes for every pupil, holding the Headteacher and senior leadership to account for all aspects of the school's performance. We take the ongoing development of our school very seriously and every year we contribute, alongside staff and senior leadership, to the School Development Plan, which sets the overall direction and targets for the school.

How do we do it?

An important part of our work is our monitoring visits. These visits focus on evidencing how well the school is delivering the School Development Plan. During our visits we meet staff, visit classrooms and see for ourselves a wide range of pupil achievement in action. This year we've attended numerous meetings with staff, achievement assemblies, Ofsted meetings, observed lessons, and much more.

The School Development Plan areas we monitor range from pupil achievement in reading, writing and maths, to leadership and sport. You can see which governors monitor which areas by visiting the governor page on the school website.

Monitoring visits are used to:

- understand school operations
- ensure value for money is being achieved
- ensure the progress of vulnerable groups is tracked and interventions are of the highest quality
- gain knowledge to assist in policy making and decision taking
- support the efforts of staff

The outcome of these meetings is a monitoring report which is shared with the governing body and the staff. These visits occur regularly across the academic year. Additionally we pride ourselves in being a part of a collaboration of local schools where we learn from each other's good practice. We are proud that our school is recognised locally as a fine example of collaborative learning for the benefit of the entire community.

Our aim is to be an approachable and open governing body, and so we welcome comments, feedback and suggestions on all aspects of school life. Our minutes are published on the school website.

You are always welcome to contact the Co-chairs about any aspect of school life:

chairofgovernors@brunswickhouse.kent.sch.uk

We look forward to hearing from you!

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