



Chair of Governors End of Year Report – July 2016

Introduction

As we fast approach the end of a very hectic and busy year for our school I thought it beneficial to draw breath, stop and think about what we have achieved as a School Community over the last year and ponder on what we need to do for next. For my family it is a sad time as our daughter in 'Year 5' prepares to say goodbye to West Chilington Community School. It does not seem five minutes since we were taking a 'First Day at School' photo in her sparkling clean new uniform. I am sure we will have a few tears on the last day! What we do know following the recent 'Stars School Consultation' is that her class will be the last to move before finishing 'Key Stage 2'. From September 2017 we will become a full Primary School. This year has also seen us receive a much anticipated visit by 'Ofsted' and my report gives me a good opportunity to reflect on the outcome of the visit and report how we are doing across both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Like all schools this year we will see some faces sadly leave for pastures new but also have the opportunity to welcome some new ones into our School Community. I will take the opportunity to thank those who are leaving us - some of whom have been part of our school life for many years and welcome those who have joined us.

Finally I will talk about some plans for the future and some of the exciting things that are happening to make our school and surrounding community an even better place to be!

What did Ofsted think of us – how are we doing?

The visit of Ofsted to any school regardless of how good they are is both stressful and time consuming. However our visit was something that was much anticipated and something we were more than ready for. You will already be aware that Ofsted advised that we have maintained the 'Good' quality of education since the last inspection in December 2010. It is worth noting that the goal posts have significantly changed over the last 5 years and this was a fantastic achievement and should not be underestimated but was no less than Governors and the Leadership Team expected. I want to take the opportunity to remind everyone some of the key points that were communicated by the Ofsted Inspector:

- "Pupils are proud of the school. They attend well, behave well, show respect to all the adults and to one another, and take good care of the school and its resources"
- "Pupils enjoy lessons immensely"
- "Pupils of all ages are now expected to think for themselves and confidently apply the skills that they learn to solve mathematical problems"

- “Pupils’ achievement in reading remains a real strength of the school”
- “You ensure that pupils are kept safe and feel safe in school”
- “All the adults in school know pupils well and the quality of care adults provide for individual pupils is striking. You and your staff go more than the extra mile to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils feel cherished”
- “Pupils achievement in reading is excellent”
- “Parents have confidence in their children’s progress because of regular communication between home and school and the ready availability of staff”
- “Parents appreciate the clear information teachers provide about pupils’ progress and how pupils learning can be promoted at home”
- “Pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school”
- “Governance is a strength of the school”.

So what did the inspector advise us our next steps as a school should be? Only one area was communicated – *“Improvements in the teaching of phonics and writing impact rapidly on pupils writing achievement during Reception year and Keys Stage1, particularly for boys and the most-able pupils”*. This was an area that the School Leadership team had already identified and plans and actions were already in place at the time of our inspection.

Outcomes for our reception class show a group of children who are achieving very significantly higher than the national and county standards. By the end of Year One children’s achievements in phonics are now also significantly higher than those achieved nationally and here in West Sussex. Rest assured that we are not stopping there. The Leadership team are working closely with our early learning – pre-school partners to help improve phonic and writing skills from the very earliest stage.

Key Stage 1

Outcomes for children in Key stage 1 are still only provisional but the indications are that reading and mathematics continue to be key strengths for us.

Key Stage 2

One of the most pleasing observations made by HMI during the OFSTED inspection was that: ***“By the time they leave school at the end of Year 5, most pupils have already attained standards expected nationally by the end of Year 6, particularly in Reading and Mathematics. This means pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in education. Parents commented positively to me about the confidence their older children showed when starting at their next school”***.

It goes without saying that as always we will not rest on our laurels and we will be striving to improve and look for every opportunity no matter how small to improve our school and students performance.

Our Goodbyes and Welcomes!

Goodbye and Best Wishes!

Earlier in the summer term we said goodbye to Gina Cooperwaite who had been part of the Front Office team for 9 years and was a much loved member of staff.

At the end of term we will also be saying goodbye to Emma Currier one of our Green Class Teachers who has been at West Chiltington for 12 years. We will also say goodbye to Lesley Mann who has been a Teaching Assistant at our school for 16 years. Both are much loved team members and will be greatly missed by the children (who I know will give them a great send-off) but also colleagues as well. On behalf of us all I wish both all the best for what the future brings as well as huge thanks for your dedicated work to our school and community over so many years.

This year we will also be losing two key members of the Governing Board. Many of you will be aware that Revd David Beal is leaving West Chiltington in the summer moving to the Parish of Billingshurst. David is the current Vice Chair and previous Chair of Governors and has been a huge support to both myself and Julian personally but others as well. Outside of his wonderful Ministry, his work in driving the school forward through difficult change over the last 5 years cannot be underestimated and we all owe him a huge amount of thanks. Our Clerk – Dids Branchflower is also sadly leaving us. I reported last year that Dids has the important role of ensuring we follow legal constitution, policy and procedure as well as producing all of our documents and minutes. This is a very difficult job that has been made to look easy and we are very sorry to lose her! My heartfelt thanks to them both for all their hard work on our behalf! We wish them all the best for the future.

Welcome Aboard!

At the start of the month we welcomed Sarah Lowe onto our Office Staff team. I know Sarah has fitted in well very quickly and we wish her a very warm welcome to the West Chiltington School Community.

This year we also welcomed Rachel Smither onto our Board of Governors. Rachel lives within our Community and is a former student of the School and remembers the day she had to carry her school chair from the old Church Street site to the current building! Rachel works for the Aldingbourne Trust and has already hit the ground running and I am sure will be a valued member of the Governing Board Team.

The Year Ahead and Beyond!

Preparation for Year 6

Julian Rose reported to Governors in his recent report to the Board that our pupil numbers for September are the healthiest they've been since 2010 and we now look forward to educating 210 pupils from September 2017. In his words *"We don't underestimate the challenge of adding a class to our school or the expectations of their performance within the community and beyond. We are confident that with us, they will be getting a great deal."* The reason I use Julian's words is that I could not have written it better myself. We have already been working with West Sussex County Council on the plans for our new classroom which has recently been agreed – an extension onto our current music room and we hope to communicate these plans fully at the start of the next academic year in September when they have been finalised.

Wrap-Around School Care

One of our Governors – Ruth Simmonds is leading a project to provide a 'wrap-around' Care service from 7.30am – 6pm including a 'Breakfast Club' and 'After School Club'. We fully recognise that moving this forward is a vitally important and a much needed service for our school. Whilst it was

hoped to get a provision in place for September it is of equal importance that we also get the right service partner in place for our children - a partner that has the same values and ethos of our school and is in it for the long term. Progress is good and I am pleased to report that we are on track to have a partner in place to start in January 2017. We will update you further next term!

A Personalised Curriculum, Engaging with Families, the Home Effect, Partnership Working & Planned Animals for 2016/2017!

I mentioned earlier that our numbers are the highest for years but in addition we are becoming a more diverse community which as Julian quite rightly communicated to Governors this week requires us to think carefully about our provision and the extent to which it meets the needs of our unique children. Moving forward Julian's team will be striving to further personalise the curriculum to meet the needs of all our children. When meeting recently Julian shared with me some research which showed how during their Primary phase a child is influenced. Whilst 50% is Genetic, 30% of a child's influence is from things they see and do at home whilst only 20% is what they see and do at school. It is important that both parents and school recognise this and work together to support each other. Next year one of the key goals will be to work with families more closely and maximise every interaction to involve and support you in your child's learning. Again using Julian's words: *"When the science tells you what a difference a family makes and more significant yet a family and a school make together, the moral imperative is clear"*.

I introduced Rachel Smither earlier in my report as one of our new Governors. Rachel is working closely with the school Leadership Team in setting up a working partnership with the Aldingbourne Trust for whom she works. The Trust is dedicated to helping people with learning disabilities to reach their potential, find fulfilling work and enjoy independent lives. Hopefully this will prove to be a very exciting project and I look forward to reporting back progress in the near future.

One of the more exciting introductions for next year will be some new school Goats! Interaction with animals for many children has proved hugely beneficial in helping develop core development skills. I am unsure at the time of writing how many or what type of goats we will be welcoming to our school family but watch this space as governor and local vet Julian Hoad works with us on this project.

Building Improvements & the School Council Pond/Environmental Project

Ruth Simmonds in partnership with the School Council and FOSA has been leading a project to develop the old Pond Area into an outside Environmental Community Work Space. The project has already seen a FOSA working party clear some of the area and visiting ceramic artist Tamar Rose visit the school to help the children make some ceramic animal statues for the planned space. The School Council have secured a £2,000 grant from 'Rockwell Collins' to develop the area further once the new classroom works have been completed next year. Again watch this space!

This summer will see a significant amount of work on our two 'Hut' classrooms. Both will see full refurbishments works being completed including new roofs over the summer holidays. I am hoping that we will see a significant improvement in the weather as the building team are on a very tight deadline!

Closing Comments

This year both locally and nationally has been hugely tough for everyone involved in Education. Mixed in with the 'Age of Transfer' Consultation locally we have also had added changes to: statutory assessment; a Government white paper on education entitled "Educational Excellence Everywhere;" widespread concern and professional scepticism on this year's national curriculum assessments and a growing concern about radicalisation of Children and the introduction of the 'Prevent' program in every school. Throw in 'Brexit' at the end of the year and the collapsing leadership of both our main political parties has not and does not make it easy!

However I have no doubt that the professionalism and brilliance of our school Leadership and Team as a whole puts us ahead of all the rest. Our school has become a place where 'Excellence' is the norm, where the best want to work, where children achieve and progress to the best of their ability and where parents and guardians want to send their children to learn. Our challenge with parents and guardians is to keep this going and always strive to make our school even better moving forward.

I wish all of our school Community a very restful and relaxing summer break.

Kind Regards,

Tim Rose
Chair of Governors.