



(Governor Tracy Mitchell not in photo)

Calmore Infant School Governors' Parent Newsletter Spring Term 2018

Welcome to the Calmore Infant School Governors' Yearly Newsletter

The aims of this Newsletter are to:

- Introduce ourselves and our role in leading the school so that if you see us around the school or in the playground, you can come and give us any feedback you may have about the school;
- update all our parents and carers of the school's improvement priorities for the academic year 2017-18;
- encourage our parents and carers to feel involved in the school.

For further governor information look on our school's website.

Our Vision for the school - drawn up by Governors and staff

'Our school is a happy, safe and nurturing environment for our children, staff and wider community. We work together in partnership. It is a place where we respect and value each other and work and learn together as a team. Our children learn to be resilient, resourceful, independent and successful learners so they will grow up to be successful adults.'

Letter from Dave Hills Chair of Governors



Dear Parents,

I am Chair of Governors and my role is to support the governing body, ensuring that as a team, we hold the leaders of the school to account and make strategic decisions that will ensure the school goes from strength to strength. I also support the senior leadership team as much as I can.

I chair the main FGB meetings and as part of this ensure that everyone's views are heard and that we reach decisions collectively.

Another aspect of my role is to sign off the school budget each year. As I'm sure you are aware, **school budgets are being squeezed like never before and funding is being cut.** With less money to spend it makes it increasingly important that we spend the money we do have wisely. We will have important decisions to make over the coming years and we may have to make some very difficult choices. Rest assured that we will always do what's best for our children in school and I'm glad to say this ethos is shared by all governors and staff.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you, the parents and carers, for the support you continue to give the school. It is genuinely appreciated. I hope you find this newsletter interesting and that it gives you an insight into who makes the decisions about how your school is run and how we all work hard to make the best possible safe, positive learning environment for you children to grow and thrive in.

Best regards,

Dave Hills

How do Governors keep in touch with all that is going on in school? How do they know the real issues and challenges that the school faces?

Our Governors give up their time to come into school and:

- **See the classes** and the children working.
- They also go on learning walks around the school to **see for themselves the learning environment.**
- They **talk to the children** and members of staff and report back on their visits at Governor meetings.
- **Governors are available** at parent evenings, YR R parent meeting and attend some of the parent workshops so they can meet and talk to parents.
- All Governors have a responsibility to ensure that the **data for the school outcomes is analysed** and that action is taken to address any issues.
- Priority for budget spending is on recruiting and training high quality staff that share the school vision and have high expectations of safeguarding, attainment and behaviour.

Governors came to assembly in September 2017 to introduce themselves to the children and talk about their role and answer children's questions.



Mel Price our Governor with responsibility for SMSC comes into school regularly to meet with the Good to be me team



Governors sometimes join us for lunch. Here is Mr Baker our Health and Safety and Children's Voice Governor having lunch with Yr 1 children and finding out about what they think of school.



Dr Chris Prior, our safeguarding Governor comes into school to talk to new members of staff to ensure they are confident about their safeguarding responsibilities and procedures following their induction.



Mr Julian Baker inspects the school half termly with our caretaker Mr Witcomb. He checks inside and outside the school, to ensure the school classrooms and resources meet safety criteria. He also checks the outside play equipment.

Who are the Governors?

We come from all walks of life and we have taken on the voluntary role of supporting the Headteacher and staff in our school. Our role is to ensure the school provides the highest quality learning environment for our children. We manage the budget so the priorities meet the needs of the school and we are accountable for the safeguarding and efficient and effective running of the school.

Julian Baker - Finance and Staffing Committee and Pay committee

I have had the privilege of being a Governor for the past 6 years. It can be challenging at times due to the responsibility of making big strategic decisions, but I have enjoyed every minute. My background is working with challenging children within a children's home. I do think this has helped me as a governor. All three of my children have been through the school and enjoyed the experiences and challenges they faced. As well as my children, I attended the school back in the 1970s and feel being a governor is giving something back to the school. I have many responsibilities on the governing body, but I have two main roles. I am lead Governor for Health and Safety where I regularly check the building and play areas to ensure they are well maintained and safe, and Pupil Voice – when I come into school and talk to the children about their experience of school and their suggestions about how to make it better.

Lief Key - Chaplin - Curriculum and Welfare Committee

I have been a part of the governing body for the last year. During my time as Governor I am pleased to have seen many effective initiatives such as Numbers Count and extra reading support in the school's own reading support program RISE and the difference it has made to those children who find reading a challenge. It allows the children to catch up with their peers and leave the school being confident readers as they join the junior school. The teachers over the last year have worked hard to meet the expectations of the new curriculum and ensured that each child's learning journey is individual to the child. The drive and passion I see from the teachers is brilliant: I am proud to be a small part of such a nurturing environment.

Kevin Curtis - Staffing and Finance Committee

I have been a Parent Governor for 18 months now and it has been really interesting getting to know the staff and the fantastic work that goes on behind the scenes to keep the School running effectively and to deliver brilliant learning results for the children. I am on the Finance Committee and am also the Maths Governor. I have been into the School to see the maths tuition and also the changes and developments that are being made in terms of using a variety of interesting tools to help the children with their understanding of maths principles - it is really great hearing, and seeing, how the teachers are looking for even more improvements in their teaching. I have continued to enjoy the community feel that runs through the School at all levels and helps make it such a good school for our children.

Jo Dorricott - Curriculum and Welfare Committee

I am a Parent Governor and also a Headteacher of an Infant School on the East side of Southampton. My link area is assessment. Mrs Cowcher provides us with detailed information on how the staff are using the Government's framework and creating an exciting curriculum which is enriched with wonderful opportunities through visits and visitors and hands on experiences. We have linked our two schools for moderation where staff engage in professional discussions about the children's work and what they have achieved. This allows the school to see that their assessments on your child's learning are robust. Governors have had the chance to look through children's books in meetings to see how staff are making changes to improve learning further – we have been really impressed as was the Learning Partner from the Local Authority on a recent visit. Calmore is a great school to be part of.

Jim McGilvery - Vice Chair of Governors. Chair of Finance and Staffing Committee and Pay Committee

I have been a governor at Calmore Infant School for over five years. I have always had an interest in education which is, of course, the key in enabling children to acquire knowledge, develop skills and hopefully fulfil their potential. I am also 'lead' governor for 'Attendance', 'Pupil Premium' and 'Governor Training' and meet regularly with the Headteacher to specifically discuss how the School is performing in relation to these important areas. Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement and for obvious reasons is crucial if pupils are to fully benefit from the excellent education being offered by Calmore Infant School. We are always monitoring attendance to make sure we don't fall below the government's minimum expectation of 96%. Regular and punctual attendance remains

crucial for all pupils if the high standards the School is achieving are to be maintained.

Pupil Premium Funding is the additional funding provided to help raise the achievements of pupils whose parents or carers qualify for this extra support in school. Pupil Premium Funding makes such a difference to what the school can provide so it is important to make sure that we secure as much of this additional funding as possible. If you think your child may qualify for this additional funding for the school just pop into the office to see Julie who will find out for you.

Finally, my role as 'lead' governor in coordinating training helps ensure that the governing body keeps abreast of initiatives and that individual governors can develop their skills, knowledge and expertise in helping to support Calmore Infant School.

Tracy Mitchell - Curriculum and Welfare Committee

I am the supervisor at Caterpillars Preschool which is attached to the school and have worked there for 21 years. I am a new governor and my responsibilities will be with early years where I can use my existing knowledge of the EYFS to be supportive. Recently I have been into Year R for a visit, where I was able to see how the children had settled. I am looking forward to regular visits which will allow me to see how the children are progressing in both their learning and social skills. Being a governor has already given me the opportunity to work closely with the school's Yr R team and I am finding out more about how we can prepare our children at Caterpillars more effectively for school. This will be a huge benefit to our children and parents. I am looking forward to working with the Governors to have a broad strategic view of the school and the challenges it faces.

Mel Price - Staffing and Finance Committee

I am a parent Governor and have been since November 2015. I have a daughter in year 1 and my son moved up from year 2 to the Junior school in September. I enjoy being a Governor, it is a challenging role but rewarding. I became a Governor because I wanted to give something back to the school that has made such a positive impact on my children's lives. I am SMSC (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural) Governor and on the staffing and finance committee. I meet with Mrs Goodey – SMSC leader and with the children in the Good to be Me Team regularly. SMSC is embedded in the culture of the school. A few examples of recent activities include a school assembly talking about respect for one another and looking after each other, plays and concerts at Christmas time along with activity weeks and various topics in each year group. I am looking forward to the year ahead and supporting the school to be the best school it can be.

Dr Chris Prior - Chair of Curriculum and Welfare Committee

I have been a governor for three years. I am the school's Safeguarding Governor. I work with the Headteacher and her team on ensuring Calmore remains a safe and happy environment for everyone. Besides visiting the school and ensuring that it is complying with the law and is working in the best interests of its students that way, I also do things like interviewing new members of staff, to make sure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in protecting and nurturing the pupils at Calmore. In my visits over the past year, I continue to be impressed by all of the hard work that all of the staff put in, both in terms of their diligence and common sense, but also being constantly aware of the details of the statutory requirements surrounding safeguarding, which means I am really satisfied that everyone is working hard to keep our school happy and safe.

Charlie Skeels - Curriculum and Welfare Committee

I have been a parent governor at Calmore infant School for a year now: It has been a great challenge but a rewarding experience. I am the lead governor for literacy. In my role I regularly liaise with the literacy leader, Mrs Darch, to analyse data and review approaches to teaching and learning to ensure that the high standards are being maintained. It is very pleasing to see the improvement and progress in children's writing books and their enthusiasm for learning. I have seen how the staff work hard to plan interesting and engaging lessons and topics to encourage all children to want to write and read.

I enjoy spending time with the children for lunch and reading with them in the afternoons. I am proud to be part of this school community.

In addition, Sarah Willes, Deputy Head and Year 1 teacher and Nicky Cowcher, Headteacher, are also on the Governing Body. Our clerk is Naomi Chetland.

What are we prioritising this year? Sept 2017- July 2018

Our key focus every year is to ensure that our children have the very best teaching and learning opportunities possible so they can make the best progress. The learning environment and the expectation is for teachers and teaching assistants talking with children about their learning - 'Learning is hard,' 'Muddles are good,' 'I can do anything if I try and don't give up' is now an essential part of the school ethos.

The budget for our school is reducing every year and we are expecting even less for the financial year 2018-19. We have a challenging financial year ahead, but for this academic year this is what we have put as priorities:

- **Training of staff as a high importance**. So far this year all staff have had access to the best training possible. The best trained teachers are able to keep abreast of changes in teaching and learning and up to date with Government expectations.
- **Assessment for learning high importance for the best possible teaching and learning**. INSET Jan 2018 was based on this.
- **Raise attainment in writing for all groups**. Although we are above national average at the end of Yr 2, we are aware of the challenges in trying to ensure as many children as possible meet the expected criteria for writing. As a result this year, the school continues to have support from HIAS English inspectors.
- **Provide highest quality one to one interventions Numbers Count, RISE, BP@P**
- **Extra 'Intervention lessons' e.g. reading recovery and numbers count 'dovetail' into class teaching** so that the class teacher can see and assess what the children need to continue learning in class.
- **Provide 'keep up sessions'** in yr 2 for those children who need to consolidate maths or writing learning, to ensure no one falls behind.
- **Task design for children with SEND is monitored** and discussed regularly as teachers are expected to scaffold work to ensure SEND children have the same learning journey as their peers but at steps that are appropriate for their needs. Teachers use 'Say it, make it, do it approach' Funding is provided so the County LLP is working with the school on this.
- **Learning journeys in all books are clear**, with evidence children are addressing 'muddles' and teachers are supporting the children to ensure that no essential learning 'block' is missed out through effective feedback and assessment. Maths and English advisors are working with the school.
- **Embed the positive learning climate** through teachers talking about learning and how hard it is and the importance of our learning heroes so children can say which hero helped them learn and why.
- **Children no longer working in set groups** every day, but more fluid and dependent on their daily assessed learning needs.
- **Maths teaching and learning evidences the CPA approach** – concrete, pictorial, abstract. Maths leaders attend the regular maths hub. NO worksheets and an increase in reasoning opportunities.

- **Governors have agreed to finance the increase in Nurture again** this year for 4 afternoons a week.
- **Governors have continued to provide Music; specialist teachers** continue to teach Year 1 and 2 classes every week on a range of instruments, African drums, recorder and, ukulele. Sports specialist teachers teach a mixture of different sports. The aim is that our children will get the very best teaching in these subjects.
- Ensuring the school meets its **safeguarding responsibilities** through HT and DHT attending high quality Safeguarding training.
- **Governors have agreed to continue the support for the Schools Sports Partnership** from the Schools Funding to promote sport in school through providing high quality teaching of sport through the Real PE scheme training and access to all the local school competitions.
- Governors are **supporting the school raising attendance** levels to a minimum of 96% through the 'Cool to be in school' initiative. Any parent of a child below 90% is notified and the Headteacher and Attendance Governor monitor the attendance carefully.

ARE YOU INTERSTED IN BEING A SCHOOL GOVERNOR?

Do You...

Want to know more about how the school works?

Want to be involved in your child's school community?

Want to know that you have had a say in decisions about the school?

Want to be part of a close team working to make the school the best it can be for ALL our children?

Want to make a difference?

Then.....talk to a Governor on the playground or speak to Mrs Cowcher or Mrs Willes or come into the office. We will all be happy to talk about the role and answer questions and what it means to be a Governor of our fabulous school.

our children  **our future**