

INTOUCH

THE GREYSBROOKE SCHOOL GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2019

First things first... What exactly is the role of the Governing Body?

As governors, we regularly get asked about what exactly our role is, as there is often confusion about how 'hands on' governors are with the day-to-day running of the school. The governing body's role is best summed up in the following statement:

“**The role of the governing body is to provide strategic management, and to act as a “critical friend”, supporting the work of the headteacher and other staff. The headteacher of the school is responsible for day-to-day management of the school.**”

According to the Department of Education, the governing body provides strategic leadership and accountability in schools. It has three key functions:

- 1 Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent. Everyone on the governing body should have a basic understanding of the financial cycle and the legal requirements of the school on accountability and expenditure. The governing body should also include someone with particular financial expertise.
- 2 Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils. The governing body should work to support and strengthen school leaders and hold them to account for the day-to-day running of their schools. The governing body itself should play a strategic role, and avoid routine involvement in operational matters.
- 3 Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction. Governors set the aims and objectives for the school and set the policies and targets for achieving those aims and objectives. They then monitor and evaluate the progress the school is making.

Thank you Ian, and welcome Andy

Ian Pritchard's four year term as a parent governor ended last month. Ian has been an active and supportive member of the governing body and, on behalf of the whole school, we would like to extend our thanks for all his hard work.

We are delighted to welcome new parent governor **Andy Skidmore** to the governing body. Andy will sit on the Resource Management Committee and brings with him a wealth of finance experience.



Hello

Welcome to the latest edition of InTouch, the Greysbrooke Governors' Newsletter.

We have now committed to writing at least two newsletters per academic year from the governing body. This will enable us to share with you some details about what we've been up to, especially with regard to ongoing projects, as well as introduce you to some of our team.

We hope you find this useful, and would welcome any suggestions you have for items you'd like to see in the next Newsletter. We also plan to hold occasional informal surgeries in the library coffee shop, so that you can have a face-to-face chat with some of us to find out more about what we are doing – so watch this space!

Pete

PETE HEDGES
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

Proud to be
outstanding



Our school strategy

To ensure we fulfil our role with the third function, the governing body were keen to work towards setting the school's overall strategic framework, including its vision and strategic priorities. We have overall responsibility for setting and implementing the school's culture, values and ethos, and needed to be clear about what this looked like.

Where did we start?

A series of workshops took place with governors and senior leaders from the school, where we carried out an extensive analysis of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, examined our current situation, and began to try and articulate what our vision for the future of Greysbrooke should be. Specifically, our brief was to:

1. Ensure the school had a clear vision – articulated in a specific written statement
2. Ensure there was a strategy in place for achieving this vision
3. Set and safeguard an ethos of high expectations
4. Foster a common culture, values and ethos across the school

What did we create?

Following the workshops, we created a clear, ambitious vision and strategy, and broke this down into four main areas, to help us focus and monitor impact.

We then restructured the governing body and its committees into these four specific areas, setting guidance and objectives for each.

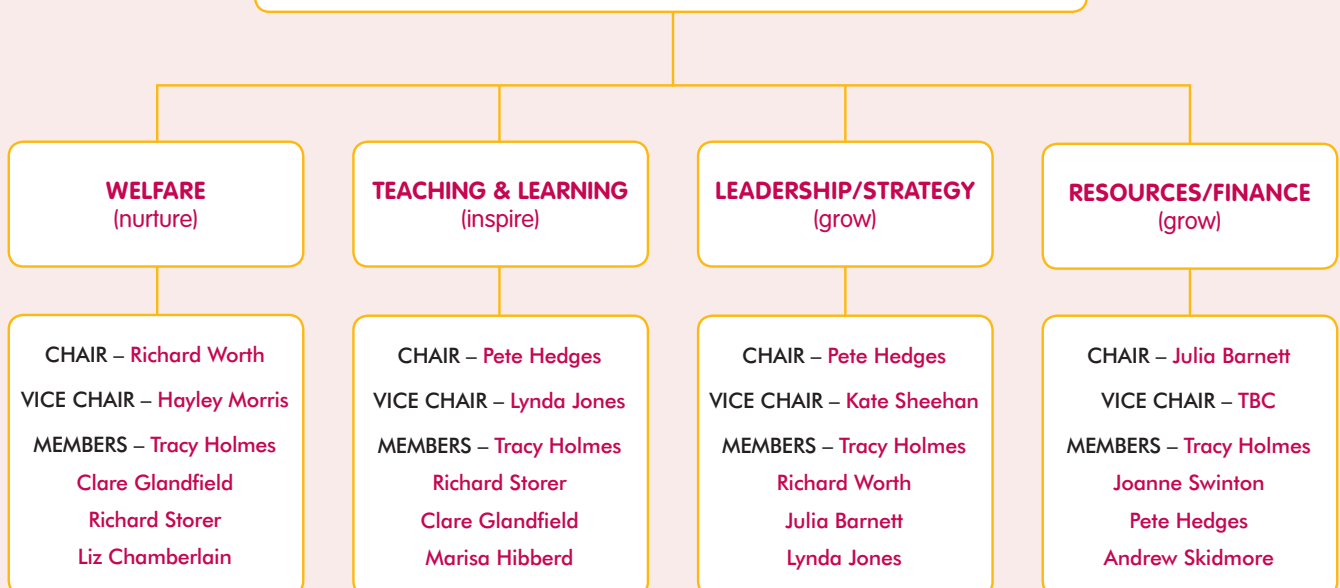
We are now in the process of aligning the school development plan with this strategy and setting ourselves one year, three year and five year targets to help keep us all on track.

The process was challenging but also inspiring. It helped us realise the strong foundations that are already in place at Greysbrooke, and how with structure and focus, we can achieve our ambitious goals. It also allowed us to work closely with the senior leaders and staff, ensuring a collaborative approach to planning for the future of the school.

VISION: We will consistently be an exceptional provider of educational excellence and enrichment opportunities

STRATEGIC AMBITION

To realise our vision through our nurture, inspire, grow culture



SPOTLIGHT ON...

Parent Governor Hayley



Parent governors play a vital role on the governing body, holding the unique position of having a parental viewpoint of the school. Through their children, they have a first hand experience of the delivery of the curriculum, and how the school is perceived from the 'consumers' point of view. This enables parent governors to bring a different perspective to the strategic management of the school.

We really value parents' views at Greysbrooke, and actually have four Greysbrooke parents on the governing body - Hayley Morris, Joanne Swinton, Kate Sheehan and Andy Skidmore.

This role can be really challenging - our parent governors are very conscious that they are representative parents rather than representatives of parents, but we believe they do a fantastic job in helping keep the governing body in tune with the local community, parental views and children's feedback. We thought it would be useful to get to know your parent governors a bit better, so in this edition, we've interviewed Hayley Morris to find out more about her role on the governing body. Hayley is Mum to Austin in Year 2.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO BE A GOVERNOR?

I believe Greysbrooke is a wonderful place for our children to learn and flourish. It has a strong ethos with core nurturing values and a committed team of staff and teachers.

This provides firm foundations to ensure high standards of achievement for all children and future excellence of the school. As a former pupil and with my eldest son now attending, and likely his younger brother in a few years, I wanted to provide support in any way possible to the school's continuous improvement.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT?

A huge amount and it's on-going. There is so much information to acquire to enable effective governance - gaining an understanding of the curriculum, data analysis and the processes and terminology used within education, as well as increasing knowledge of national and local policies and legislation to try and link this to where our school fits into the bigger picture. An excellent resource has been the NGA (National Governance Association), an independent charity representing and supporting governors by providing guidance, research and training. The governing body and staff have also been extremely supportive.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE ON THE BOARD?

I am a parent governor, of which the role and responsibilities are no different from those of other governors, however, I bring a parental perspective to the issues discussed. Understanding parents' opinion helps the Board to make good decisions and helps guarantee that there is a link between governance and the parent community. I am Vice Chair of the Welfare Committee and have a link governor role for Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent. This means I act as the link or liaison between the governing body and these specific aspects of the school.

WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST CHALLENGING?

The time commitment required to be able to help the school effectively. We have at least 3 full governing body meetings a year - there can be a lot of papers to read in preparation! Plus other committee and ad hoc meetings, training, and school visits. Balancing the role with life and family commitments can be challenging at times.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A GOVERNOR?

1.5 years, the governing body is very active and so time has flown!

WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING?

The satisfaction that I'm helping to shape the future of children at the school by playing a part in improving their educational journey, and supporting staff and parents. It is a privilege to act as a parent governor at Greysbrooke School.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY?

I feel fortunate to have this opportunity. I've enjoyed building relationships and networks within the school, with parents and the wider community, as well as gaining new skills and knowledge.

WHAT IMPACT DO YOU THINK YOU'VE HAD SO FAR?

I hope that my professional knowledge in Learning and Development and HR is beneficial to the governing body and staff but I think much of the impact has been made collectively as a team.

If you have any questions for Hayley, or any of the other parent governors, feel free to speak to them on the playground, or contact directly by email. (See website for email addresses).

What's happening with Ofsted?

Greysbrooke was last inspected in 2011, and classified as an Outstanding school. As a result, we have not been subject to an inspection since then. However, interim visits from the local authority have produced very positive reviews, confirming that we are a school with no need for concern.



There now appears to be a move towards ensuring that a selection of schools previously rated as Outstanding do receive Ofsted inspections over the next few years, and as governors, we want to guarantee that if we are visited, we achieve the best possible outcome for the school.

We are therefore keen to quickly get to grips with the very topical proposed changes to the inspection framework, and thought it would be useful to share with you the headlines around what we know so far:

- **Ofsted will now judge the behaviour and attitudes of our students as distinct from our welfare and personal development provisions. We feel this is a welcome change and we hope this will allow for clear, actionable feedback to best promote the wellbeing and resilience for all children at our school.**
- **Ofsted will use less exam data to judge the school's overall performance and instead focus upon the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. We hope that these changes will mean that our teachers can focus on delivering a broad, rich and engaging curriculum and consequently inspire a greater passion for learning.**

We are delighted that these changes are reflected in the vision and strategy we have created, which clearly demonstrates our belief that Greysbrooke is about so much more than test results.

We need your help

As local authority funding for schools is increasingly being reduced, the resources committee have been looking at other options to help us provide new, and improve existing facilities at Greysbrooke, such as the library project currently in progress. We are in the process of applying for funding grants, but to access certain funding streams, the school must provide a percentage of the funds required.

We have discovered that as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programs, many companies such as large banks and blue chip companies encourage staff to help their communities by offering a match funding scheme. If the employee raises money e.g. through helping at a school event, the company matches the funds raised pound for pound up to a specific level.

Parents, if you think you can help us increase revenues through your companies' match funding scheme we would be very grateful. **Please contact parent governor Joanne Swinton if you think you might be able to help.**



Speaking of test results...

They are of course still important, and help tell a part of the story about how the school is performing. In 2018, we were delighted with the following headline results:

NATIONAL PHONICS TESTS

97% of children at Greysbrooke passed. This puts us in the **top 6%** of schools nationally.

KS1 SATS RESULTS

87% of children at Greysbrooke achieved at least the expected standard in **READING** compared to 75% nationally.

83% of children at Greysbrooke achieved at least the expected standard in **WRITING** compared to 70% nationally.

90% of children at Greysbrooke achieved at least the expected standard in **MATHS** compared to 76% nationally.

KS2 SATS RESULTS

80% of children at Greysbrooke achieved at least the expected standard in **COMBINED READING, WRITING AND MATHS**, compared to the national average of 64%.

Our SATS results have continued to improve over the last two years, proving that our fantastic staff team are able to react quickly and focus on the areas which need attention.

Over to you...

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Hopefully it has been useful and helps to explain a little bit about what your governing body has been up to.

We would love to hear any feedback or suggestions so please do email us at: **K-SHEEHAN1@greysbrooke.staffs.sch.uk**

Finally, on behalf of the governing body, we would like to thank all the Greysbrooke staff for their continued hard work, and their active promotion of our Nurture, Inspire, Grow culture.

HAPPY EASTER