

Fawbert and Barnard Governor Newsletter 2020

Review of the Year 19/20

Having been a Governor at F&B for around 15 years now, it can safely be said that this has been the strangest and most difficult year I can remember for staff, parents, pupils and governors. I would like to take this opportunity once again to thank Mrs Brooker and all of the staff for everything they have done over the past months; firstly to step and run the school in the absence of Ms Euesden, and then to face the challenge of educating the children during the pandemic.

I am aware of how difficult it has been for many families to have to educate children at home whilst also working, and I would also like to thank parents (and children) for their support with learning. Rest assured, now the children are back at school, there will be a heavy focus both on the wellbeing of the children, as well as looking to ensure that there's a focus on any gaps in learning. This will – as always – be done in such a way that keeps learning fun and engaging and Mrs Brooker and her team are keen to stick to the Montessori principles in doing this.

For the Governing Body, the pandemic has seen us unable to visit the school for our usual subject discussions with teachers. Neither have we been able to meet in the conventional way, which usually means a Thursday evening meeting in a Year 2 classroom. Instead, we've embraced Microsoft Teams and it's enabled us to meet more frequently with Mrs Brooker to discuss Government guidance as and when it has been issued (and often changed at short notice).

One benefit of Teams has been that parent governors in particular have found attending easier (reduced childcare issues) and even Governors needing to shield have been able to participate. The downside? We appear to have a Governor who is upside down on the screen in most meetings, so if anyone knows the fix to that please let us know!

We hope that the ability to meet in person will be something that is in place by the time we look interview for the permanent headship. We're very pleased with how the new interim leadership team is working, and would like to take time to work with them to review options for the future. As you will now know, Mrs Wilcox (picture below) has agreed to join us as Interim Co-Head to ensure that Mrs Brooker can have some much-needed family time. The Governing Body is keen to ensure that we support the wellbeing of the staff as well as the pupils and this arrangement helps support that aim.

Hopefully by the time next year's newsletter comes along things at F&B will be back to normal but in the meantime we can be reassured that the staff at F&B will be here to support the children and parents.

Sarah Evans
Chair of Governors



The Governing Body – new Co-opted Governor required!

We've recently had our Parent Governor election and am pleased to announce that James Catchpole, a Year 1 parent, will be joining us. James has extensive experience in the education and legal fields and these skills will be a real asset to the Governing Body.

Sadly, our outgoing Vice Chair of Governors, Rob Smith, who was appointed by the LEA (Local Education Authority), is retiring and would like to step back from governorship in Hertfordshire as he moves away from the area so we will have a vacancy shortly for his LEA role. Additionally, we have a vacancy for a Co-opted Governor; this kind of governor is usually someone who has skills that might enhance the governing body and also a link to the local community.

Rob will leave a huge gap in the governing body as he's a very experienced governor, and has also been our Data Protection Officer. If anyone has any nominations for a co-opted governor who might be interested in joining us, then please speak to Mrs Argent in the school office in the first instance.

The Governing Body would also like to take this opportunity to thank Rob for all of his hard work and commitment: he will be sorely missed but we wish him well in his retirement and hope he will keep in touch with us all at F&B.



The Growing Garden

At present our growing garden is more of a not growing garden (apart from some new potatoes)! Governors decided over the Summer to start a re-vamp of the troughs that had been built to ensure that once spring comes, the children can make better use of this space and grow some food that they can share. Many thanks to the Governors who came along and ended up doing some demolishing of the insides of the troughs to ensure that they are going to be deep enough to grow some vegetables.

In the meantime, we're shipping in topsoil and our Wellbeing Governor, Sarah Brown, is looking at how the garden can be used by the children – if we have any parents who are keen gardeners I am sure that she would welcome your input!