

Work hard. Aim high. Have fun.



**FOLLY HILL INFANT SCHOOL**

## **GOVERNOR NEWS**

**Issue 2 - Autumn Term 2009**

Welcome to our second issue of **Governor News**. We trust that you found Issue 1 interesting and informative and that it gave you some insight into the work of the Governing Body.

We would also like to welcome you all to a new academic year and hope that you and your children are all settling in to new classes and school routines. For those of you who are new to Folly Hill School we feel sure that you will soon find yourselves involved in the many activities and events of school life and become part of the very friendly atmosphere of the school where you will make many happy friendships. The Governing body consists of a mix of Staff Governors, Community Governors, Parent Governors and Local Authority Governors. Currently we have 13 Governors, all of whom play an active role in supporting and overseeing the general management of the school. PC Milligan and Sam Willans are Associate Governors and support the school in many ways. We are a happy and hard working team working closely with the school community on both formal business and general involvement with school activities.

The current Governors are as follows:-

- **Head:-** Chris Green
- **Staff:-** Caroline Woolridge
- **Parents:-** Hazel Coote, Neil Taylor, David Holroyd, Neal Appleton
- **Community:-** Sally Walker, Jane Truin, John Ely
- **Local Authority:-** Joan Maynard, Jeanette Griffiths
- **Associate:-** Gordon Milligan, Sam Willans
- **Clerk:-** Sally Jackson

We meet at least six times a year as a full Governing Body and then another six times a year at whichever individual committees we are serving on. These committees cover the Curriculum, Finance and Health & Safety and are formally named as "**Enjoy and Achieve**", "**Economic Well Being**" and "**Be Safe, Be Healthy**". Reports from these committees are set out below.

### **Enjoy and Achieve Committee**

*"Folly Hill School aims to provide a curriculum that develops a joy of learning and is tailored to provide the opportunity for all pupils to reach his/her potential"*

Since our 1<sup>st</sup> edition of Governor News at the beginning of the year, the Enjoy and Achieve committee has been looking at **Community Cohesion**, a new initiative from the DCFS. Community Cohesion aims to work towards a world where people can work together to create a more tolerant and fair society in which they share a common sense of purpose and belonging and which can overcome differences in faith, ethnicity, culture and socio-economic status.

The Governing Body has a duty to ensure that these values are promoted within the school. To monitor this we have been working through an audit and identifying those areas which are already covered through the curriculum and general ethos of the school. As you might

imagine there are many elements which are being covered and a few others which need to be fine-tuned and/or developed further. These have been included in the School Development Plan for the next year.

Many of you will be aware of the introduction of the **Learning to Learn Tools**, which were introduced in order to encourage independent learning. These have been introduced to schools across the Confederation. Children are encouraged to think about which tools they are using when they are learning. The tools are based on Guy Claxton's theory of building learning power.

**The tools introduced last year were:**

- I have everything I need
- I can listen
- I can concentrate with other things going on around me
- I am not afraid to try

We have introduced many new tools this year.

These are in regular use in the classrooms. Governors have monitored their use and found that children are familiar with them and many use them independently.

**School Improvement Partner (SIP)**

The SIP visits the school three times a year to discuss the school's progress towards a variety of priorities which the school has set in order to meet the needs of the children and school community. These include aspects of the curriculum, grounds and staffing needs. Governors are usually present at these meetings and we are always delighted to hear that targets have been more than met. At a recent meeting, lessons in music, drama and art were observed and the standards were superb. All pupils were fully engaged with their activities and showed an ability to work successfully both individually

and in groups. They also demonstrated that they were able to evaluate their performances in a positive way.

## **Economic Well Being**

In our twice termly meetings this year, we have continued to monitor and ratify the school's budget and support the Head Teacher and the Administrative team in their financial decisions. Our overriding aim is to ensure that money is spent wisely and benefits the whole school community. In order to **increase governor confidence and expertise**, three governors have **attended Finance Courses** this year.

**Breakfast Club** was an issue earlier in the year, causing us some concern for its financial viability. However, we are pleased to report that the uptake of places has increased and the situation is much improved. The children who attend the club always seem happy and relaxed and their parents appreciate the impact it has had on their mornings! Breakfast Club has to be self-financing, and cannot be subsidised by the School budget, which can only be used to fund the educational aspects of school life. It is vital therefore that this initiative is well supported by you.

### **Office Space**

A major initiative this year has been the building work on the new office for the Admin Officer. After considering the various quotes we were pleased to offer the contract to the company, Corniche Builders, who worked efficiently and with minimum disturbance to complete the work in good time and within budget. This extra space has had a huge impact on the school, giving more office space to Alison in the Main Office and providing a space where the Admin Officer can work quietly with fewer interruptions. The new office is also available for use by

other staff members when the Admin Officer is not in school. Sally Jackson is delighted with the result and can't wait to get to school in the mornings!

In addition, we have reviewed many policies related to Finance and Staffing aspects of the school.

## **Be Safe, Be Healthy**

This year the committee have reviewed and updated a number of policies relating to the health and safety of everyone in the school. As with all the committees, all school policies are on a rolling programme of review with specific dates set for those reviews. This is a time consuming task but it is a vital aspect of school life, in ensuring a safe and satisfying experience for all members of the school community.

### **Disability Equality Scheme (DES)**

As part of the office building project a ramp has been built at the entrance to the school, giving easy access for wheelchairs. This has also probably proved to be useful for those of you with buggies!

Push button access to the school was also included in the building work and this has made access to the school building more secure.

### **Visual Inspections**

During visual inspections of the school this year the committee checked all areas of the school and grounds. This has led to some repairs being carried out, such as a loose drain cover by Starlight and uneven slabs by the Friendship area and any items considered to present a hazard have been carefully stored away.

In April the committee, with the help of Dave Hancock, were involved in the updating of the 'New Emergency Plan for Schools'. It covers in detail what to do in the event of a fire at the school, suspected bomb, through to the very topical Pandemic Flu. The Plan also has to include how the school will be used should it be needed as a 'base' for the local community. This has been a big project, which should be complete by the end of term.

### **Dedicated Headship Time (DHT)**

On the BSBH committee, we monitor the DHT each term. It is a condition that a Head Teacher has dedicated time to provide leadership and management of the school, as well as maintaining a satisfactory work/life balance. It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to ensure that this condition is met. DHT time amounts to half a day each week and cannot be interrupted unless there is an emergency. The committee has been monitoring the effective delegation of some tasks so that the Headteacher is able to concentrate on the core duty of providing professional leadership and management for the school. At Folly Hill we believe that DHT is very effective.

**In conclusion**, I hope that this review of the make up and work of the Governing Body has been interesting and useful to you. We will endeavour to keep you up to date in future issues of **Governor News**.

We are always happy to discuss any issues or queries with you. You may make contact with Chris Green or Sally Walker through the school.

We consider ourselves very fortunate to be involved in such a happy, caring and successful school and are pleased to share the school motto...

Work hard. Aim high. Have fun.