



# BROOKFIELD SCHOOL

Chester Road  
London  
N19 5DH

Headteacher: Mark Stubbings  
Email: [admin@brookfield.camden.sch.uk](mailto:admin@brookfield.camden.sch.uk)  
Tel: 020 7272 9627  
Fax: 020 7561 0056

## Governor Newsletter June 2017

Welcome to the Governors newsletter. The aim of this newsletter, along with the governor pages on the school website is to keep parents and carers, staff and members of our local community informed about the activities of the governing body at Brookfield. The role of the governing body is to set strategic direction, create robust accountability and ensure financial probity for Brookfield School. More details of the role of school governors is available in the Governance Handbook, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>.

Our work is done through committees and through Full Governing Body meetings. The following are highlights from some of the work since the last newsletter:

### Learning and Achievement committee (Acting LAC chair - Anthony Mirams)

LAC's aims are to monitor the school's work, be supportive and at the same time challenging, so that the school is as effective as possible. Brookfield is working in tricky times with, for example, real funding reductions, raised standards set by the government, changes to assessment recording methods and considerable difficulties in finding assessment data software that does what it says on the tin. Despite all of this, the LAC committee members have been impressed throughout with the efforts, thoughtfulness and commitment of the Brookfield staff team. We thank them of course.

We have looked in detail at a number of areas of the school's work in our two meetings since the last governor newsletter:

- Rights Respecting Schools - staff outlined the initiatives being taken to develop the attitudes and understanding of the children based upon the UN Convention of Rights of the Child. We agreed that this work was important and discussed how it should be continued.
- Phonics - the Read, Write, Inc approach to teaching phonics was reported as being very successful. Children have been learning to read more easily and have been performing better in the phonics screening they are required to take in Year 1.
- Early Years - we have discussed the positive changes made to our Nursery provision (e.g. the outside areas) and areas for further improvement. How Brookfield should manage its nursery places from September as the new funding arrangements become clearer has also been explored.

- We have also monitored and discussed our use of pupil premium funding to achieve the best outcome for those pupils and our Building Learning Power initiative.

This challenging and supporting approach will continue as we look in detail at other areas of the school's work.

We also monitor the effectiveness of Brookfield overall by, for instance, looking at the data of the pupils' achievement and progress (particularly in the core areas of maths and English). We

work hard to understand the complex data and ask questions of the leadership team about the subjects or year groups that are doing well or could do better. We also monitor other formal documents such as the School Improvement Plan and the School Self-evaluation Form, all of which are very interesting.

#### **Personnel, Salaries and Wellbeing Committee (PSWB Chair - Joanne Cooke)**

Since the last newsletter PSWB have been busy. Our work has focussed on several different areas. This has included supporting the school in developing the parents' questionnaire. Thank you for completing the questionnaire. We are now probing the school on their response to the findings of this survey. We have been reviewing the schools policies on Behaviour, Equality and Relationship and Sex Education. Every PSWB meeting reviews behaviour in the school. This is often a robust discussion as governors strongly challenge the school to demonstrate that the school's vision and values are alive and real. We are pleased to report that behaviour is well managed within the school. Next term our priorities are twofold: firstly writing the school's healthy eating policy and secondly ensuring that that the staff group, post-restructure, is well supported and continues to develop

#### **Finance Committee (Finance Chair - Nigel Bannerman)**

The financial situation facing the school remains challenging. The work of the finance committee in the current term has been around monitoring the projected financial position of the school over the next 3 years. This has factored in the impact of the £250k cost savings plan that was the subject of the staff consultation earlier in the year. It is also taken into account the first indications of the funding impact of the Government Fairer Funding proposals which are expected to lead to a reduction in the school's revenues in coming years. Our current projections suggest that the resources available for the school will remain extremely tight for the foreseeable future and that our current cash reserve position of £190k will (move to a deficit position by March 2020).

#### **Premises Committee (Premises Chair - Stephen Kapos)**

The Premises Committee's recent focus was on the production and presentation of a comprehensive review of and a set of proposals for the security arrangements at Brookfield - as invited to do by Camden. This included strengthening a secure perimeter, increasing security at access points, extension of the internal telephone system and new classroom locks to enable an invacuation in case of an emergency. The illustrated proposals were presented to the governing body on the 24th of May and were approved. We are now developing an implementation plan, an important part of which, will be communicating with you about the planned changes.

**Full Governing Body (FGB) (Chair of Governors - Elizabeth Dormandy)** Highlights from recent FGB meetings include:

- A detailed review of SEND provision by Katherine. This enabled governors to monitor progress against the priority in the School Improvement Plan: 'to create a culture which had a shared understanding and responsibility for all children; including those with SEND'.  
We were reassured that this priority is being carefully addressed. We are pleased to note that Brookfield's model to support children with SEND in the transition between primary and secondary school is being looked at by other schools in Camden.
- How the school will implement the changes required to implement the restructure. Laurel reported the finding of the "Ways of Working" Group. This identified areas of change. It was agreed that the key goal of the school was to maintain and raise academic standards and provide the best wider provision using the available resources for the greatest impact.

Minutes of FGB meetings are available on the school website

(<http://www.brookfield.camden.sch.uk/page/?title=Minutes+of+meetings&pid=51>) if you would like to more detail about what we have discussed at FGB meetings.

### **Governor Changes**

We are delighted that Dorothy Toh, a local resident has joined as a co-opted governor. Dorothy is a qualified chartered accountant and has experience across auditing, financial control and financial strategy. We are pleased to have the benefit of Dorothy's expertise as school finances are likely to become even more challenging.

### **Finally**

We want to thank all staff for their contribution to the school. These are difficult times, and we are so impressed by the professionalism and leadership of all staff at the school as they continue to deliver a fantastic education for all children. A huge thank you also extends to everyone who volunteers their time and talents to the school. In particular, we would like to thank the PTA, and co-chairs Sonia, Charlie and Eliane and treasurer Phillip who have organised some fantastic events. We are very much looking forward to the summer fair.

Most importantly thank you to the children and their families for making Brookfield such a wonderful community

Best wishes

Governing Body, Brookfield Primary School, [governors@brookfield.camden.sch.uk](mailto:governors@brookfield.camden.sch.uk)

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If you have any comments or suggestions or want to know more about the work we do, we can be contacted by email at the address above or drop us a note at the office.