

Brookfield Primary School

Governors' newsletter Autumn term 2013



The governors would like to congratulate the school and pupils on another successful term and wish all pupils, parents, carers, teachers and staff a very happy Christmas. The Governing Body at Brookfield works closely with the school management team in developing the school's priorities. Governors set standards and objectives, review policies and approve the school's budget. We support, challenge and advise the school. At the last Governing Body meeting the Headteacher outlined the school's key priorities for 2013/14 which include a focus on raising standards of maths, phonics, grammar and handwriting, holding a science week, the use of pupil premium money to raise the attainment of disadvantaged children including in music, raising standards of behaviour and further work on developing parental engagement. In this newsletter we have set out some information and news which we hope you will find interesting and useful.

Learning and Achievement

The Learning and Achievement committee has spent considerable time looking at how pupils achieved in the Early Years Foundation Stage (nursery and reception), Key Stage 1 (end of Y2) and Key Stage 2 (end of Y6) last year and what this tells us about how pupils are progressing through the school. Broadly speaking, pupils make consistently good progress in Brookfield. The value added score for 2013 (this measures how pupils progress) places the school significantly above national and in the top 10% of schools overall, the top 9% of schools for maths and top 13% of schools for writing. The data the school collects tells us that children make good progress relative to their starting points in nursery and reception, although the school's results at this point are slightly below national expectations. However, by the end of KS1, pupils attainment is broadly in line with national expectations and by the end of KS2, pupils are performing significantly above national expectations in reading, writing, maths and science at both levels 4 and 5. Last year 69% of children secured a L5 in maths, 51% in writing and 62% in reading. These were our best ever KS2 SATs results. 7 children also secured a level 6 in maths and 4 children secured a level 6 in writing which is considered exceptional for this stage.

The committee has been pleased to note how well our pupils continue to progress and the outstanding results at KS2. We've also noted measures put in place this year, such as a focus on literacy in reception and maths in KS1, to increase the rate of progression lower down the school. Neither the school nor the governors are complacent. We both continually look to see where the school can further improve outcomes for the children. As well as looking at the overall results, we also look at the school's breakdown of how the different groups of pupils progress compare to the same group nationally - for example

boys, girls, children with English as a second language, children on free school meals and those with different ethnic backgrounds. While most groups within Brookfield perform in line or above national expectations, there are a few groups e.g. Black African and Black Caribbean pupils who are possibly underperforming compared to national. The underperformance is only 'possible' because the numbers of these pupils at the school are very small and so each individual result requires interrogation. The school has responded quickly by looking at historical data and setting up a working party of governors and senior leadership team to investigate. This term the committee has also discussed the school's plan for stretching more able pupils, provision for children with special educational needs, how the needs of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding will be met and had reports on cross curricula teaching and on the teaching of music at the school.

The School's Finances

The Finance Committee reviews school finances and agrees the school budget. The Finance committee has had a busy and productive term and has focused on potential capital projects for the school, including looking at a better configuration of space at the school entrance, discussions around how to increase the uptake of school meals, and further analysis of pupil premium funding, which targets attainment of children who are or have been on free school meals. Governors are pleased that some of the money has been spent on members of staff employed specifically to assist in narrowing attainment gaps, and also on funding musical lessons for eligible pupils. Information about how pupil premium money is spent can be found on the school's website. The committee has also discussed introducing a living wage standard for school employees. As yet, we have no information on the shape of the 2014-2015 Budget but should have more information at the end of January.

The School Building and Environment

The new crossings in Chester Road and Croftdown Road for which governors have been lobbying for some time have been installed. There is now a zebra crossing on Chester Road adjacent to the main school entrance. In Croftdown Road the carriageway has been narrowed by the Junior gate. This allows parents and pupils crossing to be able to view the road around the parked cars. Improvements to the main school entrance hall and office area have been proposed. The aim is to enlarge and rationalise the public entrance area and to improve the working conditions in the school office space. The initial plans are undergoing a feasibility study with outline costs to be considered by the school management early in the New Year. Plans to make changes to configuration in the Junior playground were held up because the roots of the Robinia tree located between the Junior and Nursery playgrounds restricted the proposed redevelopment of part of the Junior playground and the tree cannot be relocated. The committee is considering amended plans with the resulting construction work taking place we hope over Easter.

Personnel and Wellbeing

The Personnel and Wellbeing committee monitors various aspects of the wellbeing of staff and pupils and has this term been considering new government requirements for performance management pay for all teaching staff which come into operation from

September 2014. The committee has also this term discussed the very occasional allegations of bullying, a subject which arose at this term's governors' drop in session. It is of the utmost importance that all members of the school community, but particularly pupils, feel safe, valued and respected. Anti-bullying week saw a series of assemblies to highlight what bullying is and how the school deals with it. Governors have encouraged the school to work to improve the speed at which these situations are resolved for the benefit of the children and parents concerned. A review of procedures will involve parents/carers, pupils, governors and staff. Meanwhile if any parent or carer considers that their child is in any way involved in bullying, please inform the school in the confident knowledge that all allegations will be seriously and carefully considered.

Engagement with parents and carers

Governors intend to survey parents again next term about engagement with the school and children's learning, specifically to find out what barriers exist to parent or carer participation in school life across all our communities. Look out next term for a parent meeting to launch the survey. Meanwhile parents and carers are encouraged to attend the regular governor drop in sessions, Headteacher updates, open mornings and other initiatives to boost parental engagement across the school.

Finally

The governors are happy to welcome onto the Governing Body new community governor, Lise Bruynooghe, and say farewell and thanks to Vivien Frank whose term of office has come to an end. The governors also want to welcome the new PTA team, Mary, Rosy and Lucy, and thank Grace and Emma and Marie for a fantastic Winter Fair. We also congratulate the school for securing Arts Mark Gold. To all the children and staff and to all the parents, carers and members of the community who volunteer their time and talent, the governors would like to say many thanks to all of you and wish you a happy new year.

To find out more about the Governing Body see the attached list of governors or go to the school's website where full Governing Body minutes can also be viewed. If you have any comments or suggestions we can be contacted by e-mail at the address below or drop us a note.

Best wishes

Governing Body

Brookfield Primary School

govs@brookfield.camden.sch.uk

December 2013