



Uplands Primary School and Uplands Nursery Newsletter, July 2017

Chair's Report

Friday 21st July marks the end of my fourth and final year as Chair at Uplands, and I am pleased to report that 2016/17 has proved to be another great year for the School, Nursery and Teaching School (Forest Learning Alliance). Uplands continues to be a centre of excellence for Early Years and Primary education and, just as importantly, continues to be a safe, friendly, and fun place to be.

Governor Business

Governors have met regularly over the past year, mostly on Tuesday evenings, as a Full Governing Body or as sub-committees, such as Finance, Teaching and Learning, and Premises. Even over my short time as chair, governor responsibilities and, therefore, involvement in the daily life of the school, have increased significantly and the days are long gone since governing bodies purely kept an eye on how well the school was doing, from afar. Today, the old adage "if it ain't broke, don't fix it", isn't good enough. Today, our primary role is to hold the headteacher to account with regard to all aspects of school life. Sounds pretty draconian, doesn't it? In simple terms, this means we make sure that the school is operating as it should be, legally, morally, within budget and in line with the current School Development Plan. Meetings include regular agenda items, where we receive information and progress reports, seeking clarification where required, challenging where appropriate and agreeing further actions where necessary. We also regularly find ourselves congratulating the school on its many successes. Minutes are meticulously recorded by our Clerk, Mrs. Jane Steadman. Meetings are generally good fun and we laugh a lot.

During the year, we were sad to lose Katherine Gilbert and Bob Piggin from the fold, after many years' service. Katherine's wise counsel and attention to detail proved invaluable as Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee, and Bob Piggin's head for figures was vital, as Chair of Finance, in helping us to understand how the money works. Bob Worthington, a very long-term friend of Uplands, also retired as a governor, although you may still find him mending a fence, painting a gate, or blowing leaves somewhere on the site. Our sincere thanks go to them for their commitment to the school and we wish them well for the future.

We also welcomed Helen O'Keeffe, who left working as a Teaching Assistant in July 2016, only to be appointed to our governing body that same month, as a co-opted governor. We also appointed Andy Bellamy as a co-opted governor, Ruth Deacon as an Associate Member and Andy Batty was duly elected as a parent governor this year. We wish them long and happy careers as Uplands governors.

Management Re-structure

In September 2015, as part of our succession planning, Ms. Anita Warwick moved from Headteacher to Executive Headteacher and Mr. Phil Sherwood was appointed by the governors as Head of School. This structure has now been in place for two years and has proved very successful. Continuing our succession planning, from September 2017 Ms. Warwick's role will be entirely with the Forest Learning Alliance. Mr. Sherwood will become Headteacher, which means he will assume overall responsibility for Uplands School and Uplands Nursery. Both roles will report directly to the governing body. We wish them both great success in their new roles.

SATs 2017

These are once again outstanding results at both Key Stage 1 and 2 and significantly better than borough and national averages. Congratulations to Mr. Sherwood and the team and, of course, the children, on producing another magnificent set of results.

Nursery

Uplands Nursery continues to provide a well-resourced, safe environment in which to prepare the youngest ones for the step up into full time school. We are now recognised as one of the top ten nurseries in the South East by daynurseries.co.uk, with whom we are registered. The daynurseries.co.uk Top 10 Nursery Awards 2017 highlight the most recommended nurseries in each region of the UK. The awards are based on over 28,000 reviews from parents, relatives and guardians of children who attend the nurseries. Congratulations to Mrs. Evans and the team.

The Teaching School

The Forest Learning Alliance continues to grow in scope and reputation as Ms. Warwick seeks out new opportunities to train and develop education practitioners. An example of these is a project on the Isle of Wight, providing four-day courses for teachers and supporting one school in its efforts to become a teaching school. Hot off the press is the news that the FLA has been accredited to provide the New National Professional Qualification for Headship programme, pending final checks and audits. This is in addition to already providing similar programmes for Senior and Middle Leaders. It is believed that we are the only teaching school in Berkshire to be accredited in this way.

In Conclusion

Uplands is an excellent school, professionally run, by a group of people passionate about educating children. It is also a really friendly place to be and I will miss my regular visits, the meetings and coffee in the staff room. I would like to thank our governors for their commitment to the school throughout the year, in particular, Helen Ayling, for co-chairing my last year and our Clerk, Jane Steadman, without whom it would be very difficult to function. I would also, once again, congratulate Uplands Primary – Ms. Warwick, Mr. Sherwood, Teachers, Teaching Assistants, all support staff, school governors, parents and, most of all, the children, on another brilliant year.

Wishing Uplands every success in the future,

John Farrell, Co-Chair of Governors

Governor Meeting Attendance

As a governor, an integral part of our role is the commitment to attending meetings. For 2016-17 there has been a total of 25 meetings, either Full Governing Body meetings, which all governors attend, or committee meetings. Please see the list of governors at the end of this newsletter to see which governor attends which committee. The various committees have differing schedules of meetings, though on average we all attend two meetings a month during the academic year.

It is a challenge that falls to the Chair of Committees to ensure that meetings are kept to time and on agenda. Our average attendance for all governors across the year is 75%. The average attendance at each meeting is 76%. More details of our attendance is on the website.

Our governors will spend approx. 2.5 hours a week on their governing role, including meetings and the preparation needed for meetings. We have found that if a governor invests an hour of preparation for a meeting (reading documents, preparing questions) then this can significantly help to reduce the length of the meeting.

Teaching and Learning Committee

The Teaching and Learning Committee have two meetings each term. Throughout the year, we focus on the progress, achievement and attainment of pupils, and how that is measured, as well as reviewing policies, behaviour and teaching. As always, it has been another busy, interesting and rewarding year.

In October, Miss Judge presented an Early Years report. Attainment and progress in Reception are both strong, this is helped by the good links with our Nursery staff, which makes the transition into school easier. The children also have PE sessions with Mr Archer.

Mr. Sherwood presented the RAISEonline data in November. This is a statistical analysis prepared each year by the Department for Education and monitors the school's attainment and achievement. The 2016 Key Stage 2 results were significantly above the national average in all subjects, with 90% of children working at the expected level in Reading and 26% working at greater depth. In writing, 87% achieved working at the expected level with 19% working at greater depth. The writing results were particularly pleasing as this has been a focus for the school. The maths results were also very strong at both levels. All results were either above, or significantly above national average. Importantly, these results also showed only very small gaps of attainment between Pupil Premium and non-Pupil Premium pupils and between SEND and non-SEND pupils. The School remains committed to closing these even further.

Working at the expected standard	School	National
Reading	90%	66%
Writing	87%	74%
Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar	94%	72%
Maths	97%	70%
Writing and Maths (combined)	87%	53%
Working at greater depth within the expected standard	School	National
Reading	26%	19%
Writing	19%	15%
Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar	45%	22%
Maths	26%	17%
Writing and Maths (combined)	6%	5%

These results are a reflection of the tremendous hard work and commitment shown by Uplands' staff and pupils. The required standard of achievement from 2016 is that 85% of pupils should achieve this expected standard in reading, writing and maths. Uplands pupils and staff have exceeded these figures in all areas and have well surpassed national figures. Well done!

Each term, we review the progress of all pupils in reading, writing, maths and science, by year group, as well as SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) and pupil premium. This enables us to monitor where extra support is required to attain the high level of achievement the school is aiming for, and the impact of that support, some of which is government funded.

In November, Mrs Deacon presented a very informative presentation on Computing to the committee. Following a Governor Open Day in the last academic year, where it was noted that not every child had access to their own laptop in a computing lesson, this led the school to reflect on their hardware resources. To this end, the PTA had kindly agreed to fundraise for the contract to have additional laptop capacity within the school. This should lead to having 45+ laptops within school (in addition to 30 iPads) to ensure all children have access to a device when they need to. Mrs Deacon also took us through the new Computing curriculum. Also in November, Mrs Smith and Mrs Brooker gave us a report on Science, of which they both share the subject leadership. Progress and attainment are both steady with learning objectives building effectively on learning in previous years. Future plans include building a sensory area and working on developing cross-curricular links in order to increase the number of pupils achieving greater depth levels.

In January, we welcomed Mrs Parrett and Mrs Mockridge, who gave an overview of History and Geography. These humanities subjects are taught as part of 'Topic.' We were shown a range of engaging and interesting resources which made us all feel very jealous we weren't still at school!

In March, Mrs Thornton and Mrs Paget came to talk to us about Design and Technology, Art and Music. D&T is taught as part of 'Topic' with children building on their skills year on year. Future plans include plans to enhance the outside area for Reception. Art remains a popular subject, mostly taught as a separate subject in art topics. Extra-curricular Art clubs are also very popular with the pupils. Future plans include, pupils creating murals in outside spaces and inviting local artists in to school to motivate pupils. Music is taught mainly by Mrs Devine and by some classroom teachers. Outside music agencies, such as Berkshire Maestros, have been impressed by the Music lessons they have observed.

In March, Governors also did a 'walkabout' to view noticeboards around the school, taking note of British Values. We noted that: all boards were current and were obviously updated regularly, there were excellent displays of art and writing, boards were professionally displayed, school values were displayed in classrooms and main hall, democracy seen in communal areas with displays of Houses (Captains), School Council, Sports Ambassadors, rule of Law and Mutual Respect (School values in classrooms and school hall and classes displayed their own class rules, individual liberty), lots of pictures of children following their interests, large sporting display, tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs, including religious festivals and different cultures celebrated in the entrance display board.

In May, Mrs Parrett gave us a very informative presentation on her role as SEND Coordinator, with details of identification, types of provision available and impact.

In June, Mr Archer and Miss Savage gave us an overview of the work they have been doing throughout the school to raise standards in PE and sport. Pupils' enthusiasm, involvement and achievement in sport has improved as well as the upskilling of teachers. It has also been noted that Uplands sports teams have surpassed past achievements – this is testament to the excellent work of Mr Archer in particular. Mrs Rogers also gave subject report on Modern Foreign Languages. We looked at a selection of exercise books and heard about the enthusiasm of children in languages. French displays around the school are prominent. It was also noted that many ex-Uplands pupils achieved awards at Sandhurst School's Celebration of Success evening in languages showing that they have excellent foundations from primary school. Governors highly commend both Mr Archer and Mrs Rogers, neither of whom are qualified teachers, but whose enthusiasm and leadership in their respective subjects was very impressive.

We have reviewed several policies this year including: Visitors in Schools, Physical Restraint, Intimate Care, Safeguarding and Child protection; E-safety, and Home School Agreement. All of these policies are available on the school website.

It has been my first year as Chair of the TLC and I have hugely enjoyed the experience. I would like to thank the staff for the informative presentations and contributions they have delivered to the meetings, and to all members of the committee for their hard work and dedication throughout the year, especially our clerk, Jane Steadman. Everyone strives to achieve more and it is always a pleasure to be in school and experience the enthusiasm and pride shown by pupils, staff and parents.

Dan Swanton, Chair of Teaching and Learning Committee

Premises Committee

The Premises Committee has the responsibility to ensure that the school's buildings and grounds are well maintained and provide a safe environment for the pupils and staff by ensuring compliance with Health and Safety regulations. This year we have re-vamped the outside classroom to get it back to being a useable area. The floor has been scrubbed and washed, woodwork and beds rebuilt, posts reset, woodwork painted and new benches and tables purchased. I think we can all agree that this has made a massive difference and we have already made use of this space on a number of occasions.

The 'big playground' has been levelled, skimmed and remarked. We owe a very big thank you to Mr Ewing for his very kind donation of time and materials. The flower beds around the school have been re-stocked and a number of trees were cut back in the school grounds and the driveway. The athletics sandpit (long jump) has been dug out, relined and filled with new sand. A triangular prism structure has been built to protect the pit from the elements. Lastly, over the summer break, the second phase of the roof replacement will be completed by the Local Authority. In addition, the school's emergency plan has been updated and the regular review of our risk assessments has also taken place this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those that have been involved in any of the works that have been carried out this year. Your time and efforts are much appreciated and invaluable in maintaining our school environment.

Samantha McCann, Chair of Premises Committee

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee oversees the School's Financial Budgets and is responsible for managing and monitoring the income and expenditure ensuring that the School operates within its budgets and that funds are spent for the educational purposes of the school. It scrutinizes financial information and develops policies to ensure the school remains financially stable for the future. The primary funding for Uplands Primary School and Uplands Nursery comes from Bracknell Forest Council and amounted to £925,000 and, with the added funding for our Teaching School, our overall annual budget is now in the region of £1.25million. We started the year with a carry forward of reserves of £54,000 and our budget for the year to March 2017 (including Nursery and Teaching School) was for a small deficit of £1,375; we closed the financial year with a deficit £2,591, leaving a carried forward surplus into 2017/18 budget of £51,000 (including Teaching School surplus, to be spent on Teaching School projects).

Uplands is not immune to the financial challenges facing all schools with increasing costs and real-term funding cuts. Although these very restricted budgets inevitably have an impact on our school, we remain focused on continuing to maintain Uplands as an outstanding Primary School, with an excellent Nursery and a committed Teaching School which will help numerous schools to improve in the challenging circumstances faced and therefore providing the very best education for our children and the wider community. We will therefore focus on exercising very tight control on our spending, and achieving reductions where possible, as our costs, particularly for staffing, will increase year on year, and the recent decision to focus the leadership of the school will only strengthen in this area. Our Budget for 2017/18 will show an almost breakeven for the School and Nursery, and a surplus of £7,000 for Teaching School which is, in this present climate, a true reflection of the dedicated Uplands team.

The Governing Body are satisfied that the agreed budget is comprising realistic income and prudent spending and provides a sound basis for maintaining our high standards at the School, and our thanks go to the School Business Manager and the School Leadership Team for their detailed care and diligence of our finances over the past year. Thank you.

Seona Beatson, Chair of Finance Committee

Becoming a Parent Governor

There will be a vacancy for a parent governor to serve on the governing body of Uplands Primary School and Uplands Nursery in September. We are very keen to encourage parents (or people with parental responsibilities) of registered pupils to nominate themselves to fill this vacancy.

Parent governors are elected by and from other parents, and are vital to our governing body. They share equally with other governors the responsibility for carrying out the governing body's wide range of responsibilities. Governors do not run the school day to day, as their role is at the strategic or policy-making level in the school. You do not have to be an expert on education to be a school governor, and we value the variety of experience that governors can bring to the role. The biggest attribute you need to bring is a passion for education and a commitment to continuous school improvement that enables the best possible outcomes for our children.

The governing body's main tasks are:

- to ensure that the school has a clear vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- to hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and the performance management of staff; and
- to oversee the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

I shall write to you in September with further details, and invite you to nominate yourself to stand as a parent governor.

Jane Steadman, Clerk to the Governors

List of current governors and their roles

Name	Category	Committees and Posts	Term Ends
Mr John Farrell	Local Authority	Co-Chair of Governors Teaching and Learning (TLC) Finance , Personnel, Premises and Teaching School	23/6/18
Mrs Helen Ayling BEM	Co-opted	Co-Chair of Governors TLC, Personnel, Finance and Teaching School	2/2/19
Mrs Lorraine Bracegirdle-Smith	Co-opted	TLC, Finance and Premises	2/2/19
Mr Andy Bellamy	Co-opted	To be decided	27/3/21
Mrs Alison Livingstone	Co-opted	TLC, Finance, Teaching School and Premises	30/1/21
Mrs Helen O'Keeffe	Co-opted	TLC, SEND Governor	31/8/20
Mr Philip Sherwood	Co-opted	Head of School TLC, Finance, Premises and Teaching School	2/2/19
Mrs Lucy Worthington	Co-opted	Vice Chair of Premises, TLC Pupil Premium Governor	23/2/19
Mr Bob Worthington	Co-opted	Premises	7/9/19
Mr Andy Batty	Parent	Finance	15/3/21
Mrs Seona Beatson	Parent	Chair of Finance and Personnel TLC	5/5/19
Mrs Miranda Catlin	Parent	TLC, Premises, Finance and Teaching School	5/5/19
Mr Dan Swanton	Parent	Chair of TLC Personnel and Teaching School	14/10/17
Mrs Samantha McCann	Staff	Chair of Premises TLC Development Governor	30/9/17
Ms Anita Warwick	Executive Headteacher	Finance and Teaching School	N/A
Mrs Ruth Deacon	Associate Member	TLC	27/3/21
Mrs Jane Steadman	Clerk		N/A

