

# the Governors' Newsletter



Welcome to the governors' newsletter.  
It gives a snapshot of what we've been doing  
this term.

We were pleased to welcome fifteen new  
children and their families to the school. We  
hope you are all settling in well.

Governors meet regularly to help ensure the  
school continues to provide the best possible  
education for your children.

Read on for more details.

## 'Why do schools have governors?'

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland every state school must, by law, have a governing body.

Their job is to provide strategic management to the school, acting as a 'critical friend', supporting staff but asking the difficult questions too.

Their 3 key functions are:

1. To ensure the school's strategic vision is clear. Asking, "Why are we doing it like this or not like that?"
2. To hold the Head teacher accountable for the educational performance of pupils. Asking, "Why did group x do better than group y? Why are we in the top 10 %, not the top 1%"
3. To oversee the budget, making sure all money is well spent. Asking, "What benefit do we get from spending £x on that?"

They are not involved in the day-to-day running of the school.

## Vision

Curbar Primary is a very special place – but why? And what do I / we / you mean by that?

We had an interesting session this term trying to pin down what makes Curbar Primary School special. We all agreed there was definitely something. But picking the right words was tricky. We would like your opinions to help us choose a phrase that sums up our school – we'll be giving you the opportunity to come into school in January to share your thoughts. We think there should be a clear statement or motto to help us going forwards that will communicate the heart and soul of our school to the outside world.

## School Improvement Plan (SIP)

The three school improvement priorities have remained the same this year. This does not show a lack of progress, rather our desire to have the improvements take root before we take our focus elsewhere. A reminder of the areas:

1. Raising the achievement in maths by increasing the focus on reasoning skills
2. Raising the achievement in writing, especially for those with higher ability
3. Increase the focus on being a 'good learner'

## Finance

After trimming down the size of almost every item in the budget we reached the very hard conclusion that 'we can't afford this many teaching hours for this many students'. We asked Mr Beahan and the rest of the staff to look at how the school week is organised. Could we continue to provide a full and varied curriculum but share more class time, reducing the number of staff hours worked, to enable us to balance our books? It is a credit to the staff that they were able to find a financially sustainable solution to this question that we could all agree on and build this into our planning.

You have seen this plan in progress since September and, with a few tweaks, it is working well. We will continue to review the plan and our finances in the light of our budget allocation and the number of children on roll.

## Safeguarding

Although Curbar is generally a safe and happy place there is always a need to be vigilant for any risks to our children. As the safeguarding governor George Wolfe keeps in touch with latest thinking on risks to pupils. He has attended courses run by Derbyshire County Council on the various threats to the welfare of young people from the misdeeds of adults, the internet and indoctrination by extremists. Whilst no serious threats have materialised at Curbar it is most important for school Governors, staff, parents and carers to be aware of what can happen.

The day to day management of any incidents in the school are the responsibility of the Headteacher and staff but the safeguarding governor has the responsibility of keeping in touch and seeing that proper records are kept and followed up where necessary.

## Audit

School received very positive feedback from the County's auditors in November. A team from Derbyshire Council visits every four years. They look in detail at the paperwork, processes, systems and controls in place. It gives a judgment against the government's 'Schools Financial Value Standard'. This covers not only finance, but also IT, GDPR, recruitment and buildings – everything that goes on in a school, except the children and the teaching. We are awaiting the printed results but the verbal feedback was a very positive – 'substantial assurance'. It turned out to be a useful day, with an atmosphere of 'working together to see things improve', rather than one of pointing the finger or catching people out.

Thank you to all involved, as getting everything ready for the day was no small task.

## SATs

It was great to see another year of excellent results for our SATs students. Well above the national average once again. It is a result of consistent hard work and focus across the school. Well done students, teachers and families!

## New Staff

We have advertised for two new members of staff this term. We were delighted by the calibre of applicants and were pleasingly spoilt for choice. The following appointments have been made:

Suzanne Cass will be joining us as School Business Officer, replacing Amy Rumney. Suzanne leaves behind Sheffield Business School, where she has worked in a variety of roles including Office Manager, Project Development Coordinator, Portfolio Officer and Personal Assistant.

Christian Heynes will be joining us as Class 3 teacher, replacing Lynsey Gregory. Christian has 15 years experience teaching KS2, most recently in Sheffield High School. He is also a keen sportsman, playing badminton for Derbyshire and, until recently, coaching the UK Pennyfarthing Champion!

Both will start work after the Christmas holiday. We look forward to welcoming them, getting to know them and working with them in the future.

**A reminder of who's who and their particular responsibilities:**

**Standards and Curriculum Committee**

Jane Taylor, chair of governors, SEND, Pupil Premium

Helen Walton, chair of committee

Alison Thorpe, vice chair of governors

Angie Cottle

Linda Berry

Charlotte Wright

Alan Cain

Simon Beahan

**Resource Management Committee**

Jane Taylor, chair of governors

George Wolfe, Chair of committee, Safeguarding and Anti-bullying

Raymond Griffiths

David Jackson, GDPR

Simon Beahan

John Dix, Health and Safety

Don Leitch

**Working parties to support the SIP**

Maths

Helen Walton

Alan Cain

Writing

Linda Berry

Charlotte Wright

Raymond Griffiths

Behaviour for Learning and Welfare

Simon Beahan

Alison Thorpe

Angie Cottle

You are always welcome to email governors.  
Each has an email address with the following  
format:  
firstname.surname@curbar.derbyshire.sch.uk

