

the Governors' Newsletter



A lot of work goes on behind the scenes. We thought you'd like to know.

We'd like to keep you informed about what governors have been working on. Despite this being a small school there is a lot of planning, questioning, debating, changing and improving that goes on behind the scenes. It all helps shape what will happen at school in the future. From now on we'll be publishing a newsletter at least every term.

We'd like to begin in this first edition by explaining our role and introducing ourselves to you.

Changes to governing body this year:

New Chair:

Jane Taylor

New Vice-chair:

Alison Thorpe

New Parent Governor:

Angie Cottle

New Co-opted Governor:

David Jackson

Two new Associate Members:

Alan Cain

Raymond Griffiths

'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 Headteacher 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 day-to-day running of the school.

Who are Curbar Primary School's Governors?

Jane Taylor, Chair

I was a parent governor and am now a co-opted governor. My son Isaac spent 4½ years at Curbar Primary School and is now in Year 8 at Lady Manners. My previous life involved working in Human Resources and teaching English. Since moving to Curbar I have been involved in various voluntary groups including Homestart UK, Bakewell and Eyam Community Transport and The Eastern Moors Partnership. I am on the Standards and Curriculum and Resource Management Committees. I have responsibility for Special Educational Needs and the achievement of other targeted groups of children.

Alison Thorpe, Vice Chair

I am a parent governor. I currently have a daughter, Artemis in year 5, and a son, Iskander who has just left Curbar for Lady Manners. When I am not governor-ing, I work at the Foreign Office, dividing my time between working from home in Stoney Middleton and travelling down to London. My career with the Foreign Office has taken my family and me on postings in Lebanon, Macedonia and Stockholm but we are now back in Derbyshire. I sit on the Resource Management Committee, have special responsibility for behaviour for learning and am the link governor for welfare (staff and families).

Helen Walton, Chair of Standards and Curriculum Committee

I am a parent governor with three daughters all currently attending Curbar Primary School. I am on the Standards and Curriculum Committee, with a specific focus on numeracy. In addition to School Governance I also enjoy supporting the School through volunteering and the PFTA. In addition to this I work three days a week as a Primary School Teacher in Sheffield, which offers a useful insight into school governance 'from the other side'. Please feel free to catch me at school, on Thursday and Friday pickups if you need to discuss anything.

John Dix, Chair of Resource Management Committee

My three daughters thrived during their time in Curbar Primary and are all now happily settled into Lady Manners. Professionally I started life in Quality Assurance but have now moved on and run my own business, based in Calver. I have been a governor here for over 7 years now, including a time as chair. I am on the Resource Management Committee, with special responsibility for Health and Safety.

Charlotte Wright

I'm a paediatric clinical psychologist and I work at the Children's Hospital in Sheffield. I moved out to Hathersage two years ago and am keen to get involved in the local community. I have previously volunteered with young carers, young offenders, and as a teacher in a school in Thailand; I am currently on the committee for Seven Hills Women's Institute as Assistant Treasurer. As a governor at Curbar I am on the Resource Management Committee and have a special interest in Literacy.

Simon Beahan

I am the Headteacher at Curbar Primary School. I joined the school in September 2015 having previously worked in Sheffield as an acting head and deputy head teacher at Mosborough Primary School. Before this, I spent time teaching in other schools in Sheffield, Liverpool and the Wirral. I moved to Sheffield permanently in 2001 having previously attended the University in the mid 90's. As the Headteacher, I am a member of all the committees.

Linda Berry

I am senior teacher, class one teacher and SENCo at Curbar Primary school. I joined the school in 2006 having previously worked in Lancashire. I have worked in primary education for the past 25 years, initially as a Nursery Nurse then as a teacher. I have a special interest in Special Educational needs and 3 years ago added the SENCo qualification to list of qualifications. I am on the Standards and Curriculum committee with special responsibility for Literacy.

George Wolfe

My career was as a solicitor and administrator in local government and the Peak National Park. I responded to a request for volunteers to be school governors and was governor of another school before moving on to Curbar in 2015. I have lived in Calver for 38 years and am also involved in community transport, Matlock Music, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Calver Weir and the local history group. I am on the Standards and Curriculum Committee and have special responsibility for Safeguarding.

Don Leitch

We moved to the area from London in 2009 although my wife grew up locally. My two daughters were very happy at Curbar school for several years, and are now both at Lady Manners in years 11 and 13. I have been a governor since 2012 including a spell as chair. I am now an associate member and sit on the resource management committee – given my day job in banking, I spend most of my governor time looking at budgetary and financial matters.

Angie Cottle

I am a parent governor with a son, Ludo, in class 1. I have worked in education for 22 years as an arts practitioner, 15 years of which has involved managing secondary school arts departments. Recently I have been involved writing projects in the area, including 'Little Echoes' and in 2016 was appointed Derbyshire's 'Writer in Residency'. I currently teach at Lady Manners and work as a playleader with the 623 After School Club. As a governor I am on the Standards and Curriculum Committee and have special responsibility for Literacy.

David Jackson

My working life started in the electrochemical industry, I made a career change in my 30s to work in IT, working for Royal Mail as a project Manager, transferred by Royal Mail to Chesterfield in 2000 and then joined CSC. While working for CSC I acted as a Young Business Advisor supporting a disabled group based at Chesterfield College. Since taking early retirement and moving to Froggatt a few years ago, I have become involved in a number of community activities in various roles. As a governor I am on the Resource Management Committee.

Alan Cain

I am a parent of two children at Curbar Primary, one in Class 2 and one in Class3. In my professional life I am Head of Business Continuity and Security at Manchester Metropolitan University, responsible for the protection of the 36,000 students. This includes emergency planning (fire, flood, terrorist incident) and crisis management (actual or potential adverse coverage in the press or social media). I also sit on the Prevent steering group responsible for policy relating to Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. I am on the Standards and Curriculum Committee.

Raymond Griffiths

I am a parent of a child currently in Class 1. My professional working background is in the education industry. I worked in various roles, latterly as MD, in a company supplying education resources to the primary schools market developing many of our own products and winning several major educational awards. My educational background is in Political Science and in Marketing. I am on the Resource Management Committee.

Many schools struggle to recruit enough governors. It is a credit to this school, and to the local community, that we have such a diverse and skilled group of people supporting Curbar Primary School.

We have a great village school and it is a privilege and a pleasure to be part of its future.

Next time

Future newsletters will include:

- Finance updates (It will shortly be budget setting time, always a key governor focus, and is particularly so at the moment when school finances are under particular pressure).
- Progress on our school improvement priorities
- Information gathered on governor visits
- Parent survey feedback

In the meantime

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

Here's to a fruitful 2018 for all involved with Curbar Primary School!

