

## News from the Governors

The autumn term started on a sunny September day, with new classes, new classrooms, new names to learn, wondering how everything would go this year but keen to learn new things and looking forward to the challenges ahead and I imagine the children were feeling much the same way as the teachers! We had new members of staff joining at the beginning of the year and lots of new children and parents joining us. Welcome! I hope you have all enjoyed your first term at Dale Hall, we are delighted to welcome you to our school.

I would also like to say a big thank you and goodbye to Christine Hayward, our vice chair for many years and who was our governor responsible for safeguarding, also goodbye and thank you to Alice Hardie who was a parent governor for four years, voicing the parent view point and parent experience and to Laura Goodfellow our staff governor. We really appreciate all of the time and support you have given.

This term we welcome Emma Thomson on to the governing body and wish her good luck as she settles into her role. Also, welcome to Frith Allum who has been voted on to the governing body by the staff.

Other governors have stepped up to take on new roles, John Clinton, a retired Senior School Headteacher has become Vice Chair and Sarah Sheridan, a retired teacher took on the role of Special Education Needs Coordinator. Sarah will be doing some training for this next term and Ivy Scott will be supporting her, having stepped away from SEND after nearly 4 years as she takes on new challenges in the Finance Team. I have taken on Safeguarding, an area I have always enjoyed, helping to ensure that our staff and children are safe in school. I supported the outgoing Safeguarding Governor so it isn't new to me. I have been on lots of courses this term to help me to make a good start. Look out for me next term at the Online Safety Day.

## Governors back in school

I have really enjoyed this term, for two years governance has been done online, to protect the school staff and children and to protect the governors themselves. It is so much nicer to be back in school and be able to talk to staff, pupils and parents in person. I can not tell you how great it is to actually see everyone.

In September, we kicked off the term with a number of governors meeting in school. We spent the morning talking about how we do governance at Dale Hall and what we could do better. A huge thank you to the governors who attended; Hansa, Martyn, Trish, Christine, John and myself. Overwhelmingly the message was that we wanted to spend more time in school, we wanted to talk to parents and learn what is good about the school and what could be improved. We wanted to see the children in class and talk to the staff. In the afternoon we

walked around the school in small groups and reacquainted ourselves. We saw the fabulous new look to year 6 classes that we had talked about in meetings and the new use of the old library and computer room and a number of other improvements that we have only been able to discuss. It was great to be in school and be welcomed back by all of the staff. Thank you everyone for smiling your hellos to us. It was a lovely, warming experience.

I spoke to lots of pupils and parents at the Share Afternoons this term, thank you also to Lesley Fisk (Governor) who went to the EYFS share afternoon. If I didn't manage to get to your share afternoon or to chat to you, look out for me at the next one. I really enjoyed joining in with the share afternoons this term and meeting parents and children. In year 5 we made Tudor wall hangings by weaving squares of wool which could be joined together to keep the wind out of draughty homes. Thank you very much to Mr Parker, Miss Bailey and Miss Severley. It was a really lovely afternoon and my first opportunity to go into classes and spend time.

In year 3, we made crocodiles, linked to the book that year 3 were reading, Crinklecrax by Philip Ridley. It was a lovely afternoon and there were some fabulous crocodiles. It was a bit like a mad bake off, you have one hour to create a crocodile with egg boxes, cereal boxes, any other scrounged material, paint and glue. Lots and lots of fun. Thank you very much to Mr Catchpole and Miss Watts who let me join in the fun.

Year 2 made castles and there were some great examples of delegation from the pupils as they got their parents involved, with parents working out how to add turrets and moving drawbridges, some really great teamwork and artwork. Thank you very much to Mrs Catermole, Mrs Killeen, Mrs Ross and a huge thank you to everyone who supported and helped the share afternoons work so smoothly as well as clearing up afterwards! Also a big thank you to the parents who were able to attend and make it so special. It was lovely to see everyone and I really enjoyed chatting to so many people, it was an honour to be able to share it with you.

Later in the term, John Clinton (Vice Chair of Governors) and I joined the parents evenings and talked to parents about what they like and what could be improved about the school. I was overwhelmed by the positive energy and happiness of the parents. So many parents have nothing but good to say about the school, about how welcoming and supportive the teaching staff are, how well the school has dealt with problems and the support given to pupils when they need a little extra to thrive.

It was clear to me that one of the things which is important to parents, on top of the warm welcome, is the schools ability to handle problems, lines of communication and keeping parents informed. There is a huge amount of general information on the website about how the school works but I would particularly like to draw your attention to the page "Getting in touch" which explains the lines of communication and who to speak to. If you are worried about something or want to understand why or are unhappy about an action. Do get in touch, we rely on you to let us know when something is wrong. Most problems are solved easily, we all learn from the experience and you will get to know the school and the class teacher better.

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## Work in meetings

Much of the governance work takes place in meetings, whether they are 1 to 1 talking about particular subjects or committee meetings. Last term Trish Clarke and Lesley Fisk talked to children about their learning and how they learn. John Clinton has spent time each term talking to Frith Allum about the data generated by each class to see how well children are learning. Both John and Frith report back to governors so that we all know how children are doing and the steps the school puts in place to enable children to thrive and have the opportunity to reach further and higher. It all helps us to build our knowledge of the school and to ask better questions.

A big thank you to Mrs Graham and Miss Bailey who joined the learning and development committee and talked about their plans to develop the English and History curriculum. Each term we talk to two members of staff about their role. Thank you to all of the teachers who have spent time talking with governors and explaining their plans last year also.

There are lots of lovely plans for December with Christmas lunch, school performances and PTA Christmas Fayre. I am looking forward to joining some of them. Good luck and a huge thank you to everyone who has worked so hard to make all of those things so special.

If there is anything in the bulletin you would like to talk about, or have suggestions for topics for the next bulletin, do get in touch.

Wishing you a very merry Christmas.

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Chair of Governors

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