

Governors' Newsletter -Summer 2014

Message from the Governors

There have been a lot of changes in personnel over the last 6 months. After 8 years, Lisa Venables –Millfields parent but has been serving as Community Governor is bowing out after coming to the end of her term as a community governor. Alistair Dent who has been chair of Finance Committee also comes to the end of his term as parent governor. Rikki Lanigan who has been the Chair of governors leaves us as well for a new life in Bristol. Damien Holt was recently elected to succeed as Chair of governors. We would like to thank all of the outgoing team for their hard work and service to the Millfields community over the years.

The oncoming wave brings in Dez Veares (Local Authority Governor), Denyse Whiller (Community Governor) and Hannelore Bout (recently elected Parent Governor).

Currently however all governing bodies are under instructions to reconstitute during the academic year 2014-15, ready for implementation in September 2015, and there are new guidelines about what will constitute a governing body and the ways that members are found. We are navigating this path over the coming years and will let you know of the changes when they are agreed amongst the governors.

Magnus McGrandle (parent governor) is part of a group of governors from a dozen or so Hackney primary schools, who are all members of the HTSA (Hackney Teaching Schools Alliance), looking at ways to make governing bodies more effective; specifically, ways to recruit, retain and replace governors with the right skills for the job.

What do Governors do exactly?

We attend meetings each term:

- The Curriculum and Well Being Committee looks at data about learning, achievement and progression etc and asks for presentations from subject leaders and link governors.
- MAG (Millfields Attainment Group) looks at progress and attainment data and is a regular –termly, health 'check' on all areas at Millfields
- The Finance and Planning Committee looks at the money that has been and will be spent as well as issues of health and safety etc.
- The Full Governing Body Committee scrutinises the data from both sub-committees as well as the head teachers report.

We serve as link governors:

Each link governor is closely allied to a subject (i.e. Literacy) or other area (i.e. Safeguarding). The link governor makes visits to the school to liaise and be kept up to date with the member of staff responsible for that area and so is able to feed back to the governors when necessary. (See below for list of Link Governors)

We sit on panels.

Such as disciplinary panels, interview panels, complaint panels etc.

Governors are drawn from the community, from the staff, from the L.E.A, and from parents but they are not a conduit for the concerns of the group they come from, rather a means to get balanced range of people on the governing body.

Governors are not involved in the day to day running of school. Usually if a parent comes to us with an issue or concern we point them to the schools own procedures for dealing with such things (speaking to the teacher/head etc.). Governors would only become involved in the rare occasions when something has escalated through a complaint or disciplinary procedure.

[Profile on Governors](#)

[Allen Abramson –Parent Governor](#)

Why did you become a Governor?

I became a Governor because I take seriously the notion of 'community' in the title Millfields Community School. It seems vital to me that the school works for the community but equally that the community takes as much part as it usefully can in the success of the school. In this context, I felt that School Governance is the best way that I, personally, can play a useful role. Also, my job at the university consumes much too much time, and much of my spare time is involved with family. I still wanted though to be communally involved in some way. Being a school governor at Millfields is the way in which I imagine I'm sort of being a citizen as well as an individual.

What are your roles?

I'm a Parent Governor and I sit on the Curriculum and Standards Sub-Committee and also linked governor for PE and Science.

What are the best and worst things about what you do as a Governor?

The best thing about being governor is that I do feel that it gives me the chance to be and feel a part of the local community. Equally, though, I leave each meeting thinking that Millfields really is being expertly run and that I can testify to this 'from the inside'. There are no truly bad things about being a governor except, perhaps, the feeling that Government expects governors (who are voluntary) to take on increasing number of roles and be better trained. Fine: but the 'job' is voluntary and even before adding to the expectation, governors struggle to fulfil all of what the role demands.

What impression do you get of Millfields (as a governor)?

I can see - in a way that I couldn't if I weren't a governor - that Millfields is a really fine school that knows where it is going, what its strengths are, how it can be strengthened even more. I can also see that it is a 'happy' school and why this is so

[Joe Walker –Parent Governor](#)

Why did you become a Governor?

My son started in reception this year and I wanted to use the skills and experience I have to play a positive and engaging role in the life of the school community. I'm passionate about education and how a school like Millfields delivers inclusive, quality and creative education for all children. Becoming a parent governor has enabled me to play a role in supporting and shaping these values and ensuring that Millfields continues to be a great and exciting place to learn and grow.

What are your roles?

As well as attending the full governors meetings, I am a member of the Curriculum Committee and the link governor for Early Years. Over the course of this year I have spent time getting to know the staff and volunteers at the Children's Centre. I have worked alongside the head of Early Year's supporting Vicky and the team as they have developed key services for families and children, ensuring that we are reflecting the needs and the issues that many people in our community face.

What are the best and worst things about what you do as a Governor?

In my first year as a governor I have spent a lot of time listening and learning from others and getting to know the school. It has been a privilege to work with a great team of Governors that possess such a wide range of skills, experience and knowledge. Supporting Jane and the team has been a huge inspiration as I have witnessed their boundless energy, commitment, professionalism and dedication to all children in the school. I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of the team and very much look forward to the year ahead. As for the worst things about being a Governor, I really don't have anything to add...

What impression do you get of Millfields (as a governor)?

Everyone I meet around Hackney in my professional life always has a good thing to say about Millfields Community School. I'm proud to represent the school as a Governor. It has a reputation as a school that delivers high standards of teaching and a caring, creative and fun environment for its children which goes beyond the school gates.

[Angela Donnelly –Parent Governor](#)

Why did you become a Governor?

I stood for election in autumn 2013 because I was keen to play an active part in the life of the school my children attend and to ensure a strong relationship between the school and the community it is part of. I'm passionate about the importance of education in giving everyone a platform for success in life.

What are your roles?

I am Link governor for maths and PHSE and a member of curriculum and finance & human resources committees.

What are the best and worst things about what you do as a Governor?

Best- being part of the school community and seeing how committed the team at Millfields are to developing our young people.

Worst- trying to get my head around all the jargon and the statistical targets which the school is expected to perform against.

What impression do you get of Millfields (as a governor)?

Every time I go into the school I am amazed by how calm and controlled it feels and delighted by how enthusiastic pupils and staff are. It's a massive school in limited space yet it had a great atmosphere and pupils are all known individually.

[Link Governors](#)

Sandy Stanton

*Children in Care
Child Protection and Safeguarding*

Damian Holt

*Health and Safety
Attendance
Behaviour*

Gordon Murray

*Literacy
Religious Education*

Angela Donnelly

*Maths
PHSCE and SRE / Healthy Schools*

Allen Abramson

Science

Magnus McGrandle

*ICT
Music
History
Geography
Partnerships –HTSA*

Joe Walker

*Children Centre
Physical Education*

Chris Belgrave

Extended Schools

Dez Veares

Inclusion -Special Educational Needs

From the sub committees:

Curriculum and Well Being Committee

Our third visit from the SIP (School Improvement Partner) as part of the local authority checks and balances of schools, focused on leadership and management, has just finished and we await the report. Over the year however the school has put in place measures that have provided impressive progressions in attainment in core subjects and a narrowing of the gap between Pupil Premium Grant eligible children and others. We continue to have a small team of MAG (Millfields Attainment Group) governors who scrutinise attainment data throughout the year and feedback to the committee.

Gordon Murray -Chair

Finance, Human Resources and Premises Committee

We ended 13/14 with a very small deficit (£6K, or 0.2% of the overall budget), which is much better than we were hoping earlier in the year. We have agreed the 14/15 budget which allows an 8% increase in spending vs. the previous year. However when we take into account the fact that we're starting 14/15 with a deficit, while we started 13/14 with quite a large surplus, we actually have slightly less money to spend than last year. Therefore we'll be monitoring the situation very carefully throughout the year.

Alistair Dent - Chair