

THE SQUIRREL

Windhill Primary and Nursery School
Governing Body Newsletter



No. 4: July 2009

'Outstanding' Displays

- Governors have received the summer term **Progress Review Report** from Windhill's School Improvement Partner. Highlights include:
 - The school's focus on writing has been effective in raising standards. Improvements are also apparent in specific areas such as raised expectations, improved planning, increased involvement in pupils assessing their work, better strategies to involve pupils in building on their learning and improved feedback to pupils.'
 - 'It was clear that staff have successfully created an outstanding learning environment for the children. Outdoor areas are organised particularly well and in each classroom and in all of the communal areas there are high quality displays that (i) provide guidance, prompts and factual information, (ii) engage children in investigations, puzzles and challenges, (iii) stimulate interest in a wide variety of subjects and (iv) emphasise literacy and numeracy skills.'
 - 'Pupils work well independently and collaboratively and they show interest in their work. Increased opportunities for speaking, listening and drama have been beneficial in raising standards, particularly in literacy. Cross-curricular links are helping pupils to understand what they are learning.'

Windhill Children's Centre

Children's centres are being set up throughout the country by the Government to provide a range of flexible services for families and carer's with children under 5 years of age. The mission of the **Windhill Children's Centre** is to enhance the wellbeing of children & families in the local community by:

- Working in partnership with key agencies e.g. In the area of health.
- Supporting mothers, fathers, grandparents and carer's.
- Ensuring that activities are accessible to all.
- Improving outcomes, as set out in the Every Child Matters framework.

The new Windhill Children's Centre Web Site can be found at:

<http://www.windhillchildrenscentres.org.uk>

Governors are Accountable!

The roles* of any school governing body can be broken down into three main categories: to act as a critical friend to the school, to be strategic and to be accountable. In this edition we look at the last of these in more detail.

Accountability Role

- The Governing Body must conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement.
 - Governors have the right to discuss, question and refine proposals and should respect the professional roles of the Headteacher and other staff, and their responsibilities for the management of the school.
 - Governors must be prepared to account for the school's overall performance and to explain its decisions and actions to anyone who has a legitimate interest.
 - The Governing Body will need to account to the whole school community for the performance of the school.
- ❑ * Please see previous editions for an overall summary and articles about being a critical friend and strategy.

An Interview with Anne Jones, Staff Governor

How long have you been a governor and what roles do you have?

I have been a governor since the 1980s when my eldest daughter started at The Havers Infant School. I have been both parent and teacher governor and at one point Special Educational Needs Governor.



Why did you decide to get involved as a governor? *To become more involved in the school community as a whole.*

What has been your biggest challenge whilst being a governor? *Time management, making sure that I can attend as many meetings as possible, especially when my children were small.*

What do you like the most about Windhill Primary School? *It is an extremely inclusive school with a very friendly and non-threatening ethos. The children are wonderful.*

If you could change one thing about Windhill Primary School what would it be? *The public perception of it that still exists in places – there still tends to be some negativity.*

What is the best and worst thing about being a governor? *The best thing is the feeling that one is helping in a small way. I can't really think of a worst thing.*

When you are not involved in governor business, what do you do? *I am a Year 3 teacher and Inclusion Co-ordinator at Windhill. Out of school I work in my garden, read a lot and enjoy time with my family.*



Governing Body Objectives 2008/09 – Our Achievements.

- **Objective 1: Ensure Governing Body has the required financial competencies in order to comply with new financial management standards.**
 - Skills audit completed.
 - Plan to review school policy and practice against the standard drawn up.
 - New Chair of Resources Committee has undertaken finance / FMSiS training.

- **Objective 2: Improve links with staff and pupils.**
 - New year group link format adopted. A number of visits carried out or planned..
 - Best practice guidelines produced for effective governor year group links. Practice to be continually monitored and reviewed.

- **Objective 3: Increase communication / visibility with both parents and staff.**
 - New intermediate web site in place. New permanent version is built and content being populated.
 - New Governor notice board in place and used for open evening and induction evenings.
 - Regular copies of *The Squirrel* distributed to staff and parents.

- **Objective 4: Become better at sharing workload to complete key tasks.**
 - Table of responsibilities produced.
 - Chair and Vice-Chair roles profiles completed.
 - Tasks were appropriately assigned based on a balance of preferences, skills, availabilities and workload.
 - New community governor and LEA governor appointed in autumn and spring term s respectively.

- **Objective 5: Make better use of available training.**
 - Prompt and regular communication of available courses consistently achieved.
 - Increase in number of Governors attending training courses.

- **Objective 6: Ensure completion of outstanding documentation.**
 - School Uniform Policy approved in autumn term.
 - Draft Security Policy completed. Staff to be consulted on the proposed policy before it is approved at the 2009 autumn term Resources committee meeting.
 - Accessibility, Gender & Disability Equality Schemes Approved in autumn term.

Governing Body: Some Key Meeting Points

- The Children's Centre and School **budgets** for 2009/10 were both approved.
- Governors received the review of the **School Development Plan**.
- The Headteacher reported that he had recently updated both the **School Prospectus** and **School Profile**.
- Governors' adopted a new **Annual Health and Safety Inspection Checklist**.
- Governors reviewed progress with the new **Governor-Class Link Scheme** that had been adopted to enable governors to form links with particular year groups.



MESSAGE

FROM THE CHAIR



2008/09 Achievements

I am pleased to report that your Governing Body has had an excellent year and it is pleasing to see we have made a measurable impact in many areas. Along with the accomplishments against our objectives we have also achieved the following:

- *Support of the staff and pupils of Hillmead School after the devastating fire that destroyed their school in early December.*
- *We acquired lead agency status for the phase 3 Children's Centres in Bishop's Stortford.*
- *School security was discussed and proactively improved, in particular actions to improve (1) the safe movement of people through the car parks and (2) the general security of site and buildings during the school day.*
- *We formally changed the school's name to Windhill Primary and Nursery School in order to give greater recognition to our excellent nursery.*

Also, I would like to thank Mrs. Mills for being a skilled and reliable Clerk to the Governing Body and for all of her assistance.

2009/10

Next year will continue to support Mr. Clark and his staff in the school's mission to raise standards further and continually increase pupil numbers. At the same time we will make sure that we monitor progress effectively and that we embrace new government initiatives in a positive way, e.g. the new OFSTED Primary Framework, the Primary Curriculum Review and exploiting ICT to improve parental engagement (including online reporting).

It just leaves me to wish everyone a great summer and, if you have any comments, issues or questions, please contact any of the governors via the school office. Finally, a reminder that minutes from Governor meetings are available to view – again, just contact the school office.

John Darker
Chair of Governors



Future Meeting Dates

Full Governing Body:

9th November 2009 at 6.00pm
8th March 2010 at 6.00pm

Resources Committee:

8th October 2009 at 5.30pm
1st February 2010 at 5.30pm

Standards and Achievement Committee:

29th September 2009 at 5.00pm
8th February 2010 at 5.00pm

Children's Centre Committee:

22nd September 2009 at 4.00pm
25th January 2010 at 4.00pm