

Dear Parents & Carers

The full governing body met last week and as is custom at this time of year we have appointed our working committees and key roles. I am delighted to have been re-elected as your Chair and wanted to take this opportunity to tell you more about our work as ORPS governors: how we work, where the school is now and, in particular, our immediate priorities for building on the significant progress made in recent years, and the vision we and the School's senior leadership team share.

### **How we work**

As school governors we are bound by a code of conduct and carry out our duties according to a legal framework. The governing body is made up of individuals from the parent community, the local community, and school staff. This year we have two new Parent Governors. The governing body's main duty is to plan for the School's future and regularly review current performance, progress against the school's development plan, policies and data to make sure that the School fulfils its legal requirements to all stakeholders, is financially sound and is making good academic progress. There is a clear division between the strategic responsibilities of governors and the role of the Head teacher, who leads and oversees the everyday management and operations of the School in conjunction with a senior leadership team of Deputy Heads, an Assistant Head and a Business Manager.

The full governing body meets 6 times during the school year but most of our work is done within our sub-committees. The Teaching and Learning Committee oversees the quality of teaching and pupil progress and attainment, as well as safeguarding issues. The Resources Committee is responsible for finance, staffing and health and safety. Further information about our committees can be found on the School website.

The governors and school leadership team put current and future pupils and families at the heart of all the decisions we make. We seek input into our planning from the School community as much as we can and although we do want to listen to all views it will never be possible to take every opinion into account when making a decision.

### **Where we are now**

Our school has undergone a significant transformation in the past couple of years and we acknowledge that the extent and rapid pace of change may have caused anxiety in some elements of the School community. The changes and decisions that have already been tasked were taken to raise teaching and learning standards quickly, to ensure we have measurable, outstanding impact from the School's resources as well as to increase the capacity of the School, i.e., to meet the needs of current pupils and prepare for the future growth in pupil numbers.

The catalyst for this programme of change came in 2011 when the School received its third consecutive 'Satisfactory' judgement from Ofsted. Governors recognised that rapid progress was urgently needed to address the concerns highlighted by Ofsted before the next inspection took place. The appointment in autumn 2012 of Deborah Howard as acting Head teacher had an immediate and a continuing positive impact, evident in the improvements seen in the quality of

teaching and learning, in SEND provision, safeguarding and in the financial position of the School. Here are just some of our recent success stories:

- we have seen a 30% increase in children achieving the GLD (Good Level of Development) in Early Years Foundation Stage
- we exceed local and national averages for Year 1 phonics screening
- we exceed local and national averages in all subjects across Key Stage 1 and have seen stronger performance in school
- we exceed local and national averages for reading, writing and maths combined for Key Stage 2, and have seen a positive 3 year trend and significant differences each year compared to national averages
- through regular pupil progress meetings our teachers know all their pupils well
- the School's first ever Good judgement from Ofsted in 2013

Governors provide both challenge and support to the school's leadership team and, in addition, all areas of school life are regularly reviewed and assessed by external educational professionals, including National Leaders of Education who are leaders of outstanding schools in the primary sector and also by advisers from the Local Authority. We all agree that the School is making significant progress. These views aren't limited to governors and educational professionals however; the School regularly receives positive comments from parents, carers and children about the School, its staff and activities, e.g.,

*"A new approach to leadership - the head is bringing change, progress and optimism at a controlled but impressive pace." (Parent)*

*"I will never forget the nurturing and passion for learning that she has provided. What an outstanding member of staff." (Parent)*

*"We are delighted that [our son] is settled and happy. Thanks must go to the outstanding Reception team for helping him over the last couple of terms." (Parents)*

### **Where we want to be**

During this period of growth and change the governors have agreed immediate priorities and longer-term goals with the School's leadership team. If it seems that there's something important we've missed, it's more likely to be that this is a focus in the next phase of our plans. However, please do continue to tell us if you have specific concerns - we value input from all the School community.

This term a key priority for the School is to develop a communication strategy and strengthen partnerships between the School and the community it serves. We are committed to continuing to improve and expand the School's communication channels to positively engage with our community as well as deliver timely, accurate information in various ways. One of the governors now has responsibility for overseeing communications as a discrete area. We are also creating a new post to lead on this important liaison work. The School is a large organisation, and, as such, we know that communication must always be a high priority.

In terms of teaching and learning a whole school priority for this academic year is providing appropriate challenge for all pupils. Maths is a subject focus and the effective leadership and cross-

curricular approach that embedded literacy so well in each of the three phases (EYFS, KS1 and KS2) will now be applied to maths.

The rapid progress we have seen over the past two years under the leadership of Mrs Howard is only one step towards achieving our vision of an outstanding school. We hope that you will continue to support the governors and the School leadership team, and get involved in school life as much as possible. Only when we work together towards a common goal, sharing our experience and skills, will we meet the needs of every pupil of Oswald Road Primary School.

Helen Dobson  
Chair of Governors