



INTOUCH

THE GREYSBROOKE SCHOOL GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER – JULY 2015

We're live and online!

Slightly later than anticipated, but hopefully worth the wait, we have a new website! Feel free to go to www.greysbrooke.staffs.sch.uk and have a look around.

Further to the feedback you gave last year, we have tried to include everything you asked for, and provide plenty of information for parents who are new to the school, as well as parents with children already at Greysbrooke. You may even find some photos of your children on there as we had many 'models' happy to pose! Make sure you check out the fabulous drawings of the teachers too.

We understand that it's important the website acts as a useful tool, so as well as the blog which we will be updating regularly, you will also be able to find back editions of newsletters and letters in the Our News section.

We'd love to hear what you think about the new site, so please drop us a line at katejsheehan@icloud.com and let us know!



Hello

Welcome to the latest edition of InTouch, the Greysbrooke Governors' Newsletter.

We're delighted to share with you some exciting news about what we've been up to, as well as introduce you to some of our new governors, and keep you in touch with ongoing projects.

We hope you find this useful, but please feel free to feedback with any comments so that we can ensure we're giving you the information you want to know, in the right format.

Enjoy!

Julia

JULIA BARNETT
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

School links

E: office@greysbrooke.staffs.sch.uk
T: 01543 480321
www.greysbrooke.staffs.sch.uk

Parent Governors

Esther: esther@estherparsons.com
Ian: ian.pritchard@nexusinds.com
Kate: katejsheehan@icloud.com

Proud to be
outstanding



What have we been up to?



The best thing about being a school governor is making a difference. All the projects we undertake are to provide the best possible school experience for all the Greysbrooke children, ensuring that we really do nurture, educate and grow within the school and within the community.

There are four sub committees within the governing body, and these committees have responsibilities in their own key areas as follows:

- **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**
(incorporating finance and premises)
- **TEACHING AND LEARNING**
- **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**
- **COMMUNICATION AND I.T.**

Collectively however, we all have a responsibility to make sure that Greysbrooke really is the best school it can be. So how do we do that?

Firstly, we listened to you. You said...

- ✓ We need a new website
- ✓ We need to receive communication electronically
- ✓ We'd prefer assemblies to start earlier so that working parents can attend
- ✓ We'd like to see more music included in the school curriculum

We helped make these things happen.

And whilst all that was going on, we...

- Introduced a new school mission and purpose statement
- Formed a Co-operative Trust with Little Aston Primary School (more on this later)
- Reviewed the school policies in line with social and legal requirements
- Developed a revised curriculum in line with the new guidelines from the Department for Education
- Purchased and installed a whole load of new IT equipment
- Appointed 3 new governors (more about them later)
- Supported the Leadership Team in updating the school's self-review and subsequent development plan
- Challenged ways of working and looked at introducing efficiencies
- Carried out a review of school performance data to ensure children are making progress and attaining well
- Supported Mrs Holmes in ensuring that the school gets the best value for the money it spends
- Supported Mr Storer in his new SENCo role (more on this below)



The role of a school governor comes with ever increasing responsibilities and demands, but we are all 100% committed to supporting the school, the staff, the parents, the children and the community.

We will continue to challenge, mentor, encourage and support, to ensure the children at Greysbrooke School have the very best preparation for the next stage in their education, and the next stage in their life in modern Britain.

SEN Governor Support

Mr Storer has recently taken on the role as SENCo at Greysbrooke, and has been working exceptionally hard completing the relevant courses (he'll have a Masters Degree when he finishes!), understanding the individual children and getting to know the relevant families.

He is actively supported by our brilliant SEN Governor, Esther Parsons, who has many years of SEN experience.

The key focus areas Esther is supporting Mr Storer with are:

- overseeing new systems for SEN following the new Code of Practice in September
- providing advice on policies and procedures for SEN

- overseeing the provision for SEN children in the school
- advising ways to utilise additional funding or intervention for the SEN children
- sharing good practice regarding SEN provision
- formulating an action plan to further enhance the provision, resources and staff expertise that is currently available at Greysbrooke
- keeping up to date with the latest developments in Special Educational Needs

Thanks to the hard work of all the staff, we are delighted to have recently been presented with the very prestigious Dyslexia Friendly Level 1 award. Well done all!



Aston Brooke Trust 6 months on...

It's well over six months now since all the consultations on forming a Trust with Little Aston Primary School were taking place – so what's happened since then?

Firstly at the management level, after all the positive responses from staff, parents and governors at both schools, the Aston Brooke Co-operative Learning Trust was formally incorporated on the 8th December 2014. There have now been two meetings of the Trust Board, at the second of these the two Headteachers, Mrs Holmes and Mrs Pearce (Little Aston Primary School) presented a Strategy up to 2018, which was accepted. The Governing Bodies of both Schools have been reconstituted. Little Aston's land and buildings have been transferred to the Trust from the Local Authority, and the transfer process for Greysbrooke is ongoing. The School's Business Managers are working to see what resource savings can be achieved under the umbrella of the Trust.

But what does this mean for learning and teaching in the schools?

Well it's early days yet, but there's been a lot of work behind the scenes with joint staff meetings taking place at all levels, discussing and planning a range of initiatives for both the short and the long term. There has already been a joint meeting of the two School Councils, a rounders tournament has taken place and a joint visit to France.

So where do the five Trust Partners fit in?

Firstly, the Co-operative college is providing guidance and support in the implementation of the trust process and procedures. The ECM (Every Child Matters) consultancy will be assisting with staff development and training: Mrs Holmes and Mrs Pearce have already participated in 'update sessions', and a maths inset day has been organised for September. Arthur Terry School will also be involved in collaborative staff development and teacher training initiatives. For pupils, they are setting up transition events, including attending performances of "We Will Rock You".

Mrs Holmes and Mrs Pearce spent a day at Aston University meeting the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and staff, and a joint inset day is planned there for the Autumn term. The University is currently assisting with the science curriculum, and has provided support with some sessions on sound including "So what's the difference between sound and noise?", and Greysbrooke Year 6 will soon be doing kick sampling in the Black Brook! The Year 6s went together by coach to a Transition Day, where they were introduced to what study at a University means. Little Aston is already involved in a Literacy Research Project with the University, and other joint research ideas are being explored.

The school placements and graduate teacher programme which both Little Aston and Greysbrooke partner BCU (Birmingham City University) with, is ongoing. BCU are also going to provide support for PE and ICT provision, and an Active Learning Research project is currently being established. Future ideas for collaboration are being discussed, which include mentor training.

And if that's all happened in just the first six months of the Trust, we can certainly look forward to an exciting future. However, this wouldn't have happened without the enthusiasm and the hard work already invested by the staff of both schools. We owe them a great big thank you!



How are we doing?

As the Ofsted goalposts have significantly moved over the last couple of years, and the number of schools being awarded 'Outstanding' has significantly decreased, it is becoming increasingly difficult to accurately evaluate our overall performance against the new guidelines.

We were keen to gain an external evaluation of progress within the school, to help us celebrate our strengths, and optimise our opportunities, so we were delighted when the local authority commissioned a review of Greysbrooke School.

The overall picture was extremely positive and below are some of the key bullet points which came out of the report:

- **Thorough and accurate analysis of pupil data**
- **Evidence of the impact of teaching and learning over time is compelling**
- **Attainment has been consistently high in both key stages**
- **Pupils books show that progress of all pupils in all classes in the school is consistently good**
- **Behaviour is exemplary**
- **The pace of learning is consistently good**
- **Governors are very effective in their role**
- **The school's evaluation of its own work is accurate – the leaders know the school's strengths and areas it needs to develop further**
- **Children are making good progress, particularly in writing**
- **Safeguarding is a high priority in the school**
- **Leadership is strong and collective**

The review of our school offered us some things to think about and work on to continue to be as good as we can be. These were:

- **To continue to raise standards in writing**
- **To look at pupils' books more often to check on the progress they are making**
- **To consider additional staffing in Reception to increase the support for pupils when they are choosing their own activities**
- **Look at ways out Teaching Assistants can record how pupils are participating when the whole class is together at the ends of lessons**

We were really pleased to have confirmation that we are on track, and will be looking to build on our strengths moving forward. A special thank you to all the staff for their hard work in achieving this feedback.

Three new governors

Here's a bit of info about our three newest governors. You can check out the rest of the governors on the new website at www.greysbrooke.staffs.sch.uk/greysbrooke-governors/

Ian Pritchard

PARENT GOVERNOR

Ian has lived in Shenstone for 10 years and is Dad to Luke in Year 3 and Lauren in Year 1. He trained as an accountant and is also a qualified corporate treasurer. He has worked in finance for over 20 years in a variety of roles from running a family business to being a treasury manager for HSBC. His current role is finance director of a multinational company.

Ian will be able to use his experience in finance and resource allocation management to help the school make the best decisions regarding both raising and spending money to ensure all of the children get the most out of their time at Greysbrooke. It won't come as any surprise that Ian is on the resource management committee.

Ian describes himself as an optimist who believes anything is possible – including West Brom winning the cup...

When not at work, Ian is taxi driver to his children and occasionally finds the time for a beer or two in the village pubs.

Rev. Liz Chamberlain

COMMUNITY GOVERNOR

We are delighted to welcome the Reverend of St. John's church in Shenstone to the Greysbrooke Governing Body.

Liz is also a Governor at St. Peter's Primary School in Stonnall, and brings a wealth of experience from her previous life working in business and finance, as well as her current role working with and supporting the community. She is a regular face in Shenstone and at Greysbrooke School, and is really looking forward to fulfilling her role on the Governing Body.

Pete Hedges

COMMUNITY GOVERNOR

Involvement in primary education is relatively new to Pete, as he has worked as a lecturer at Aston University for over 35 years – so he's passionate about education. He was initially co-opted onto the Governing Body to help with science and technology. Originally a civil engineer specialising in rivers, Pete started his working life with Yorkshire Water, but looking for a change, landed a lecturer post at Aston University.

Over the years he's taught many subjects ranging from water engineering, through maths and construction, to environmental science and green building – knowledge he hopes to share with Greysbrooke in the next few years. Since becoming a governor, Pete has negotiated Aston University's Partnership in the Aston Brooke Trust, and is currently the University's Trustee. We are now working on some exciting collaborative initiatives, which will include visits to the University, staff development workshops and pupil activities, such as the recent sessions on sound and noise. Pete has four children and, at the last count, five grandchildren. Now that he's semi-retired he's finding time to do those DIY jobs around the house that up till now have been put on the back burner.



Meet the Governors

For those of you who would really like to put a 3D face to a name, our parent governors (Esther Parsons, Ian Pritchard and Kate Sheehan) will all be available at the **school open evening on Wednesday 15th July**, and will be delighted to speak to you and answer any queries you might have.

We can't promise to solve everything, and we can't talk about individual children, but we can promise to listen and take on board any comments. Please pop by and say hello!

Over to you...

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Hopefully it has been useful in terms of explaining what the Governing Body have been up to this year. We would love to hear any feedback or suggestions, so please do email katejsheehan@icloud.com with your thoughts.

Finally, on behalf of the Governing Body, we would like to thank all the Greysbrooke staff for their continuous support and hard work, and wish them all a peaceful and relaxing summer break.