

# InTouch

## GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER

### STOP PRESS...

- It has been a busy year; all the children and staff have worked very hard and are looking forward to a well deserved summer break! We have a number of new staff joining us in September. Later on in the newsletter Joanne Webb has written about the interview process that candidates have to go through when they apply for a position at Pirton School.
- There will also be some changes to the Governor team from September. We are very sad to say goodbye to our chair Sarah Stoney, who has resigned from the governing body to focus on her growing family – we would like to say a huge thank you for all the hard work she has put in over the last 3 years. A new chair will be elected in September. A big thank you also to Graham Gibbs and Diane Bailey who are leaving the governing body after serving two terms of office. This means we now have two vacancies for Community Governors. If you know of anyone who lives or works in Pirton and would be interested in supporting the school in this important way, please get in touch.
- Thank you to those parents who attended the recent iPad evening. It was a useful look at how the new iPads are being used in school. They are just one way in which technology is being used to enhance learning. If you have any good apps that you use at home with your children, please let the school know!

- Sport at Pirton School will be undergoing an exciting overhaul from September, with the appointment of Mrs Downing to lead the development of PE and sport at the school over a two year period. Her role will involve working with other schools and sports professionals to both develop the teaching of PE across the school and to provide a new range of sporting opportunities for the children.

### Pupil Progress

Consistency across the school and progress in maths were on the agenda at the termly progress meeting with Bob Hopcraft, our Hertfordshire School Improvement Partner on 13 May, attended by Sarah Stoney. They found that:

- Good progress has continued towards making sure that the school is consistent in marking, feedback, behaviour management and expectations of the children.
- The use of the 'Assertive Mentoring' system, a new tracking system for pupil behaviour and attitude to learning has had positive feedback from both staff and pupils.
- Teaching is being consistently targeted at pupils' needs.
- Progress in maths has continued with some effective staff training sessions run by Mrs Houghton.
- The numeracy evening for parents was a great success and will enable parents to be better engaged with their children's learning and development.
- A new focus recently has been on the ability of pupils and staff to 'conjecture and convince' across all areas of mathematical learning. This

focus enables children to be better skilled at explaining the methods they have used and to justify these.

### **Teaching staff interview process**

As you are aware, we have new staff joining us in September and we thought you might be interested to know about our recruitment process here at Pirton.

All new recruits are invited to come and visit the school and see us in action prior to any formal application. They are shown around and given the opportunity to ask questions to get a feel of the school. Teachers and Teaching Assistants are able to give feedback about the candidates and applications are then shortlisted by the Leadership Team. For Teaching Assistant Posts, the next stage is a formal interview and if we feel we have a suitable candidate for our school, we appoint. If not the post is then re-advertised.

Candidates for teaching positions follow a different procedure after the initial informal visits and shortlisting process. They spend the whole day in school and are at first shown around by the School Council and then interviewed by the older school council members (Years 4, 5 and 6) and a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The children have the opportunity to ask questions that they have prepared in advance and their feedback is given to the interview panel. The candidates also teach a lesson to their prospective class and this is formally observed by Mrs Houghton. The whole staff team then have lunch with the candidate and time is given for them to visit classes on a more informal basis. Again, feedback from all staff is sought and this feeds into the final decision making process. Finally, a formal interview is held with Mrs

Houghton, Miss Banks, Mrs Webb and a Governor.

Once a Teacher or a Teaching Assistant is offered a job, they are then invited to spend time as much time as they can in school before taking up their post. Of course, all job offers are subject to suitable references and safeguarding checks.

We feel that by recruiting in this way, we have a good balance of formal and informal procedures in place to assess prospective candidates. We also value everyone's contribution and feel that by involving staff and children in this process, we can get the most rounded picture and therefore, the best person for our school.

### **Staff/Governor INSET Day**

Every year in June, the whole staff and governor team gets together to talk about the achievements and successes of the previous year, areas for development and to brainstorm new ideas and priorities to go into the School Development Plan for the coming year.

The meeting this year took place on the INSET day on 4 June and we were also joined by two members of the school council for part of the day to feedback pupils' views. It was a very successful day and we thought it would be interesting to give you an overview of some of the things we discussed:

#### **Successes**

- The new behaviour system, (stickers and the sunshine club) is working; it is bringing pupils together across the school - with year 6 children managing the sunshine club. It also means that behaviour management is consistent wherever the children are.

- The allotment space is great and all the classes have enjoyed planting up their raised beds
- There has been noticeably more support from parents this year, helping with swimming, trips out and reading etc. Thank you!
- The iPads have been a big hit!
- The increase in the number of MSAs (midday supervisors) has helped with behaviour at lunchtime.
- The learning walks have had good feedback from the parents who took part, with more definitely planned.
- The new monitoring system for governors is working better for both governors and staff, making it easier to see how the school is working and where the areas for development are.

### **Areas for development – watch this space!**

- We are considering how we can change the lunchtime system to create a calmer and less rushed environment for the children to eat in.
- Looking at how/when we can refresh the school environment, de-clutter and/ or paint.
- We are looking at imaginative uses for our outdoor space – ideas such as a staging area, chalkboard, more painted games, mini goals etc
- More theme/enrichment days across the school
- Greater involvement from the children in assemblies

### **OFSTED and Parent View**

Pirton School is expecting a visit from OFSTED at any time over the next year. The inspectors will notify the school the afternoon before the inspection, which will last two days. Staff and governors are making sure that the school is ready.

An important aspect of the inspection is the views of parents. This used to take the form of a questionnaire, but has recently been replaced by the 'Parent View' website <http://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk> and is a series of multiple choice questions completed online.

We are encouraging parents, if you have not already done so, to have a look at the website and complete the questionnaire. The school does not have access to any of the responses or information about who has responded, but is informed of how many responses there have been.



### **Contact Us**

The best way to contact us is via our email address:

[governor@pirton.herts.sch.uk](mailto:governor@pirton.herts.sch.uk)

We welcome your comments and suggestions, including on:

- ideas for improving how governors and the school communicate with parents
- the aims and objectives of the school
- targets that have been set to achieve these
- the school's budget
- the content of this and future newsletters