

# InTouch: Governors' Newsletter #

## PIRTON SCHOOL GOVERNORS

Nicola Robbins (Chair)  
Richard Easterbrook (Vice Chair)  
Paul Watson  
Richard Sugden  
Jamie Sutterby  
Loretta Concannon  
Sarah Eva  
Neil Ireland  
James Robertson  
Derek Webb  
Jeni Houghton  
Alison Banks  
Joanne Webb

## STOP PRESS...

- Congratulations from the Governors to Mrs Wooding on the arrival of her baby boy!
- Since the last issue of the newsletter, the building work to the old school house has been completed and it is good to see the playground back to full use. You will have noticed that the floor in the school hall is still in a state of disrepair. We are in discussion with the Local Authority to determine what the cause of the problem is and how it can be resolved as soon as possible.
- We are really pleased to announce that the funding which has allowed Mrs Downing to concentrate full-time on improving the provision of sport at Pirton School has been extended until 2020. The extra clubs and new sports activities in PE lessons are proving a huge success.

## BEHAVIOUR PROGRAMME – CHALLENGE ZONE

Parents will be aware of the behaviour action plan that was put in place following some concerns about poor behaviour, particularly at playtimes, which were highlighted by the Parent View survey and subsequently by a similar survey of the children by Mrs Houghton. It seems that six months in, the plan is showing really positive results with children and staff reporting improvements in behaviour across the board and work is ongoing to make sure that this continues.

At the start of the year Governors approved some funding for an extra Teaching Assistant (TA) to work 15 hours per week between 11am and 2pm each day specifically with children who are struggling with friendships and/or behaviour with a view to improving behaviour and ultimately the lunchtime and playtime experience for everyone. Mrs Skull, who is already part of our staff and works as a TA in class 4, had already undergone mentoring training and was keen to take on this role. Nicola Robbins spoke to Mrs Skull about her new role:

“During lunchtime break I have set up ‘Challenge Zone’, which is for a small number of children who have previously found lunchtime play difficult. During this time I am focussing specifically on these children with activities such as treasure hunts, quizzes, craft activities, organised games – and throughout they will be collecting points for positive, calm, respectful behaviour and engagement with others and the activity. Small rewards are given every few days for high scorers. I also eat with them every day which gives us a chance to talk about the day’s activity but also makes mealtimes a much calmer experience for them (and for others). On a Friday each child is allowed to invite another one or two children to join us in a 5-a-side football game, again they will be collecting points for positive play.”

“The main aim of the Challenge Zone is to try to model positive social interaction for these children and to help them to think about how they should be behaving – but it’s also important to remember that this is their lunchtime too, and if they are not able to play freely with whoever they like it has to be fun for them! It also gives some of the other children a break if they were finding that their play was being disrupted in the past.”

### **BEHAVIOUR PROGRAMME continued...**

“In the hours before and after lunchtime break I spend time with children across the school who need support or mentoring – perhaps they are struggling with friendships, or behaviour in class, or something has happened during playtime that I can help them to resolve. It is really nice to be able to have the dedicated time for this, which ordinarily as a TA you wouldn't have a lot of time to do.”

“One of the main challenges has been maintaining the balance between making the Challenge Zone fun – which it needs to be for it to be a success, but making sure that it is not being seen by other pupils to be rewarding poor behaviour, which it most definitely isn't – it's about education. It's a balancing act, but I think this way of close mentoring and modelling behaviour for those who struggle in this area is vital for the wellbeing of all the children at the school.”

The funding for this extra support is fixed until 2015. Governors have also recently been discussing the school's behaviour and anti-bullying policies and will be working on strengthening them over the coming months. If you have any questions or suggestions on about any of the new behaviour initiatives then please speak to Mrs Houghton, Mrs Webb or Miss Banks, who will be happy to talk to you.

### **DEVELOPING SPECIALIST PROVISION LOCALLY (DSPL)**

From the beginning of April this year, Pirton School will formally become the lead school within our local area of North Hertfordshire for a strategy called 'Developing Specialist Provision Locally' (DSPL). DSPL is a Hertfordshire County Council strategy to make sure that children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities have their education, social care and health needs met as close to their home as possible, so they can be helped to reach their full potential.

When resources are used effectively like this to secure a range of support services that meet the needs of SEN children close to their home, it helps to improve outcomes for wellbeing and attainment, widens choices for parents and carers, and removes barriers to learning.

Becoming the lead school for this initiative gives Pirton School the advantage of being at the forefront of developments within education, and being able to use them to the maximum benefit for our children, as well as provide the staff at Pirton with wider professional development opportunities.

### **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