

Brabourne Church of England Primary School

Brabourne, Ashford, Kent TN25 5LQ * Tel/Fax 01303 813276 * email

office@brabourne.kent.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr Andrew Stapley

Dear Parents,

Welcome to a new academic year and welcome to all new parents! Time for the annual review from Brabourne governors. Governors support the school at a strategic level – we don't get involved in decisions about individual pupils or day-to-day schooling but we do help decide the future direction of the school and support the finances. I've broken this review down into our three main categories of responsibility – looking backwards and forward.

Providing Strategic Leadership

Several years ago, with the introduction of the new primary school curriculum, we conducted a thorough strategic review. It was at that point we developed the current vision, confirmed the need for a wide curriculum (in the face of, at that stage, strong pressure from Ofsted to produce high attainment in maths and English) and so introduced time-tabled outdoor learning, continued cross-curricular topics and tried to give the teachers space to develop their own creative teaching plans. Our hope at that stage was that all of this would enhance learning for all pupils, they'd enjoy school and be engaged which would mean improving even in subjects they didn't enjoy as much. The last DfE comparison tables were updated at the end of 2018 based on 2018 results and we were second in the Ashford area for the percentage of pupils reaching expected standards in KS2 and the top school in Ashford for progress. The 2019 results are yet to be released but we are hopeful the progress results will be equally high this year. Furthermore, pupil and parent survey results continue to show that the children enjoy coming to school and are excited by their lessons – which we hope means all pupils have a positive attitude to learning which continues into secondary school.

It now feels as though this is the time to identify new challenges. Ofsted has introduced a new inspection framework which is a refreshing improvement. They are focusing far less on core academic outcomes for pupils and more on the breadth of education as well as personal development. Meantime we are also held to account by the church inspection framework which is also changing. Bringing these factors together, part of our governor objective this year is to look forward – visiting other schools to get inspiration of best practice, understanding the new inspection frameworks and working with all of the school staff to develop a new longer term plan to challenge us for the next few years.

Driving up the Performance of the School Academically

As outlined above, the school is performing very strongly academically. We know there are still areas to improve but they tend to vary by year group – because our school is so small, each pupil is worth 7% of the school's results so overall results do vary year on year. Looking forward, we will continue to enrich the curriculum – extending learning from one subject to others. For example, teachers are ensuring that quality writing is not just for English so children learn to use their skills in topic work and other subjects too – hopefully outside school as well. Maths skills will be shared into science, topics and beyond. The school improvement plan this year identifies some areas still to improve but is also focusing on further widening the curriculum – ensuring there are lots of visitors coming into school to talk about the wider world and arranging visits out and about, trying to widen the range of sports and finding a balance of clubs.

Overseeing the Financial Performance of the School

Our finances continue to be tight and strongly dependent on the number of pupils in the school. Under Mrs Mac's careful supervision, every penny is set to work and the core functions of the school can be maintained. However, for extra investment, we are heavily dependent on the PTA. As announced last term, we are hoping to build a new cabin next to the playground and one key area for governors this year is to support the funding of that. Unfortunately, we were turned down for lottery funding (that would have been £10k) because the project was mainly for the pupils rather than a wider community. We will continue to apply for other funding – such as the supermarkets' token schemes – and will keep you updated on progress. The budget continues to be tight for other areas of the school too – you may have noticed that more after school clubs now need to be paid for – but we are doing our best to ensure the key elements, such as classroom resources, are the focus.

Governors

We have had relatively few governor changes over the year. Emma Keating left us as a parent governor after a full four years of service (thank you!) and Becks Massie has joined us as her replacement. With a little encouragement, we also welcomed Lucie Edmed who has joined us as the Local Authority nominated governor – she has a lot of experience in Early Years education, including several years working for KCC in this area (and she's also a grandparent to a year R and a regular on school runs).

So, our governing board is now as follows:

Hester Fenwick (Parent Governor) – Chair of Governors, Member of Finance and Ethics & Culture Committees

Roger Shaw (Co-opted Governor) – Vice Chair of Governors, Chair of the Finance Committee

Becks Massie (Parent Governor) – Member of Ethics & Culture Committee

Sarah Hopker (Parent Governor) – Member of Teaching & Learning Committee, Safeguarding & SEND governor

Sarah Vant (Parent Governor) – Member of Finance Committee, Health & Safety governor

Andrew Stapley (Headteacher) – Member of Teaching & Learning and Ethics & Culture Committees

Natasha Miller (Staff Governor) – Member of Teaching & Learning Committee

Chris Denyer (Incumbent) – Member of Ethics & Culture Committee

Ruthie Gilbert (Foundation Governor) – Member of Ethics & Culture Committee

Maggie Smith (Co-opted Governor) – Chair of Teaching & Learning Committee

Lucie Edmed (Local Authority Governor) – Member of Teaching & Learning Committee

Kerry Percival-Smith – Clerk to the Governors

If you want to know any more about any of us or what we do, have a look at the Governor page on the school website – or just catch one of us at school sometime. All will welcome your comments, thoughts or suggestions!

Hester Fenwick (01303 814432/hesterfenwick@hotmail.com)