

Annual Governor Newsletter 2014 / 15

Starters and leavers

This year we have welcomed six new governors to the Governing Body and also said our farewells to three governors.

Su Calvert, Louise Chantal, Michael FitzPatrick, Shelly Kanyaru, Venetia Lipscombe and Claire Murray have all joined us this year, bringing a diverse range of work and life experience including education, medicine, business, publishing and communications! We are delighted to have them as part of our team.

We also said goodbye to Terry Georgeson, Sally Green and Nick Melliss over the course of the school year, who for various work/personal reasons were unable to continue their governorships. We are grateful to them for their contributions.

Being a governor is not an easy job and New Marston's governors are a commendably wonderful team for wanting to give up their time to help the school continue to improve. Thank you to all the school's governors, past and present.

I am so proud of New Marston Primary

School and it has been an immense privilege to be part of the school, both as a parent since 2010 and as a governor since 2011.

Our pupils are enthusiastic, eager, and a delight to be around. I would like to thank staff for their commitment to getting the best out of every pupil. I would especially like to thank Zara d'Archambaud for her leadership in bringing the school to the much strengthened position it is in now.

My family and I are moving to Canada over the summer, but I am delighted to be able to continue contributing to the school as Co-Chair of the Governing Body in 2015/16. Alongside Co-Chair Claire Murray, we are looking forward to working with our new Head Hannah Brown to continue to make the school a great place to learn and to develop for pupils, staff, parents/carers and the local community.

Go TIGERS!

Emma Sabzalieva

Chair of Governors



Welcome to our annual newsletter! This report outlines how we've been working with the school in 2014/15 to provide the best possible learning experience for all the children at New Marston.



Making our school safer

This year the governing body has continued to work with the school, parents and carers, and the city and county councils to create a zebra crossing on Copse Lane. A consultation took place in May and we expect to find out the results soon. We had hoped work would begin on this over the summer, but have been advised that this is now unlikely. We are committed to making the school environment as safe as possible for the children and will advocate strongly at the county council level to ensure this important improvement is delivered.

What do you think of New Marston Primary School?

Ofsted, the body that inspects and regulates schools, has an online survey that asks for your opinion on 12 aspects of your child's school.

You can take part and let them know what you think about New Marston Primary School here:

<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>

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Recruiting a new head teacher!

This year the governing body has undertaken what is arguably the most important task within our remit – recruiting a new head teacher.

We spoke to pupils, parents and carers, and staff to understand the sort of leader you wanted for our school.

We identified we were looking for someone who is: determined to ensure each child maximises their potential; will be committed to our TIGER values; will deliver an excellent and holistic learning experience that supports our children to be independent learners; and will continue our caring and supportive ethos.

We advertised the post on the leading teacher recruitment website, www.tes.co.uk and on the Oxford County Council website.

We designed an interview day that involved staff, pupils, and parents and carers. Candidates were asked to: lead an assembly; analyse school data; be interviewed by a panel of pupils; and conduct a learning walk around the school. After lunch a formal interview took place with five governors.

At the end of this lengthy process a very strong candidate emerged.

We were delighted to offer the post of head teacher at New Marston Primary School to Hannah Brown, and even more delighted when she accepted!

A range of activities and clubs...

As governors we want all our pupils to have the chance to be involved in the large range of school clubs New Marston Primary School offers.

This year we have helped the school raise funds to support extra opportunities for sport.

We have also engaged with local secondary schools to help increase provision, and were delighted to welcome a number of pupils from Rye St Anthony who have spent time in school supporting our sport and music activities.



Pink to think!

In January five governors spent a morning in the school to see the school's new marking and feedback policy in action.

We listened as the children explained how their work was marked, and how they used feedback from their teachers and each other to help their learning.

It has been great to see how teachers and pupils alike have adopted the school's new marking policy positively: pupils seem to be aware of the difference between green and pink marks, recognising the latter as a signal for further attention and improvement, and using it as a trigger to improve their own work.

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School development plan

Every school has a school development plan which it uses to assess the current picture of pupil achievement and progress and to set its plans for the coming year(s).

Throughout the year, the Governing Body has worked extensively to revitalise our school development plan to make it a more strategic document that will drive improvement at New Marston.

We consulted with staff, parents and children and considered external influences such as government priorities and local initiatives. We brought all of this together to create three new school aims:

- We will develop the unique features of our school
- We will prepare our children with excellent learning skills to meet the demands of a fast changing world
- We will enrich the learning experience using the school environment and local facilities

These are exciting and challenging aims that give us scope to, for example:

- Develop our TIGER way of learning and teaching
- Embed 'soft skills' that enable children to be confident and resilient in learning and life
- Do more outdoor learning
- Get more involved with the local and Oxford-wide community

These aims work alongside our knowledge of the school's current strengths and areas for improvement to generate our current year and longer term plans.

You can read more about these aims at www.new-marston.oxon.sch.uk/about-the-school/aims-and-values.

Learning and teaching

The governors in the Learning and Teaching committee have worked with the school to improve the quality of key areas of curriculum delivery during this school year.

Storytelling has been a positive feature of as a way to boost literacy skills. Our feedback from children and teachers is that they have loved it and felt learning has improved by using storytelling techniques.

'Reading For Pleasure' and Book Week activities aimed to support children's love of reading, and have had a positive impact on classroom reading.

Pupils have started using Mathletics enthusiastically as a way to reinforce maths learning outside the classroom. Its literacy equivalent, Spellodrome, has also seen successful results.

Finally, we have been very pleased to see the positive impact that introducing a new informal, regular observation approach to assessing teachers' progress.

Teaching staff have engaged with the initiative and it has created positive developmental opportunities that have led to the improvement of teaching throughout the year.

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Improving communication

Governors are always keen to hear ideas from all members of the school community.

We attend parents evenings, International evening, Open Days, breakfast mornings and learning detective meetings.

We work with the school to make sure pupils, staff and parents and carers are listened to, informed and involved.

This year we've focused on improving the school's website so that it does a better job at:

- Sharing news about all the great activities that take place in our school
- Keeping you up to date with what is happening in your child's class
- Making information about things like the curriculum and policies easy for you to access

www.new-marston.oxon.sch.uk

Spotlight on resources

The main tasks of the Resources Committee are to keep a close eye on the school budget and to ensure all matters to do with school assets (such as the building and equipment) are looked after and fit for purpose. We work closely with the school's Business Manager, Tracy Cox.

There have been challenges this year, including: the Government's introduction of universal free school meals; finishing-off the building work; and coping with changes to financial systems.

Whilst budgetary tasks are becoming more difficult for schools at a time when funding is being squeezed by central government and when the County Council is reducing its support for schools, the 3 year forward budget is well under control.

About the Governing Body

New Marston Primary School currently has 12 governors, a mix of parents and carers, staff and community representatives.

The objective of the New Marston Primary School's Governing Body is to support the school as it continues to progress and improve.

You can read more about who the governors are on the school website here: <http://www.new-marston.oxon.sch.uk/governors/>. Information can also be found near the school office.

The full Governing Body meets 6 times a year, once each term. You can read minutes from these meetings on the school website.

Each governor is a member of at least one

committee. The committees are Learning & Teaching; Resources (Finance, Premises & Staffing) and Working Together

Governors are volunteers and receive no payment from the school. The school pays certain governor services, for example to Oxfordshire County Council for training and a professional clerk. The total cost for these services in 2014/15 was around £2,200.