



Bitham Brook
Primary School

Headteacher
David Ross
Arundell Close
Westbury, Wiltshire
BA13 3UA
Tel: 01373 859172
Fax: 01373 821210
e-mail: admin@bithambrook.wilts.sch.uk

Governors' Annual Report to Parents - July 2017

As we approach the end of another school year at Bitham Brook, once again I reflect on the fact that we are fortunate to have a dedicated Governing Board consisting of volunteers with a variety of skills and experience, who carry out a wide range of responsibilities for the benefit of our children, parents/carers and staff.

The role of the Governing Board is defined by the Department for Education, who are keen to ensure that the education system becomes more school-led. This means that the Governing Board has significant responsibilities, including vision setting and strategic decision making for their school. Governors play a vital role in ensuring the best possible education that takes every child as far as their talents allow. This means that we must create robust accountability for school leaders by using, and being familiar with, objective data on the performance of pupils, teachers and finances to ask the right questions. It also means ensuring that schools prepare pupils for life and the workplace and promote fundamental British Values to protect them from the risks of extremism and radicalisation. Whilst this may seem insignificant in our area, there is no room for complacency and we are required to be as aware of these issues in Westbury as anywhere else.

This year we have continued to work closely with the school, including joint Governor/Staff development days, to ensure that the vision and strategy of the school is embedded into the way the school operates every day. The school Senior Leadership Team has worked hard to ensure a cohesive link between the school Strategic Plan, for which the Governors are responsible, and the day-to-day operational planning carried out by staff. This helps us to be confident that every possible effort is made to do the best we can for the children of Bitham Brook.

The targets for pupil achievement, set by the Government, have been increasing in recent years and this has resulted in teaching staff needing to adapt to those new expectations. Our teachers and teaching assistants have done this incredibly well and, alongside the standard of teaching, the school has developed the processes required to track progress against those expectations. This allows Governors to understand our strengths as a school and also to identify areas where additional support or resource may be required.

Our results in 2016 put Bitham Brook in the top ten primary schools in Wiltshire. This was a fantastic outcome, and one that the school can be proud of. However, at Bitham Brook we aim to provide a learning environment that allows children to develop as resilient individuals and responsible citizens, as well as successful learners. Opportunities such as School Senior and Class Ambassadors roles allow children to grow in confidence and play an active part in the success of the school.

The 2017 Year 6 SATS results, shared in the recent school newsletter, are evidence that the approach we are taking as a school is effective and is delivering a quality learning experience for our children. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of all school staff, including support staff and volunteers, and it is great to see our pupils do so well as they prepare for the next stage of their education.

As you will have noticed, the school extension has taken shape over the last few months and this has been carried out in a professional and considerate manner. The potential for disruption during this year was a concern for Governors and we have been kept informed of progress throughout the project. The contractors have tried to carry out the noisiest and most distracting work outside of school terms and have adapted plans to break through existing walls after the end of the school year to minimise the effects on our pupils.



The extension also represents a milestone in the development of Bitham Brook as we move from ten classes to twelve. This is an exciting time at the school and will present a number of challenges as we adapt to the new structure, including staffing, logistics and the need to maintain good financial control. The long term strategy is to complete phase 2 of the expansion plan, taking the school to a full 2-class intake, but in the short term we need to focus on maintaining standards and the overall school experience with the two new classes.

A key role for governors is the setting of challenging objectives for the Head Teacher, based on previous performance and areas where there is potential for improvement. These objectives are agreed and monitored as part of the Governing Board's commitment to ensuring effective leadership. Changes to the school Senior Leadership Team, initiated at the end of the previous school year, have resulted in a more consistent leadership approach throughout the school and will continue to develop over the coming months in order to provide robust processes with which to face the challenges ahead.

The school continues to be well managed financially, adapting to changing demands throughout the school year and providing appropriate levels of resource in all areas. Specific income streams, such as Pupil Premium and Sports Development funding, are monitored and reviewed, along with the statutory duties of the school, by the committees of the Governing Body to ensure that standards are being met.

As Governors' terms of office are fixed, it is natural that a Governing Board will include a range of levels of experience. This year we have seen two Governors stand down from their role: Sue Wells and Mike Slater. Their hard work and contributions to the school are very much appreciated. We have also welcomed two new governors to the school and are confident that the Governing Board can go from strength to strength.

On behalf of the Governing Board, I would like to express my thanks to all involved in the school – staff, pupils, parents, volunteers and Governors - for their considerable contribution to the successes of this year and to wish you all a relaxing and enjoyable summer break.

Jim Baldwin

Chair of Governors 2016/17