

Monkshouse Primary School

Governors' Newsletter - December 2014



New Governor

In October, Louise Chapman, whose son joined the school's reception class this year, joined the governing body as a parent governor.



Well Done!



We were pleased to note how well the school has done in the recently published Primary Performance tables, getting a mention in the local newspaper for 84% of last years' Year 6 pupils achieving Level 4c or above in reading, writing and maths and 73% achieving 4b+, placing us high up in the area. This is a great achievement for the children and the staff of the school.

These can be accessed on the Dfe website.

Meals provider

Investigations are ongoing into the options available to the school in terms of switching the provider of our school meals.



A parents' poll revealed that of the 54 parents who responded, 45 wanted to see the school switch school meal provider.

Governors are now working with school staff to consider the pros and cons of the options available to us.

Farm Kitchen is one possibility, but as that company would require the school to provide trays and cutlery, it would require a significant initial investment. There could also be ongoing additional costs.

We are awaiting further details from another firm, Chartwells, which produces meals for delivery from Corby Glen.

The school is keen to agree on a provider that offers excellent food for the children and easy ordering for parents at an affordable price.

Attendance



Governors continue to monitor attendance in a bid to achieve the school's target of ensuring every pupil is present at least 95 per cent of the time.

In the first term of this year, 97 per cent attendance was achieved.

Verbal feedback

This school year has seen the introduction of a new system to allow teachers more time to give one-on-one verbal feedback to pupils about their work.

Last summer, governors agreed the school should invest some money into providing additional staff to free up the time to make this possible.

School expansion



Planning permission has now been granted for one additional classroom to help the school accommodate the intake of 60 reception children last year.

The classroom will fill in the outdoor sheltered area between the existing year three and four classrooms.

Additional plans have been submitted to create a new, larger school hall and 2 more classrooms, necessary due to the increase of pupil numbers, progress through the school. Governors are working with school staff, Lincolnshire County Council and contractors to agree on how best to deliver proceed. Initial proposals include transforming the existing school hall into new classrooms and a library.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the school to benefit from a large investment into our infrastructure and we are keen to ensure the end result delivers great long-term benefits.

Visits

One of the most important roles of governors is to act as a 'critical friend' to the school. It is felt that governors can help schools do things better by seeing what the school already does, how it does it and asking why it is done that way.

To this end, governors visit the school often to oversee all aspects of what is going on both day-to-day and during special events.

Recent visits:

- At least one governor was present at all of the school's Christmas events including the school plays, carol concert and Christmas fair. Governors commented on how well staff and pupils did with the events and what fantastic dedication and hard work had gone into them. 
- In November, Louise Chapman, our new parent governor and Betty Jordan, a governor who was previously a primary school headteacher, accompanied Mrs Goodsell for a morning sitting in on lessons with our older, Key Stage Two, children. Louise and Betty were able to see how teachers were ensuring all children were being pushed to achieve their potential through work being tailored to different ability levels, how pupils engaged with each other and their teachers and their behaviour in class. Louise and Betty were very impressed with so much of what they saw. 
- Betty also spent an afternoon with Mrs Goodsell reviewing children's workbooks. They looked at books from all year groups to ensure they were well presented and being marked in line with school policy. The policy is for work to display the block and bubble system whereby teachers draw a block to include pointers on how pupils can improve their work and a bubble noting what has been done well. 
- In September, Kevin Pallister, a governor who is a committed member of the Salvation Army as well as a solicitor, delivered assemblies to all of the school.



The Governors would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for your continued support and wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas holiday and look forward to working with you in the New Year.

