

Monkshouse Primary School

Governors' Newsletter - July 2015

Leavers' feedback

Four Year Six pupils, who will be leaving Monkshouse this summer, gave a presentation to July's full governors' meeting on what they will remember about their time at the school.



Oliver Drakard, Chloe Gildon, Gytis Kucinskas and Julia Topka (shown in photograph from L-R), all aged 10 and 11, spoke of having had **"amazing experiences"** especially related to school trips and visitors into school. They also each said they leave the school with a sense of increased confidence and an understanding of the benefits of teamwork.

Gytis, who joined the school in Year Three, said: **"When I came here I couldn't speak any English at all. I am now getting ready to go to Spalding Grammar School."**

Oliver mentioned the **"amazing experience"** of a Year Five trip to Magna Science Adventure Centre and **"lots of fun"** at a recent Kingswood residential involving zip wires, midnight feasts, caving and abseiling.

He said: **"I have gained alot of knowledge. I used to be the one sitting in the corner never putting my hand up, now I won't stop talking."**

Chloe recalled the Year Four trip to Freiston including pond dipping and shelter building and Year Six visit to Stibbington Day Centre where pupils became evacuees for the day and experienced a mock air raid. On a different day, she said, children got a taste of living with rationing. In addition Chloe recalled a visiting planetarium coming into school.

"It was really, really cool," she said.

Julia spoke of visitors into school including one who helped the children build Saxon houses out of mud and branches and hands-on learning about faiths including Judaism, lessons which included Hanukkah candles and kippahs - traditional caps.

Gytis mentioned two workshops - one based around electronics and the other finances - delivered by visiting specialists. He admitted he feared both would be boring but ended up fascinated.

Pupils got to join wires together to light bulbs and budget for a day at the football taking into account costs of travel, food and tickets.

The children listed enterprise days, sports competitions, school fairs and **"nice staff"** amongst their highlights.

Julia said:

"Personally in the time I have spent at Monkshouse I have gained confidence, especially in rehearsing for the leavers' play, learned about teamwork playing hockey and rounders and I have improved my levels in all subjects which I am very proud of."

"I am looking forward to secondary school but I won't forget my experiences at Monkshouse."

Considering academy status



Governors are seeking views of parents, staff and other interested parties on whether Monkshouse should become an academy. The school has registered an interest in pursuing an application for academy conversion. The potential benefits of becoming an academy are to do with the background running of the school. It would mean the school is in control of and responsible for all of its own functions and would be free to purchase services like building works from the provider it feels is best. Mrs Goodsell would still be the head-teacher and would continue to be in charge of the day-to-day running of Monkshouse and the conversion would not, in itself, lead to any noticeable change to the school day.

As an academy, Monkshouse would be more independent than it is now and would no longer be maintained by Lincolnshire County Council. Instead, funding would come directly to Monkshouse from central Government. Monkshouse would then be responsible for deciding how best to invest that money for the benefit of students, within the boundaries of auditors and guidance. Monkshouse would still be inspected by Ofsted and would be subject to the same standards as it is now.

Whilst academies are free to chose their own term dates and school hours, there is no intention to deviate from the current arrangements at Monkshouse. There is also no intention to change the Monkshouse uniform.

Anyone wishing to discuss this further or offer their views

should email:

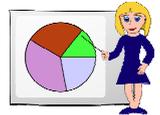
enquiries@monkshouse.lincs.sch.uk for the attention on Simon Lilley.



Further details and an extensive questions and answers list is being uploaded to the school website.

Constant lesson improvement

Teachers and governors are constantly working together to monitor teaching standards in all lessons.



Each subject has a governor assigned to it to question and analyse how staff go about teaching it in school.

Reviews of teaching this year have shown lesson standards to be consistently in line with the school's current "good" Ofsted rating with some examples of outstanding teaching.



Marking standards are very high and recent external monitoring of the school's self-evaluation of how it is doing showed it to be making correct judgements.

Green Policy



Governors are developing a new policy to underline Monkshouse Primary's commitment to ensure environmental considerations are made whenever goods and services are bought by the school.

Aims of adopting the policy include encouraging recycling and minimal waste and reduction of landfill. The policy states the school is committed to the use and purchase of environmentally and socially responsible materials, services and products. As well as identifying and using products that are less harmful to the environment and, where possible, bought locally and/or recycled.

Some of the specifics stated in the policy include:

- Recycled paper should be used in school
- Cleaning products used by the school should ideally be those effective at low temperatures and there should be an aim to use those that do not have wasteful packaging
- Any new office equipment should be energy efficient
- The school's waste should be re-used or recycled where possible
- Light bulbs should be low energy usage





Governor Profile



My name is Simon Lilley and I am an ex-parent and current Chair of Governors. I live in Spalding, have two boys Ben and Jake, both of whom have been to Monkhouse. I am married to Jo - you may have met Jo as she works in the school office as an administration assistant.

I work in Peterborough for Travelex, a major provider of foreign exchange worldwide (including the main 3 UK supermarkets), as a Global IT Manager. Currency Services is a 24x7x365 business so it certainly keeps me busy! Until recently I played flat green [lawn] bowls for over 30 years, but I have now joined Spalding Golf Club to play golf with my two boys. Last September I also took on the Chair of Governors at the Thomas Cowley High School where I have been a Governor for 2 years.

Louise Chapman has kindly put together the last few issues of the Governors newsletters, so she thought it a good idea this time to pose some questions to me.

When did you become involved as a Monkhouse governor and when did this happen?

There was a parent governor vacancy advertised a couple of times. I spoke to one or two existing governors that I knew about what was involved and the second time around I applied. I was elected unopposed in the summer of 2007.

Why did you get involved?

I was interested in school life and how schools run. I was of course apprehensive at first but decided I would like to give it a try and put something back into the system and to hopefully contribute enough to make a difference.

When did you become chairman?

Each year elections take place within the Governing Body for the Chair, Vice Chair and Link Governor (who oversees training opportunities). I happened to get into a discussion with someone about these positions and somehow was persuaded to put my name forwarded for the Chair. I was elected in October 2008.

What does the role of the Chair involve?

I have a weekly meeting with Mrs Goodsell. We talk about all sorts of school issues ranging from staffing, finance, premises, hot meals, ICT and of course, the most important factor, the children and how they are progressing. The main aspect of my role is to oversee the Governing Body (which is responsible for the strategic direction of a school) and to provide help, guidance, a supportive ear and challenge to the Headteacher.

Why do you do it and what motivates you to do it?

I enjoy hearing all the stories, seeing the children improve, getting involved in the challenges, and just generally being involved. I appreciate it's not all rosy, but when things go well, it's very satisfying for all concerned.

How much time does being the Chair of Governors at Monkhouse involve?

Being a school governor demands on average an hour week during term time. I attend the weekly head teacher meetings, regular sub-committee meetings (finance, curriculum/standards) and termly full governing body meetings. I suppose in general this evens out to be 2-3 hours per week. Other than my weekly meeting with Mrs Goodsell, all other Governor meetings are in the early evening. It's all voluntary though, so everyone's commitment is unique.

What keeps you interested?

It's different to the day job, yet has certain similarities. I also thought the two would benefit and complement each other, as they do have some reoccurring situations that I may have experienced before on one or other of the roles.

How long do you expect to remain involved?

I want to see Monkhouse become an established academy and improve from it's current Ofsted rating of good to achieve and sustain outstanding. I appreciate this will take another year or two yet, and I may then think about handing over the reins to someone else. I will then have done 10 years as a governor.

What has been your greatest moment/biggest achievement in your time as the Chair of Governors?

Helping to get the school to 'good' and looking forward to the two next big events in the schools' history of achieving 'outstanding' and hopefully converting to an Academy.

Any funny moments?

I really enjoyed being part of some residential trips a few years ago. I have had the privilege to accompany some fantastic staff and children to Freiston and Kingswood who all came away with some long lasting memories and were a credit to themselves and Monkhouse.

Any low points/downsides?

There have been a few, as there always is with any organisation, but I'm luckily to be surrounded by passionate staff and governors to overcome these challenges.

What are your plans/hopes for the future in the role?

As mentioned above, I really want to oversee Monkhouse becoming an outstanding Academy and a school that both parents and children want to be involved in.