



The Bellbird
Primary School



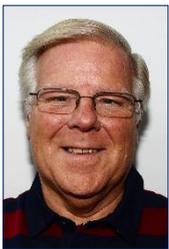
“This is a
good school.”
Ofsted 2015

ANNUAL GOVERNORS’ REPORT

2016/17

The Governors of The Bellbird Primary School are the group of parents, staff and members of our community that decide on school policies, hold the Headteacher to account for the school’s performance, and ensure that the school’s budget and other resources are best used. The Governors meet as a full group each half term, with some additional sub-committee meetings. Every year we provide a report to parents to tell you about the things that the Governors have been involved in during the year. This is our report covering the 2016 academic year.

NEW CHAIRMAN



Dr Tim Wreghitt has taken over as Chair of the Governors, effective from 1st September 2017. Some of you may already know him, but for those that

don’t, Tim is a Consultant Virologist at Addenbrooke’s Hospital and has been a Governor of The Bellbird School for the past four years.

“I have lived in the village for some 40 years and have four grandsons at The Bellbird,” he says. “At what is an exciting time for the school, I look forward to working with our new Headteacher and her staff, as well as the Board of Governors, to ensure pupils are supported and encouraged to achieve their fullest potential in a respectful and safe environment.”

GOVERNORS

Dr Tim Wreghitt - Chair
Mr Duncan MacFarlane - Vice Chair
Mrs K. Kendall - Headteacher
Mr John Rimell
Mr Phil O’Dell
Mr Nick Silk
Dr Katie Graham
Dr Tracy Assari
Mrs Emma George
Mrs Eileen Wheatley
Mrs Liz Smith
Mr Steve Skinner
Ms Sarah Jarvis - Staff governor
Mrs Jane Woodstock - Staff governor

We welcomed Liz Smith and Steve Skinner as new Governors this year and send our thanks to Jenny O’Connell and John Gill, a previous Chair, who left us recently after many years as a Governor. Despite stepping down from the Board, John is still leading the excellent work of keeping our school website up to date.

GETTING A HEAD: MRS KATIE KENDALL

A principal role for the Governors this year (2016-17) was the search for, and recruitment of, a new Headteacher. To this end, before the summer holidays, we were delighted



to appoint Katie Kendall who officially joined the Bellbird team in September.

Katie, who is a keen skier and mountain climber (including successful ascents of the 3 peaks – the highest mountains in England, Wales

and Scotland), started her professional life by training as a doctor at St George’s Hospital in South London. She initially worked in London before moving to Sheffield, where she worked as a GP trainee.

Combining medicine with family life for a while, she eventually took the decision that with four children in the Kendall nest, being a full-time mum took priority, so she retired from the medical profession.

Katie, her husband and children, then spent a year living in Adelaide in South Australia, where she says they all enjoyed the lifestyle and culture. While there, Katie’s husband was

recruited for a Consultant post at Addenbrooke’s hospital, here in Cambridge, and so the family returned to the UK.

Once back, and with the children growing-up, Katie decided to retrain as a teacher.

Having gained her teaching qualifications, she held posts at the Meridian, Caldecote and Dry Drayton Primary schools, before gaining the headship here at the Bellbird.

Since starting at the Bellbird, Katie has been nothing other than impressed by what she's found. "There is no question that the school benefits from a dedicated, hard-working and committed staff, who work collaboratively to ensure all of our pupils have a fulfilling school experience," she says. "What's more, parents and the local community have been extremely welcoming and friendly, which has been wonderful." Katie adds: "I have also been especially impressed by the 'FABS' team, who work so hard, as volunteers, to develop an exciting calendar of events and activities to support fundraising for the school. Their contribution to school life cannot be under-estimated."

Looking ahead, Katie's aspirations for the school are fully aligned with the school's motto. "When I was recruited, I saw the line 'soaring to success'," says Katie. "For me, my vision is to investigate, develop and support all possible avenues for the staff and school, that will ultimately ensure that all our pupils develop life-long skills during their time here at the Bellbird, so that they can live rich and fulfilling lives – so they can soar to success!"

And with one of her hobbies being to solve a daily cryptic crossword, there's little question that, alongside a broad sense of general knowledge, Katie has the ability to look at things from different angles, which is perhaps the most valuable of tools for any head teacher.

SPECIALISTS

Among our Board of Governors, we have various Members that take a lead in key areas:

Finance – Mr Phil O'Dell

Safeguarding – Mrs Eileen Wheatley

Property and Safety – Mr Nick Silk

Parent Consultation – Mr Duncan MacFarlane

Environment – Dr Tim Wreghitt

REFLECTIONS

Thoughts from the outgoing Chair of Governors, John Rimell.

"This summer was both the end of an era and the start of an exciting new time for the Bellbird. This year marks the start of a new Headteacher and a new Chair of Governors and as the outgoing Chair, it is an opportunity for me to reflect on the time past.

My time as Chair of Governors, from 2013 to 2017, had a tough start. On 10th Sept 2013, not four days into the school year, Ofsted called to say they were coming in the next day. On arrival they were unhappy not to see sufficient progress in the pupils' work books, though barely a page or two had been filled in yet. They also felt the pupils weren't learning with sufficient pace, though the pupils had not yet had a single full week in the same room with their new class teacher. Before we knew it, we were slapped with a dreaded "requires improvement" notice. It was heart wrenching.

Over two hundred Bellbird parents spontaneously arranged and signed a petition of complaint and I was delighted to sign that too. Ofsted also

raw deal. What did the school do? Spiral downwards in misery? No. In fact, I'm immensely proud of the response of the staff and parents. Mrs Corral, together with the new deputy, and subsequently co-head, Mrs Darrell, took on the mission to show them what the Bellbird could deliver. In the ensuing years, the national curriculum changed, the Ofsted inspection rules changed, and even the grading system for pupil progress changed. The goal posts rarely stayed in one place! So, it is a real credit to the entire team that when Ofsted visited on 28th Jan 2014, and then 24th Jun 2015, their feedback was very positive and ultimately recognised the school as a "Good" school. The most recent school results also reflect this. KS2 SAT expected level: reading was 8 percent points above Cambridgeshire average, Maths 12 points above average, spelling and grammar 18 points above the average. Writing was no worse than equal to Cambridgeshire average. All the staff, teachers, TAs and all the other support personnel are solely focused on making the Bellbird a wonderful place to learn and they deserve all our thanks for that.

Another feature of recent years has been the continued growth of the school. In 2014 we raised the official



acknowledged the governors' complaint but the report was not going to be changed.

We might have been accused of complacency at the time, but it was a

annual intake cap from 40 to 45 children. This was the precursor to our ambition to move the school to have two complete classes each year, aka two form-entry, or 2FE. One

extra classroom was built and we moved to 10 classrooms. We then had several meetings with the county admissions team, and started to take two classes of children per year (above the official cap). After a lot of classroom planning and running the budget numbers, we secured our two new, temporary mobile classrooms.

We have also had architects produce example blueprints for a permanent larger extension to the school; we are waiting to hear when it will be built. Overall, from when I started as chair, the school is now larger by three classrooms with around 70 more children.

The key moment for me was when I took the call from Mrs Corral and I was the first to learn that she intended to retire (whilst firmly insisting that she hated the word 'retire' and wanted me to avoid it). That started the statutory process of selecting a new head teacher and Mrs Kendall is now our wonderful new Headteacher. However, it also meant saying goodbye to Mrs Corral and thank you to Mrs Darrell for their stewardship of the school. I was delighted to give both a 'crystal' Bellbird super star at an assembly in front of all the children. It was also lovely that, as a parting gift, Mrs Corral arranged for a star in the night sky to be named "The Bellbird". The star is aptly located in the constellation of Apus, the bird of paradise.

Overall, I've felt very lucky to be Chair of Governors for such a great school over such key period of time. Other obligations needed me to step down as chair, but I am delighted that Dr Wreghitt has taken on the role and I know he and Mrs Kendall will see the Bellbird soaring to many future successes!"

John Rimell.

ON THE UP

The staff and Governors of the Bellbird are very pleased with the 2017 results attained by pupils across the school. All the staff have worked exceptionally hard to improve outcomes for all the children at The Bellbird Primary School and will continue this great work during the forthcoming academic year.



Our SAT results in Years Two and Six demonstrated a fantastic increase from last year. "In all year groups, progress has shown an increase from the end of the previous year's results," says Deputy Head, Helen Darrell.

"Our Year Six children demonstrated that their results were above national average in reading, maths and grammar as well as spelling and punctuation. What is more, the results show that those children who achieved age related expectations in all three of the main curriculum subjects of reading, writing and Maths was also above the national average," she adds.

Helen concludes: "We are very proud all the children and families in our school for their hard work, as well our staff team for their dedication and hard work in striving for and achieving these great results."

FRIENDS & FUNDS

FABS had a very successful year, achieving fund-raising results considerably above target of £20.16 per pupil. Indeed, it was over £30 per child in the end. As well as paying for every new starter to have a cycle helmet and swimming lessons, FABS has made a large contribution to the new school library.

Numerous smaller contributions have also helped to support many school activities, such as bringing authors and theatre performances into the school. "I suppose you could say we are keen to fund all those things that it is hard to find money for from within the school budget," says FABS Chairman, Richard Banks. "Special thanks to all on the committee, helpers and participants at the many fun events we run through the course of the year. Without you, none of this would be possible," he adds.



The Flash (out of hours school club) management committee is chaired by a parent governor and consists of both governors and flash staff. This year has seen flash continuing to expand and the committee has worked hard to address any issues arising from the increased numbers such funding extra staff and buying new equipment. Thanks to all who have contributed old games/toys/books and items suitable for den making - the children always enjoy having new playthings!

MONEY MATTERS

The school's annual spending adds up to nearly around £1.3m, so each year the Governors, with advice from the Head Teacher, make decisions on how best to use that money to benefit the children.

This year we were able to facilitate the continuation of 12 classes for a further two academic years and also extend the post of Booster Teacher for at least one more year.



The government funding that we received via the County Council went up by 2.3%, which was a useful increase, but still not enough to cope with the increasing cost pressures we face. It looks like we might receive a funding boost next year as the government finally implements a formula which will start to give Cambridgeshire schools a fairer share of funding on a permanent basis, but we await confirmation and details.

Although the governors look at all the budgets each year, for the year ahead we are planning an extra level of scrutiny involving groups of governors looking at specific budgets in detail to seek better value for money.

The school remains in a very strong financial position compared to similar schools, but the pressure is always on to provide the extra books, materials,

outings and experiences that make so much difference to the children.

In this context, as always, we would like to thank those who support us financially, including all our wonderful local fundraisers whose contributions make all the difference to what we can provide for the children. For example, FABS continue to fund the school swimming lessons, buy every child a cycle helmet, and contribute towards the costs of class trips and the in-school theatre visits.

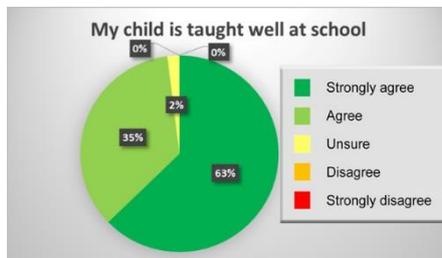
Their big events are the Christmas and Summer fairs, with fun nights for children (discos and magic shows) and adults (bingo, quiz nights) throughout the year. Thank you to all who help make these occasions so successful and please support these events as they truly make a difference to your child's school life.

FEEDBACK



It is now my second year performing the lead feedback governor role. It is important for governors to receive regular feedback from parents, pupils and staff. I aim to help provide this to the governing body through analysis of anonymised parent and pupil surveys as well as ad hoc feedback forms for events such as the School Open Day. A highlight from this year's parent survey shows how well parents view the standard at teaching at The Bellbird.

"It is important for governors to receive regular feedback from parents, pupils and staff."



Example feedback from 2017 parent survey

SHARING

A key feature of our governor meetings is hearing presentations from subject leaders so we can understand



more about what goes on in the classrooms each day.

This enables us to understand the challenges

the staff face on issues such as embedding any new curriculum and looking at how this can be enriched at the Bellbird. We are always particularly keen to discuss resource matters with the teachers, and how any additional funds we might manage to afford can be put to best use to help the children.

PUPIL PREMIUM

Another important role of the Governors is to assist in the management of the Pupil Premium.

The Pupil Premium is designed to ensure that funding to tackle disadvantaged pupils reaches those who need it most. The funding is allocated to schools with pupils from Foundation Stage to Year 6 in Primary schools who are eligible for free school meals (FSM), are looked after or have parents currently in the Armed Forces. Money allocated to the school is used to provide one-to-two support and booster lessons, alongside providing time for mentoring of individual pupils.

GREAT OUTDOORS



The Governors have worked with teaching staff, parents and children to improve the Outdoor Learning environment of the school in order to enhance the learning opportunities from this important school resource. The allotment area has been tidied up and each class now has their own plot. The Bug Hotel has some interesting guests. We have grown some wheat which the children have ground into flour and made into bread rolls and loaves for the Harvest Festival, thus completing the 'farm to fork' food cycle.



A new environmental area has been created at the end of the playing field, adjacent to Link Road, to facilitate creative environmental play.

THANK YOU

The Governors would like to thank all the school staff who have worked tirelessly over the last year to make The Bellbird School an excellent successful environment for learning. Their achievements are plain for all to see and they are a credit to the school.



HOW TO CONTACT US

Governors are contactable via the School office and the website. Any matter regarding day to day issues, including complaints should be discussed with either your child's class teacher or the Headteacher.