

To all Parents and Carers of Collis Pupils

As the parents and carers of our wonderful and unique children, you play a huge part in the success of our school, from cooperating with operational considerations (of which there have been many in recent times!), through your encouragement of your child's learning, and supporting our teachers' ambitions to give the children every opportunity to realise their full potential.

The pandemic and the new Ofsted School Inspection Framework, which is finally being implemented, continue to present challenges to all schools. Now that the build project is complete, the governors want to return their focus to more normal activities and look at opportunities to enhance aspects of school life.

Looking at ways to improve communication with our parents is a key priority for us and we hope that introducing a termly update will give you an insight into the work of the Governors within the Collis community. We recognise that everyone has busy lives so our intention is to keep this quite brief and cover key information. However, for this first edition we thought it would be useful to give you an overview of school governance.

What do the Governors do?

Every educational institution has some form of governance. A maintained school under the control of a Local Authority, such as Collis, is required to have a board of governors. The board will have staff and parent elected governors, together with a number of co-opted governors, who are all volunteers with a wide range of skills and experiences. Boards can also appoint associate governors. They may bring special skills and experience required for a particular project, or the role is a starting point for those who are new to governance, to help them get an understanding of the commitment and work involved.

The role of the governors is strategic rather than operational. We do not get involved in the day-to-day operation of the school - that is for the Leadership Team. The Governors use their skills and knowledge to work with the Leadership Team, to drive school improvement through monitoring activities, offering different perspectives and being a 'critical friend', supporting and challenging ideas or thinking, to get the best outcomes for our pupils.

There are three key priority areas of responsibility for governors.

- Planning the strategic direction of the school, its ethos and values.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school ensuring money is well spent.
- Holding school leadership to account.

In Collis our main governance structure is comprised of formal committees that look at the curriculum, pupil attainment, safeguarding, finance and all aspects of wellbeing and H&S. These are supported by subgroups that look at specific aspects of school e.g. recruitment, staffing, parent and partnership, communications. There may also be specific project groups such as we had for the build project. All of which enable us to understand what's happening throughout the school and to support the SLT and staff.

The formal Committees will usually meet every half term and the Full Governing Board (FGB) every term. The Committees will look at their subject areas in detail, review reports, attainment data, make recommendations to the FGB on approving policies and procedures and have detailed discussions with staff on everything related to getting the best outcomes for the pupils and keeping the school a safe and happy place that is crucial to enable the children to learn.

The work of Committees is very important in ensuring that the school remains compliant with all the regulations they have to follow and for gaining critical information on performance. However, the real value of the Governors' work comes from actually visiting the school and seeing how all that information from the Committees is actually implemented in the school day.

More detail on Governors can be found on the Governors' section of the school website.

Governors' Termly Update – Autumn 2021

Focus Area

The key focus at the start of every school year is to agree the priorities for the coming year with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). This year, as a result of the pandemic, there is a lot of focus on supporting the children to catch up on their learning. Finance is always key but again the pandemic meant the school lost a lot of revenue from lettings and school clubs. However, lots of work has gone into mitigating this impact without detriment to the pupils and the budget is on track. We have also been working on developing a risk register that prompts us to think about unlikely but possible strategic risks, such as pandemics. The first term also has a lot of procedural work we have to complete.

Each term we review the School Improvement Partner Report from the Local Authority that gives us guidance on key agenda items that the LA wants us to consider, if appropriate, for our school.

Governor Meetings

There have been five Committee meetings, two full Board meetings and eight sub-group meetings during the term. One advantage that came out of the pandemic was the introduction of online meetings. They proved an efficient use of time and gave us the flexibility to continue with our work. Consequently, the intention is for Committee meetings to continue on line, but full Board meetings will be held in school, if permitted.

The Committee responsible for overseeing the curriculum has been doing a lot of work with the SLT and teachers on the development of lessons that are now required to meet the new Inspection Framework. The Resources Committee, that monitors all aspects of finance, was involved in selecting a new catering provider. We have taken on board your feedback about the current provision and are very excited that Pabulum, the new provider, will provide a great value for money and improved food service. The Committee that looks at wellbeing, safeguarding and communications has monitored on-line safeguarding, behaviour and all aspects of pupil wellbeing this term and is currently planning a full programme of visits to school.

Governor Visits

All Committees are planning to get our school visits back towards pre pandemic levels. Our Governor responsible for SEND undertook a detailed visit to school to look at various aspects of the support being provided for the children with special needs. There have been safeguarding visits. Our Vice Chair volunteered at the amazing Fireworks event. I had the opportunity to attend the CSA presentation morning and conduct a tour of the new building with parents, which gave me an opportunity to answer some of your questions. The CSA team does extraordinary things to help our school. The funds they raise are so crucial. I encourage any of you who can give even a small amount of time, to help them - and it looks really good fun.

On behalf of the Governing Board, may I wish all of you and your families a healthy, happy Christmas break and I look forward to updating you on another successful term in the Spring.

Mags Thomas

Chair of Governors

<https://www.collis.richmond.sch.uk/governors/>