



## **GOVERNOR NEWS – ISSUE 2, SPRING 2016**

Welcome to the Spring update from your Governing Body. It only seems like yesterday that we were wishing each other Happy New Year, and here we are at Easter!

**Governing Body Membership** – I am pleased to be able to inform you that the governing body is now back up to full strength, as we welcome Jillian Melton, Hayley Chandler, Carol Mason and, as part of a national Pilot Scheme, we are one of first schools in the area to welcome a virtual governor in Miss Folosade Babalola. There is now a government requirement to recruit governors based on skills needed by the school, and we are lucky in recruiting governors with strong academic, legal and finance/audit backgrounds. This further strengthens the school leadership team in continuing good works as recognised in the monitoring visit in November 2015 which recognised that “*senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement*”.

**The Single Plan – progress/updates** - The leadership team are continuing to implement and monitor the plan which, in itself, is evolving as we move forwards. We continue to have the 6-weekly Primary Improvement Board meetings chaired by Steve Mellors, Standards and Excellence Commissioner from the Local Authority (LA), Governor Visits to monitor and evidence action and progress, and the Governor Committees and Full Governing Body Meetings.

To summarise the key areas and progress:-

*Achievement of all Pupils at the school* - results from the Autumn assessments showed strong results for Reading throughout the school with steadier results for Writing and Maths. With the removal of levels in assessments, staff are working hard with new systems to ensure rigorous moderation and integrity of assessments.

*The Quality of Teaching* - the overall quality of teaching is improving but we are continuing work to accelerate this progress. More outstanding teaching has been observed, but there are some consistency issues that need to be addressed.

*Behaviour and Safety* - Staff & Governors received ‘Prevent’ duty training in Jan/Feb 2016. Monthly safeguarding reviews have been implemented. Concerns over behaviour & staffing levels at lunchtime have resulted in changes commencing Feb.





*The Quality of Leadership and Management of the School* – the senior and middle leadership teams are reporting regularly to the impact and next steps in each core area of the school, which are demonstrating qualities of securely good and better. The external review of governance conducted in October was positive and the monitoring inspection clearly validated the actions taken since the last inspection.

Collaboration – we have active collaborations with Barnes Farm Infant School, the umbrella trust STEP, Chelmsford Teaching Schools Alliance, the Local Delivery Group and International Schools.

*Overall Effectiveness* – We are an improving school with some key areas of strength but the depth of this improvement requires further work. The greater scrutiny on teaching and learning has equipped our teaching staff with clear action points and has enabled a better picture of our strengths and weaknesses. The key throughout all of this is consistency, which, although improving, is still not as extensive as it needs to be. Our overall effectiveness is on course for achieving at least 'good' by the end of the Summer term.

**The future of Barnes Farm Schools** - on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016, the Chancellor announced that governing bodies of local authority maintained schools will have four years to make the decision to convert to Academy status, or they will be forced to do so. The new School Governance Regulations refer to a preference for Multi Academy Trusts and a more fully skills-based governance – hence the removal of the requirement for Parent Governors, and establishing a database of everyone involved in governance. We will be talking to other local schools, and gather all the necessary information to try and ensure that we remain in control of the move to Academy status, and to whom we align. There is a significant learning curve here, but we will keep you posted of progress, and have a full consultation with parents when we have the required levels of information to begin the process.

I hope you all have a good Easter break; don't forget the clocks go forwards on Sunday, so one hour less to sleep! I offer my continued thanks to the staff, governors and parents for their ongoing support and commitment to driving our school forwards.

**Steve Andrews - Chair of Governors**

