



Welcome to the first edition of this Bulletin, the purpose of which is to provide a direct channel of communication from governors to parents regarding our key initiatives, the school's development priorities and long term plans.

## *From the Chair of Governors...*

The governors look forward to communicating with you directly through this Bulletin and to receiving your feedback on the issues presented or indeed anything else. In this first issue, I would like to give some background on who the governors are, our responsibilities and the rewards of being a governor at Great Tew. I hope that you find the Bulletin insightful and that maybe you will consider becoming a governor yourself.

I have been a governor for three years and chair since Sep 2016. I have two sons at Great Tew (Y3 & Y5) and my eldest is at secondary school in Oxford. We joined the school in 2013 and sensed immediately how special it is and I wanted to contribute. Becoming a governor has meant that I get to work with a dedicated body of volunteers alongside an excellent team of education professionals. It is stimulating and hugely rewarding to play a role in school improvement and to fully understand the great effort that goes into ensuring our children have the best possible education at Great Tew.

*Some background:* Once a month the Full Governing Body (FGB) meets to fulfill these responsibilities:

- Setting the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

The governors are volunteers who all share a commitment to improving learning at Great Tew. We represent the school's main stakeholder groups - parents, staff, Local Authority and the community. Essential training builds on the skills governors arrive with.

Governors take on particular responsibilities, for example, I am the Safeguarding governor meaning that I work closely with Mrs Miles to ensure that policies and procedures are in place and complied with to ensure the children's safety and well-being. Other 'link' governor areas include Assessment, Finance, Buildings, Health and Safety and Early Years Foundation Stage.

Collectively the FGB monitors progress against targets set in the School Development Plan (SDP) – this Plan is at the heart of school improvement drive. *Cont...*

**Issue 01: Summer Term - 2017**

**Next Full Governing Body Meeting**

26 June 2017

**Next Parent Governor Election**

June 2017

### **Who are the Governors?**

Chair: Jane Zibarras, Co-opted Governor

Vice Chair: Naomi Roberts, Parent Governor

Lucy Miles, Headteacher

Peter Collins, Parent Governor (previous Chair)

Viv Bennett, Local Authority Governor (previous Chair)

Sarah Lainchbury, Co-opted Governor

Una Tibbetts, Co-opted Governor

Sam Reid, Staff Governor

Matt Bull, Associate Member

**VACANCY**

Parent Governor (see p.2)

Angela Murrey, Clerk

The Governing Body pages on the school website contain 'pen portraits' for each of the governors.

Contact governors via the School Office:  
office.2104@great-tew.oxon.sch.uk

The headteacher, staff and governors identify priorities, key actions and success criteria. Currently the plan is focused on five main areas:

1. Improvement of teaching and learning in all aspects of Maths and English in order to accelerate progress in these subjects
2. Strengthening the effectiveness of school leadership at all levels
3. Articulation of a set of school values which underpin all that the school does
4. Development of communication with all stakeholders (for example, this Bulletin)
5. Development of a buildings management strategy.

In addition to the school's own development priorities, governors focus on strategic issues arising from changes in government policy at local and national level. When I first became a governor, in 2014, the key issue was major changes to the National Curriculum. Recently we have been concerned with the removal of familiar assessment systems; the funding challenges facing schools throughout the country; the school's three year projected budget; and the government's academy agenda (more on this below).

*Jane Zibarras*

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## ACADEMIES – OUR CURRENT ASSESSMENT

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Below is an overview of our actions and responses to date to the much publicised government ambition for all schools to become academies or have plans in place to become academies by 2020.

The governing body's priority is to ensure that Great Tew Primary School continues to provide an excellent education and to maintain its distinctive ethos and values. Actions to date:

- Academies Working Group established to consider all options.
- Meetings with representatives of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs), such as the CEO of River Learning Trust, the MAT Chipping Norton Secondary School has recently joined, to understand what MATs practically offer and if they could be a positive fit for our very special school.
- Governors have attended and continue to attend academy information events taking place in Oxfordshire and further afield.
- Regular contact with heads and governors of the local partnership schools to understand their intentions and with the aim of developing collaborative opportunities. In 2017 our chair of governors is co-ordinating termly meetings of Partnership Governors.
- Understanding and formulating our strategy in response to the reduction of local authority support for schools in Oxfordshire.

Based on our assessment, both nationally and locally, and an active investigation into Great Tew's options, to date we have decided against applying to become an academy. Any decision to academise will be driven by the school improvement opportunities it would bring. As the governors continue to review the school's options and emerging government policies we will keep everyone informed of our progress and views via this Bulletin or additional communications as necessary. The governors would really welcome your views on academisation, please contact [chair.2104@great-tew.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:chair.2104@great-tew.oxon.sch.uk).

## Become a Governor

Enthusiasm and a commitment to school improvement are the key qualities required in a governor.

There will be a Parent Governor election in June (a popular month for elections!). If you are interested in finding out more, please speak to any of the governors.

The governing body can also co-opt new members with skills/experience which would contribute to the effective governance of the school. These skills may have been gained in a professional context totally unrelated to education. For example, business management, finance, project management, communication, IT or web management. N.B. Co-opted governors do not have to be parents. If you know someone who may be suitable, please share this Bulletin with them.

Whether you would like to fulfill the vital role played by a parent governor or you have a particular expertise to bring to the table, please contact [chair.2104@great-tew.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:chair.2104@great-tew.oxon.sch.uk)

### What is an Academy?

Academies are independent, state-funded schools, which receive their funding directly from central government, rather than via a local authority.

Most academies are overseen by individual charitable bodies called multi academy trusts (MATs) and may be part of a larger academy chain, comprising several or 20+ schools.

You can find out more about academies here <https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school/academies>