



# Governor Newsletter

## March 2017



This month our Chair of Governors, Elizabeth Knowles has celebrated a very special birthday. Staff, governors old and new and friends of the school all joined together to celebrate and to thank Elizabeth for all that she has done and continues to do to support the work of the school.

The governors have been checking that the school website meets all statutory requirements. There is a lot of news and interesting information on the school website, please do have a look!

[www.blake.oxon.sch.uk/website](http://www.blake.oxon.sch.uk/website)

It is vital that governors, between them, have the appropriate skills needed to support and challenge the school.

At the start of the year the Department for Education produced a new [Governor Competency Framework](#) setting out the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for effective governance.

Governors have this month carried out a skills audit to review their strengths and weaknesses as a corporate body.

The audit clearly showed that together the governors have all the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively fulfil their three key roles:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision,
2. Holding the headteacher to account
3. Overseeing financial performance.

### **Governor spotlight – Elizabeth Knowles**

Elizabeth was appointed as a Foundation Governor in July 2010 and became Chair of Governors in October 2013.



### ***Is being a governor what you expected?***

I've been a governor for seven years. When I was first asked by St Mary's Church to be one of their foundation governors, I had just retired from Oxford University Press. I welcomed the chance of helping the church and the school, and getting to know a different working world. I don't think, though, that I had any idea of how interesting it was going to be.

### ***What do you enjoy most about the role of governor?***

There is always something new to learn! Demands on teachers, children, and parents can seem never-ending in the world of education today, and governors have to keep up with that. We can only provide the support that The Blake deserves by ensuring that we are knowledgeable enough to act as reliable 'critical friends'.

### **Admissions**

During March each year the governors receive information from the Local Authority regarding the applications for places in Reception for the forthcoming September.

Mrs Julie Hitchman, the school's admissions officer spends a great deal of time checking all the applications against the school's admissions policy to ensure that the places are allocated correctly and in accordance with the school's over-subscription criteria.

The governor admissions committee met with Mr Edwards-Grundy and Mrs Hitchman to go through the allocation of places prior to the Local Authority sending out offer letters.

Assuming that all those to whom places are offered take them up, as in previous years in excess of 75% of the children admitted to the school will either live in the catchment area or already have a sibling at the school.

### **Contact the governors**

The governors are always keen to hear from the wider school community. You can contact the governors via their email account [blakegovernors@googlemail.com](mailto:blakegovernors@googlemail.com) or via the school office.

You can find out lots more about the governors and the work that they do on our [school website](#).

***Committed to the care and education of your child within a Christian setting***

### **Governor spotlight – Elizabeth Knowles**

#### ***What is it like being the chair of governors?***

It's a great privilege, but the key thing to remember is that you are still one member of a group. Of course, there are times when it's your role to represent the governing body, and that can mean you have opportunities to meet governors and heads from other schools. One lovely recent experience was accompanying Mr Grundy to Christchurch Cathedral for the annual service for heads and chairs of governors of Church of England schools in our diocese.

#### ***Is there anything you wish that the wider school community knew about the governor role?***

The role of governors is to set the overall strategy, agree the budget, and support Mr Grundy and his team by monitoring outcomes and asking questions. We don't run the school (that is their job), but we do need to know the school—something I hope and believe we achieve.

#### ***What are you looking forward to doing/achieving as a governor?***

As an individual governor, and as chair, I'd always hope to contribute in a way that ensures that every other colleague can also give of their best. We are very blessed at The Blake in having people ready to take on what is a demanding as well as a rewarding role.

I also feel quite passionately about our role in supporting The Blake as a church school—founded by the church to bless the community with education, inclusive because it is Christian. In a divided world, that seems to me to be a really worthwhile vision.

Rather than have presents for herself on her birthday, Elizabeth kindly asked for donations to be made instead to the school library. Thanks to her generosity the school now has £545 to spend on new library books.