

Governor Update Newsletter

Summer Term 2018

STAFF CHANGES

There have been some recent staff changes at both schools over the past few weeks, however due to the way these changes have been managed there has been little if no impact on the children. The normal teaching at school and the day to day running of school has been unaffected.

That said it gives us the opportunity to congratulate some and welcome others into our school community.

Congratulations to Heidi Cross on becoming Deputy Head Teacher at Copdock following Janet Parnell's decision to reduce her teaching hours. Fortunately we will not be losing Janet's expertise as she will continue teaching at Copdock on a part time basis.

Congratulations also to Zoe Verow from Bentley who will be leaving us at the end of term to take her place on a teaching training course. We all wish her well and know she will do extremely well on her course.

Sophie Carrington of Copdock will also be leaving us at the end of term to "Discover the World" before settling down again. Sophie will be missed by her class and her colleagues and we wish her well in her travels.

With these changes it has given us the opportunity to welcome some new and some familiar faces to both schools.

Welcome to Ian Ross, the new Kittens class teacher at Copdock. Ian, from Hadleigh, is an experienced teacher, especially in Early Years and his expertise is warmly welcomed to our Federation. We also welcome Paula Zabacinschi as part time T.A. and Abbi Bemrose as Lunchtime Supervisor.

And at Bentley we welcome 2 new faces into classes: Jo Drain and Di Rivers.

PARENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Many thanks to those of you who responded to this year's questionnaire, which as always shows the Governors a true reflection of

how the Federation is progressing and it's areas of strength and weaknesses. Fortunately as in past years the majority of those that completed the questionnaire had nothing but positive comments to make and scores to give. There were a small number of individual, specific concerns raised which were areas already known to the Head Teacher and staff and matters which are being dealt with on an individual basis.

One general area for Teachers and Governors to consider was that a number of the responses thought it was unclear that Copdock is not a Church school but Bentley is. This is obviously something we need to and will address. A further area of concern, although not a major one according to the responses, was the lack of extra-curricular opportunities. Whereas we can sympathise with that view it is not for the lack of trying on behalf of the teaching staff. For any extra-curricular activity to succeed it requires sufficient numbers of children to take part and that, alas, is not always the case, hence those activities do not get progressed.

What was very positive though were the responses to how you feel the schools are helping the children in achieving the school development priorities and specifically how they are assisting the children to become successful, confident and responsible people. A very pleasing response especially for all the staff across the federation.

FINANCES

As you must be aware by now, school budgets and finances are constantly under a great deal of pressure and require constant scrutiny. None of this is helped of course by changing Government policies and the state of flux in the Nations economy.

However, due to persistent monitoring by our finance committee, each year the Federation manages to stay on track financially. Still the pressure remains and there are no guarantees that in future radical changes may have to be made.

With this in mind the committee has looked at a number of initiatives, not necessarily to save money but to use the monies we receive in a more imaginative way. A prime example is the funding we receive from Sports Funding. In the past we have outsourced our P.E. training but now, with Alice North our qualified P.E. lead it is done in-house. To enhance our P.E. awareness and ability to teach in-house

Semra Hicks is undergoing training and will soon be qualified to assist Alice in the provision of P.E. delivery.

I.T.

It is pleasing to report that our I.T. provision has progressed well under the guidance of Rachael Rudge (Teacher Governor) and Grant Houlden(Governor) and the majority of previous problems have been resolved. Our new support provider has listened to our concerns and has rectified these and at present there would appear to be no on-going problems.

The next step is to upgrade the equipment we already have to enhance the children's learning, however before we can do that we need to find a better broad-band provider as the present system does not have the capacity for these upgrades. As a consequence our next task, along with our support provider, is to find a suitable replacement after which we should be in an even better position than we are now.

CONSERVATORY

The conservatory at Copdock is now finished and furnished, with new books being purchased to freshen up the stock for children and adults to loan as of September.

Thanks must go to the Parish Council locality budget and the Ipswich Rotary club, who along with other local groups enhanced the £5,000 provided by the PTA. The "Grow your £10" project realised a fantastic £4,500 and Neil Andrews provided all the furniture at cost price. Thank you to Mark Gladwell and Simon Taylor who took a large part in driving this project forward and finally a huge thank you to the PTA for their incredible donation.

GOVERNOR QUALITY TRAINING

The governing body is constantly striving to ensure both schools maintain their OFSTED rating at Good to Outstanding and in order to do so we have to ensure that as governors WE must also maintain our standards at the highest level and as a consequence we are embarking on the Suffolk County Council led Governor Quality Mark (GQM).

The GQM has been created as a framework for governing bodies and trustees to undertake a robust self-review of their strengths and areas for development.

This has been in conjunction with a wide range of governors, trustees and governor focus groups who are keen to ensure that our practice is "fit for purpose" and that we are undertaking everything possible to support our federation.

GOVERNOR MEMBERSHIP

As each governors term of office comes to a close they have the option to renew or move on to pastures new. Recently we have sadly said goodbye to a number of experienced governors, albeit they have been ably replaced by committed, competent and enthusiastic people. Our latest new face is Craig Barker who has strong links to Bentley and the church community. Craig is no stranger to many of us and we extend him a warm welcome.

Unfortunately though we must say farewell to one of the federations stalwart governors in Tracey Deacon. Tracey has been involved firstly as an active member of the Copdock PTA and latterly as the Safe-Guarding Lead Governor for the federation. Her commitment, experience and enthusiasm will be missed however we wish her well for a bright future.

If you feel you would like to get involved in the running of two successful schools there will be positions available in the next school year commencing September 2018. We are looking for someone with commitment, enthusiasm and a belief in our federation as we continue to keep it at the highest level.

SCHOOL WEBSITE

A reminder to all parents/carers that information about and communication with our schools is available on the appropriate website and we would urge you to use them as an important means of communication with weekly updates, reminders of ALL significant dates, activities and schemes the schools and your children are involved in.

It is important to check the website at least weekly during term time for all the latest updates.

If you have difficulties, problems or you need assistance in getting on to the website speak to any member of staff or one of the governors who will be only too pleased to assist.