
IN THIS ISSUE

Proposed federation of
Send First and St Bede's –
an update

Our review of the last
academic year

Parent governor news

We welcome any comments and questions about the school from parents, children, staff and members of the community. As governors we want to do all we can to make improvements to every aspect of our school, so please get in touch.

The easiest way to contact us is via the school Bursar Caroline Leary, who is also Clerk to the Governing Body. Caroline will ensure that all messages are passed on.

email: bursar@send.surrey.sch.uk

Phone: 01483 223 464

WELCOME...

The children seem to have settled well into their new classes and are all working (and playing!) hard. Hopefully all parents have also settled into their routines too!

We'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Mr Lees to Send First School. We are grateful to him for helping bridge the gap during an exceptional period in our school's development, and are confident that his previous experience – along with the support of all the staff – will keep Send First moving firmly forwards.

There are a number of other new members of staff who have joined this term and we would like to extend our welcome to all of them.

Interim headship

Whilst we go through the consultation process to decide if federation between Send First Infant School and St Bede's Junior School is the right decision (please see page 2), Mr Lees has been appointed as acting head of both schools and will be with us for this academic year.

We anticipate that we will run a headship recruitment process during the Spring term – this will ensure that we work within the required timescales for headteachers giving notice to leave an existing position.

Subject to the decision regarding federation, we will recruit a permanent executive headteacher to run both schools, or a separate headteacher for Send First (as will St Bede's). The successful candidate(s) will then take up their appointment from September 2012.

We will ensure to keep you updated of developments as they happen.

Proposed federation of Send First and St Bede's – an update

Most of you will be very aware of the important decision facing both schools, but for the benefit of parents new to Send First we thought a quick overview would be useful.

In May, the governors of St Bede's invited us to explore the feasibility of forming a 'hard governance' federation of the two schools. This was prompted by Mrs Lowry's retirement as headteacher of St Bede's, and Mr Hobbs' decision to take up a new headship further strengthened the willingness to discuss the available options.

Representatives from both governing bodies held a series of meetings, and took advice from the Diocese of Guildford, Surrey County Council and a consultant on governance.

We looked at the wider context of school development nationally and the key drivers affecting change – government policy, new models of leadership, the demographics

of the teaching profession, the application rates for headships and how federations operate. We explored in detail the impact federation might have upon our children's education, the community, leadership, management, staffing and governance, as well as considering the pros and cons of continuing as two separate schools.

As a result of these meetings both governing bodies agreed that we should conduct a formal consultation on a proposal to create a hard governance federation of the schools.

Where we are now

We are now in the process of preparing a consultation document that will enable all parents and staff to have a say in the future of both schools. With Mr Lees carrying out the role of Executive Headteacher across both schools we have a unique opportunity to see how a federation might work before choosing to commit to that route.

We hope you will tell us what you think – it is your opinions that will inform the final decision. We all need to think carefully about what this means for our children now and those children who are yet to start their school lives – the education and wellbeing of our children is the

overwhelming priority – so please take part in this very important next step for our community.

Interestingly, Ofsted has just published *Leadership of more than one school. An evaluation of the impact of federated schools*. The report highlights examples of improvements when schools federate, such as the quality of education, better pupil behaviour, wellbeing and achievement, and greater opportunities for professional development for staff.

If you'd like to find out more, the report can be downloaded from Ofsted's website.

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/leadership-of-more-one-school>

Our decision to move forward to a formal consultation was based on the following recommendations:

- 1 There are good grounds for believing that a federation of the schools would benefit children between the ages of 4-11 by improving the continuity of curriculum and teaching strategies, securing a common view on children's achievements at KS1 and easing the transition from KS1 to KS2.
- 2 The schools serve the same community. Federation would deliver a more consistent approach from both schools to children, parents and the community.
- 3 A federation of the schools would strengthen the rationale for more closely harmonising the admission policies, PTAs pooling vision and resources, whilst also retaining distinct relationships and valuable partnerships with both schools, and generally more common thinking and planning.
- 4 A fresh leadership and management structure overseeing an enlarged federation of schools would bring new and expanded opportunities and is likely to be more attractive to high calibre school leaders and teaching staff.
- 5 We sense that parents are largely in favour of the schools working together more closely. This belief will be properly tested by the consultation.
- 6 Our current situation (ie Mr Lees overseeing both schools) is enabling us to 'road test' aspects of the federation model.

Our review of the last academic year

The children worked extremely hard throughout the year and we are very proud of the progress that they made. Each term our link governors visited every year group, from the Nursery to Year 2, to see the children at work and were delighted to see the enthusiasm that the children have for learning.

The Year 2 children achieved excellent SATs results and we would like to congratulate them on their success. Overall, the results were well above the national average in all subjects – a fantastic achievement.

Every child's progress – whatever year they are in – depends not only on the skill and dedication of the teaching and support staff but also on the effort of the children themselves and the support of their parents, so thanks to you and your children for all your hard work and commitment.

Parent governor news

Ros Ebdon's term of office will very shortly come to an end and Jo West resigned at the end of last term due to relocation; we would like to thank them both for their dedication, commitment and hard work during their time as governors. Both made valuable contributions to our school's development.

We need you!

This means that there are two vacancies for parent governors. Anyone interested is invited to submit a nomination form, and if we receive more than two applications an election will take place.

So would you like to take an active part in the governance of our school?

You may have a professional skill that you feel would add value to the Governing Body, or you may just want to get more involved – but what we want most are parents who are interested, enthusiastic, committed and have some time and energy to spare for meetings.

The Governing Body is made up of the various stakeholders that the school serves – parents, staff, the local community, local authority and diocese. We work as a team to monitor and raise standards of achievement in the school, ensure the ongoing welfare of the children, and check that resources are being used effectively. Our role is to act

as a 'critical friend' and ensure accountability at all times.

The full Governing Body currently meets once every term – usually on a Thursday evening at 6.30pm. Meetings usually run for about two hours. We then have three committees – Learning and Achievement, Safety and Wellbeing, and Finance and Personnel – to ensure that all aspects of the school are overseen. The committees meet every half term, usually on a Thursday afternoon at 4/4.30pm. Governors are not expected to sit on all three committees!

There are also opportunities to get involved in other areas eg becoming a Subject Governor to monitor and report on a specific part of the curriculum.

Governors are appointed for a term of four years. Naturally, you can resign at any time or you may want to be reappointed.

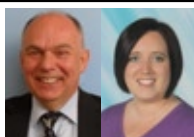
General training is provided for all new governors. And once you've decided on which committee(s) you want to be involved with, further training can be provided to help you develop specific skills, knowledge and understanding.

If you're interested in becoming a parent governor and would like to find out more about the role please do speak to any of the governors, Mr Lees or Caroline Leary, Clerk to the Governing Body.



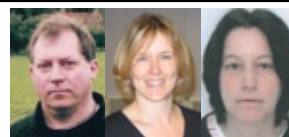
Parent Governors

Rowena Brooker
Ros Ebdon (Vice Chair)*
Mark Silcock
Rachel Williams
Vacancy



Staff Governors

Des Lees (Headteacher)
Helena Cole (teaching)
Vacancy (non-teaching)



Foundation Governors

Rev. Tony Shutt (Chairman)
Michelle Jamieson



Community Governors

Tim Bruton
Sam Othen



Clerk to the Governors

Caroline Leary

* Term of office ends October 2011