



# Governors' Newsletter

December 2020

## A note from the Chair of Governors Rachel Leach



Hello and welcome to the winter edition of our Governors' Newsletter. What a strange start to the term it has been. I am sure you will all join me in saying how fantastic the school have been with keeping us informed on what is going on and making sure that staff and students are safe in school.

This edition of the newsletter is all about making you aware of the roles each governor has at the school and what we have been doing since the school reopened in September. As chair of governors, I work closely with Mr. Wanford to promote and maintain the high standards of educational achievement. As chair I ensure that the governing body sets a clear vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school. Throughout the term I have encouraged the board to take various governor training to support their roles within the school. I, myself have completed training this term on Pupil Success and Wellbeing, looking at how we can support students through their early years of education and having their wellbeing at the forefront of their success. I have also completed Prevent training, and Exclusions training, helping support the school with exclusions and gaining a further understanding of how to stop incidents researching the point of exclusion.

This is my second year as Chair of Governors and I continue to be amazed by all the work the staff at Green Ridge do, always with the pupils at the heart of everything. I'm sure you will all join me in wishing all the staff at Green Ridge a restful Christmas break.

## Sean English



This year the Autumn term has been quite different. We have seen changes to our routines within school, adjustments to the curriculum and a range of different development and support for the staff and children alike. However, in spite of all the changes owing to COVID, the school continues to go from strength to strength.

I have really enjoyed the work I have done with the governors this term. As a representative of the school, I feed back in a range of different areas including vulnerable groups within the school and how we support them. This includes discussing the school's Pupil Premium Strategy but also includes how we are spending Catch-Up Funding to support the children in bridging any gaps within their learning. As a school we recognise the impact the lockdown has had on the children and have developed a range of

different strategies to support the children in getting back to where they need to be. This includes not just their academics but also their social and emotional state. These approaches have included the subject leaders across the school putting together their own 'bridging curriculum', which has been implemented this year.

Another area supporting the children with their social and emotional development has been the work we have been doing within our PSHE curriculum. This is an area that has grown, each year, across the school and is at a point where all the children have frequent PSHE lessons where they develop their learning about personal health and relationships.

I wish you all the very best this Christmas and New Year and look forward to what we have in store for next year.

## Tara Erdos



As a staff governor, my experience of monitoring is quite different to most governors as I get to experience things from the inside and have the benefit of seeing Green Ridge as part of the REAch2 family of schools. I network with other Business Managers

within the Trust but also with those in Buckinghamshire and the local area, so we can share advice and support each other.

Governor visits are quite different for me too as I am the one being visited rather than the other way around! My link governor for Finance is Chris Whiting and we got together (remotely via Zoom of course!) earlier this term for his monitoring visit. School finance is quite different to other businesses with various streams of income making up the funding that schools receive and with each having its own set of rules

and restrictions on how it can be spent. Chris and I have been through school finance before but this time he had attended a governor training webinar for REAch2 governors about school finance. I think this provided him with some valuable information as he came up with some really good, challenging questions about our financial position not only as a school - but also within the Trust.

I believe it is comforting to be challenged on reasoning and decision-making at work, just as we would confide in friends for personal support, and this is a valuable role that our link governors can provide for us.

## Judith Glover



As a REAch2 appointed governor for Green Ridge Academy, I wanted to update the wider Green

Ridge Community about some of the training that governors undertake to enable us to fulfil our duties.

I moved to Berryfields in 2017 and I was keen to give back to my local community. I leapt at the opportunity to get involved when a place on the governing body was vacant. This role was completely new for me and so I wanted to get as much training and support as possible.

This term I have completed training on The Governor's Role, Safeguarding and the Role of the Governor – Continuing Professional Development. Although I complete annual Safeguarding training in my current employment as a secondary teacher, there is additional training required for my role as governor.

Auditing the single central record and the safer recruitment process is an important role for the Safeguarding-linked governor and the governing body, as a whole. My experience of undertaking safer recruitment training and designated

safeguarding lead teacher training in my previous employment has given me insight into how important these processes are in keeping children safe in education.

The training has also been useful for future Ofsted inspections. Safeguarding is a key area that inspectors will audit and ensuring that all stakeholders are aware of local safeguarding processes and updated safeguarding training will add to evidence demonstrating that children are safe at Green Ridge Academy.

### Laura Nunn



I'm almost three years into my role as a parent governor, and whilst the learning curve has slowed, it shows no sign of stopping yet! Over the last few months I've sought to keep my knowledge up-to-date, and developed

my skills. In addition to the mandatory Safeguarding training, I've undertaken training on Equality and Diversity, Exclusions training and, just last week, Effective Governor Visits – to make sure that when I'm visiting the school in my capacity as a governor, I'm asking the right questions. Useful ideas for improvement can then be brought back to the wider group, when we have our regular meetings.

In addition to my role as Equality and Diversity link governor, and a link governor for Year 2, I also apply for larger grants on behalf of the school. My background in finance and developing business cases has been useful here, as I try to persuade grants bodies to part with some money for Green Ridge!

We have been lucky enough to receive several thousand pounds of funding over the last few years, which have paid for equipment and experiences that otherwise the children may

have not had access to. These have included gardening equipment, keyboards for music lessons, and most recently, a reading shed filled with books on healthy living and the environment.

I'm always on the lookout for any other grants Green Ridge might be eligible for, so if you know of any at your workplace or in the community, please do let me know.

### Chris Stait



My first term as a Governor of Green Ridge is now almost complete, and I've been on a pleasantly steep learning curve.

In my day job as Legal Director and Company Secretary of a non-profit company working in regulated areas, I'm accustomed to the principles and implementation of good governance, and I'm very pleased to have seen such a high level of performance focused implementation. I have been impressed with the school and its staff, and the broader support offered by the Academy Trust.

As well as general oversight on the Board during which we hear from the Senior Leadership Team, I have link monitoring responsibilities for Behaviour and Attitudes and Early Years against the School Development Plan. I'm also the monitoring link for Year One. This provides a good opportunity to explore in greater detail specific aspects of Green Ridge, and hear from other members of the leadership team and teaching staff as to their views and experiences.

Throughout my monitoring, as expected, it was clear that COVID has had a significant impact on strategy, operations and implementation. However, it has also been reassuring throughout to see the challenges identified, an effective strategy put in place to resolve or mitigate, performance assessed, and plans refined to

improve outcomes. It is evident that a great deal of effort has gone into maintaining the safety and wellbeing of staff and pupils, whilst adapting to the present climate and striving to maintain and exceed standards of achievement for all pupils.

It's been a challenging time, but I think, from an independent perspective, Green Ridge is really shining.

Have a wonderful, safe, festive break, full of generosity, kindness and cheer.

### **Chris Whiting**



Conducting our role as governors has been rather different this year, yet we have all ensured we continue to be as thorough as usual in our approach. With the social distancing measures in place, we

are thankful for the technology available to us to allow our meetings and school 'visits' to be completed remotely.

This has allowed us to continue to support the school, its leadership team and pupils, whilst continuing to give us the opportunity to question and challenge things to make sure every child makes as much progress as they can and achieves as much as they should. These meetings give us full confidence that the school is doing everything it can to continue to deliver on its vision, values and aims, and provide the best learning possible for every pupil at Green Ridge.

Recent updates and developments regarding the Coronavirus, provide us all with hope that we will soon be able to return to some form of 'normality'. It also means that the governors will hopefully be able to visit the school in person again soon, meet with teachers, children, carers and parents, and witness the fantastic level of

teaching we know continues to be delivered at Green Ridge. Visits in person will only recommence once it is appropriate to do so. Please continue to follow the rules and guidance set out by the government, and the school, so we can do everything possible to ensure everyone remains safe and well.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and healthy New Year.