

Governor Newsletter Autumn Term

This has been another busy term for all at Brandles. As chair I was delighted to welcome four new governors with a strong mix of skills to strengthen the governing board and support its role in holding the head and senior leadership team to account.

Tasha Parkhouse has taken on the role of vice chair in addition to working on both committees, Rhona Seviour is the LA governor, Matina Tryantafyllou is co-opted and Angela Smith is a valued parent governor. We look forward to working with them all. Sadly, during the term, Geoff Sharland decided that his work commitments prevented him from continuing with his governing role.

We have our new head. David Pearce took up post in October and has quickly set about establishing his authority and bringing a new perspective to work at Brandles. It is very interesting for me as a chair to work with another headteacher. Many chairs do not have this opportunity to see leadership in the school from a different viewpoint. David's experiences in other schools enables us to consider whether some of these would work for the benefit of Brandles' pupils. It is important that we are able to replicate, as much as possible, those opportunities which are given to boys in mainstream education.

This term we have held two full governor meetings, one finance and personnel meeting and one pay and performance meeting to discuss how staff pay is linked to performance and learner outcomes. As chair I have met regularly with the head to discuss both operational and strategic matters. While it is the head's role to manage operational issues, we do share ideas and discuss how best to improve educational opportunities for Brandles' pupils.

Governor visits have focused on pay and performance management, safeguarding, pupil premium and new headship this term. We have met with staff, discussed completion of key documents and checked the thoroughness of document presentation. We have asked for more detailed data reports, reviewed and ratified the latest school improvement plan and self-evaluation document, audited the web site and safeguarding processes. We have planned our own work schedules to link with key accountabilities and dates in the school calendar.

As chair I visited the school regularly to observe how new year 7 pupils settled in, the management of adverse behaviours exhibited by some challenging pupils and the displays of work in and around the school. We hope that boys will soon realise that showing respect for others, for school property and for themselves is fundamental to developing the right attitude for learning and growing into responsible adults.

Staff work hard to explain what is necessary for a successful experience at Brandles and to help boys improve skills. Not all boys are willing to work with staff so the school has put in place additional systems which enable them to become learning ready in a quieter environment. The adaptation of the BVEC building has become central to this work. Governors have noted how successfully this process is working in supporting the reintegration of boys back into whole school involvement. We will continue to monitor this area next term.

Finally, governors have also met with parents, attended coffee mornings, the Christmas meal and parents evening. It is delightful to note how well behaved and what good company the boys can be. We hope that we will enjoy similar positive visits next term.

Wishing you a happy Christmas

Pat Furness Chair of governors