15.4.23

Dear Parents & Guardians,

As we commence the start of the Summer Term this is a good time to give an update from the Governing Body of the school.

Mike Blackman is standing down from the Governing Body and therefore relinquishing his role as the Chair of Governors. Mike informed the Governing Body of his intention to stand down at the end of this academic year on the 7th February allowing a significant amount of time to appoint a successor. At the subsequent Governing Body meeting on the 20th March, I put myself forward for the role and I am delighted to announce was voted in as the new Chair of Governors.

I have been regularly communicating with Mike since February and we both felt it was in the best interest of the school for Mike to stand down with immediate effect and for myself to commence the role as Chair of Governors for William Penn School from the 15th April 2024. In my first official act as Chair of Governors, I would like to immensely thank Mike on behalf of the Governing Body, for the hours of voluntary work he has given for the benefit of the school. He has helped lead the school through a difficult and stressful period and done so with high levels of humility and diligence. I wish Mike and his family all the best for the future.

Although a number of you will have seen me at the school gate, I wanted to introduce myself formally and outline the experience and skills that I bring as the new Chair of Governors. Firstly, I have two happy children at William Penn, Bethany in Year four and Fraser in Year one. We are based as a family in Barns Green and chose William Penn ahead of our nearest school for the Quaker ethos, high-quality teaching, the school’s vision of ‘Living, Laughing and Learning Together’. We are very happy with the choice we made and therefore very invested in the performance of the school. I am delighted to now have the chance to work closely with the exceptional staff at William Penn and help guide the strategic direction of the school. Since joining the Governing Body, I have been highly impressed with the commitment and togetherness of the staff team in wanting to ensure all children at William Penn continue to get an exceptional education filled with enjoyment.

I am a Deputy Headteacher at Glebelands, a secondary school in Cranleigh. My leadership responsibilities focus on constantly improving the intent and content of the curriculum, improving the quality of lesson delivery from our teachers, leading staff training across the school, ensuring high quality outcomes for students, and leading on external reviews of the school. I have also sat on various school Governing Bodies for over 10 years. I aim to use my skills and experience to lead the Governing Body of William Penn in both supporting and challenging the leadership team of the school.

As Chair of Governors, I will aim to give regular updates on the strategic intentions of the school. I understand many of you will have questions regarding the leadership and staffing situation at the school. This continues to be a sensitive situation and I hope you will understand it is not appropriate for me to go into detail at the current time. I will of course write to you all with updates when it is appropriate to do so, in line with the processes that are taking place. For the Summer Term, Mrs Constable will continue as Acting Headteacher. She has led the school skilfully since stepping into the role and will continue to be supported by Joy Waelend (Consultant Headteacher).

Under Mrs Constable’s leadership the school has sought support from the Local Authority due to capacity issues created by the current staffing situation. I am pleased to report the Local Authority has completed a number of support visits in the Spring Term and put in place a significant package of support for the school. In turn the school leadership team have updated the school improvement plan and are working through a number of key priorities this Summer Term utilising this support package. These include:

* Further developing an ambitious, engaging curriculum and further improving the quality of teaching and learning (lesson delivery) across the school.
* Improve reading and writing across the school, and to develop an authentic ‘Reading School’ at William Penn
* Ensure provision for SEND pupils in each class, effectively meets their day-to-day needs
* Improve Mathematics across the school
* Continue to regularly review Safeguarding effectiveness at William Penn
* Increase the level of governor involvement in proactively understanding their statutory responsibilities and their support and challenge of the school including preparation for OFSTED

I must stress that these priorities were already a part of the school improvement plan and would be common to many primary school improvement plans. What has changed, is the level of support the school is receiving to help achieve these priorities which will help speed up how quickly these can be met.

During the Summer Term I aim to lead the Governing Body in continuing to have focused monitoring visits to review the impact of the work the leadership team is doing on further improving the quality of education the children get at our fantastic school.

Finally, if you do need to contact me you can email chair@williampenn.co.uk

Yours Sincerely

Matt Kerry

Chair of Governors

William Penn School