

# Governors' News



## Welcome

It's time for this term's edition of the Brookside Governor Newsletter!

We would like to begin by extending a warm welcome to our youngest pupils who started in Foundation in September, and to their parents and carers. We look forward to supporting your child's education through these all important early years and hope that they are enjoying our newly refurbished classroom space!

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## Governor Vacancies

For those new to Brookside, the Governing Body works alongside the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team and sits between the school and the Local Authority. We are supported by Governor Services and undergo training to enable us to carry out our role.

Our statutory responsibilities are set by the Department for Education and we manage the school's aims and objectives as well as its strategic direction. Mr Kenny (Headteacher) runs the school on a day to day basis, in terms of the performance of the school, its pupils and the staff and is accountable to the Governing Body.

We currently have a Governor vacancy and would love to hear from you if you are interested in becoming a School Governor. Read an account on Page 3 from our newest member, Mike Clark, of what is involved and also an article about school dinners on Page 4, which is a good example of the work we do to improve things here at Brookside.

Please contact Mr Kenny if you would like to know more about joining us.

## Meet the Governors

The Governing Body is made up of a group of volunteers which include parents, staff and members of the community. Governors are chosen according to the skills and experience they have to offer.



Anne Brammall  
Finance  
Co-opted Governor



Reesha Armstead  
Chair  
Local Authority  
Governor



Gary Kenny  
Headteacher  
Staff Governor



Rebecca Wood  
Vice Chair  
Co-opted Governor



Andy Beharall  
Staff Governor



Sarah Evans  
Co-opted Governor



Helga Peatman  
Co-opted Governor



Jennifer Pulkinen  
Co-opted Governor



Hannah Kear  
Parent Governor



Kelly Clarke  
Co-opted Governor



Tim Green  
Parent Governor



Mike Clark  
Co-opted Governor



Phil Doherty  
Associate Governor

## Being a School Governor — The Early Days

Though the education of my children is important to me, I had until recently thought that all matters relating to formal teaching was best left to others. Seeing Mr Kenny and his team of very able teachers going about their business was admirable and I was happy to devolve responsibility to them. Unexpectedly an opportunity to serve as a Brookside School Governor arose. I didn't accept immediately as I had to think of the implications. Perhaps some of these considerations would mirror your own thoughts.

My career is completely unrelated to teaching so I was concerned that I would not be skilled enough to contribute to the Governing Body. Both my wife and I work full time and we have two young children, so how much of my remaining free time would be consumed by this position? School Governors was not an alien concept to me but I was not quite sure what they did.

What has become apparent in the few months I have been a School Governor is that a strong Governing Body is an integral part of a good school and requires a diverse mix of enthused members. Governors volunteer their time freely, so it won't make you rich in monetary terms, however the riches that are garnered are in experience. At my first Full Governing Body Meeting I was merely an observer. I was glad that I did not have to contribute as the complexities, the jargon and the acronyms of the items discussed were beyond me. Now that I have a few more meetings under my belt, I feel I am contributing rather than floundering. With a couple of meetings a term; always on a midweek evening, they come around often enough, so previous points are remembered but not too frequently to be onerous, and the accompanying minutes are useful.

New Governors receive a comprehensive Brookside Governor Induction Pack and are allocated a mentor to offer support. Having attended a Nottingham City Council Induction Training Day, it quickly becomes clear the important role that School Governors play in setting a school's strategic plan, being accountable for a school's activities and their role of "critical friend" involving monitoring and evaluating how the school is progressing. Governors need to build a trusting relationship with the Headteacher and staff in order to achieve this. This may sound daunting but it is not. The Governing Body works as a team, led by the Chair. Some Governors have served for several years, so know the ropes and there is an appreciation that no one member can know every facet of the school. Instead, we each bring our own skills and experiences. Some are fantastic in ensuring the numbers are right when budgets are calculated, others are more focused on optimising the teaching experience for children, the outside pressures placed upon Brookside are ably with dealt by some and building for the future engrosses other Governors.

We all like to be altruistic sometimes and if maximising the educational experience of not just your children but of all Brookside children is important to you, if you can find a few spare hours each term, and you have some useful skills and want to learn some more, I would highly recommend becoming a School Governor.

*By Mike Clark*

## Improving School Dinners

We feel very fortunate here at Brookside that we have an on-site kitchen which is staffed by Nottingham County Council, to provide freshly cooked school dinners. During the last academic year, however, we received various complaints from children, their parents and staff about what was being offered. The main issues were around portion sizes and the availability of choice, and so the Governors decided to send out three separate surveys for parents, children and staff in order to obtain the full picture.

Parents and staff completed the survey via email, whilst the children were able to go through this during class. The parents survey (52 participants) showed that they were overall satisfied with the quality and provision of school dinners but the majority highlighted the issue of children not being able to choose their preferred option because foods often ran out. After discussing this in depth, it was decided that we would move away from offering different options for children to choose from in order to avoid disappointment when their choices aren't available which now means that all children have the same school dinners (apart from vegetarians). Pasta was named as the children's preferred type of food, and we fed this back to the Local Authority as there weren't many pasta dishes on the menu. The kitchen staff undertook further training to improve the quality of food.

Since making these changes, opinions about school dinners are much more positive. Children seem much happier knowing exactly what to expect from the menu and we are pleased to have been able to bring about improvements.

*By Rebecca Wood*

*We know that this has been a long term for our pupils and staff alike and are grateful for your support. We wish you all a very Happy and Restful Christmas!*

