



# Governor News

**Summer 2025**

## Hello from the Governors

It's hard to believe that another year has passed in the world that is Brookside School, and here we are again, approaching the long awaited summer holidays.

We've had another jam packed and successful term, with our older children sitting their SATs tests. They have done incredibly well and another excellent set of results mean that Brookside continues to sit well above the national average, when compared to other schools nationally. Hard work, as always, has been mixed with lots of fun for everyone, including days out, participating in East Leake Carnival and plenty of outdoor play.

The governors are very proud that Brookside has won the Platinum Award for OPAL Play. This is a huge achievement, considering only 10% of schools are awarded Platinum on their first attempt! We have also achieved Beacon Status, which means that Brookside will serve as an example to other schools who will be able to come and see how we run OPAL Play. As always, we are enormously grateful to a huge number of you who have had a hand in this.

Congratulations also to all of our amazing children who have worked tirelessly to create positive social impact, both in school and out in the community, and won the Superkind Award!



## Come, Join us!

Would you like to join the largest volunteering body in the UK?!

We have two vacancies for Trust Governors (which just means that any appointment requires approval from Equals Trust to whom we are accountable). The Governing Body is made up of staff, parents / carers and members of the local community. Our role is to make strategic decisions and oversee the running of the school, uphold its values and ethos, hold the school to account by monitoring school performance and support the Headteacher.

We meet twice a term on a Wednesday evening and alternate between meeting in school and online via Zoom. All meetings are minuted by a Clerk from Nottingham City Council. New governors go through our comprehensive induction process and receive full training, along with a mentor to support them.

This is an extremely rewarding role and offers the opportunity to influence the education of hundreds of children, and set them on the path to a bright future!

Please contact the school office if you are interested in joining Brookside's Governing Body.

# Meet the Governors

We are a group of volunteers made up of staff, parents and members of the local community.



Reesha Armstead  
Chair  
Trust Governor



Gary Kenny  
Headteacher  
Staff Governor



Jason Billin  
Vice Chair  
Trust Governor



Andy Beharall  
Staff Governor



Sarah Evans  
Staff Governor



Tim Green  
Trust Governor



Lewis James  
Trust Governor



Helen Stevenson  
Parent Governor



Vanessa Bailey  
Parent Governor



Stuart Adey  
Parent Governor

# Governor Update

## Termly Focus

This term, our Link Governors have carried out school visits on topics around Child Protection and Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Lifestyle Choices. We are pleased to report that all routine systems and checks are in place and monitoring documents have been submitted to Equals Trust.

A couple of new school policies have been introduced this term as well as others that were due to be updated. These have all been ratified by the Governing Body. Those policies that are relevant to parents or members of the community, or that are required to be made public, can be found on the school website.

## Brookside Nursery Returns

It's a joy to be able to reopen our nursery once more this coming academic year. We were sad to close our original nursery, but the demand for reception age school places in East Leake in 2018 was such that we needed the classroom space. Since then we have expanded our building which gives us the opportunity to reopen this valuable provision.

We've been thrilled by the strong uptake and are grateful to our families for working with us to build a flexible approach to sessions. Rather than requiring full-time attendance, we've been able to tailor schedules that suit each family's needs—making nursery a supportive and accessible experience for all.

If you're interested in your child joining us in the future, you're very welcome to register for upcoming sessions. We're always happy to chat and help you find a plan that works best for your family.



# For the Love of Reading

Following our OFSTED Inspection last October, and the recommendation that we improve what is referred to as the 'Book Spine', a great deal of work has been carried out across all year groups. Exposing children to a wider range of different types of literature and texts underpins classroom learning and is vital in supporting the development of reading, writing and spoken language.

As a school that is continually striving for improvement, we were already aware pre-OFSTED that the Book Spine needed to be refreshed and it was already featured on this year's School Improvement Plan. Governors take an active role in monitoring the implementation of this, and we can happily confirm that our objectives have been met very successfully this year by Andy Beharall and the team.

This now rolls on a two year rotation for each blended year group (EYFS, Year 1/2, Year 3/4, Year 5/6), ensuring that teaching does not repeat the same authors, genres or types of text throughout children's school journeys. This means that they experience a wide and diverse range of literature, both classic and modern, poems, articles, stories and speeches. As you will appreciate, this is no easy task and takes a great deal of planning.

In my role as Curriculum Link Governor and from my termly monitoring and observations, I can confirm that Brookside has, yet again, gone over and above in this respect, by ensuring the books and texts being studied are intertwined with other curriculum subjects. This is evident, as follows:

- Year 1/2 read the 'The Odd Fish' during the summer term and created their own environmental story, inspired by the book
- Year 3/4 enjoyed reading 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' in the autumn and went on to perform the most magical and uplifting show, with every single child having a part to play
- Year 5/6 have been studying Martin Luther King's most famous speech and the novel 'Journey back to freedom - the Olaudah Equiano Story', inspiring a wonderful display in the school hall that you are welcome to go and see, and have also looked deforestation, linking with the book, 'The Explorer'.

The impact that the Book Spine has can be seen not only through its links to other subjects within school, but also in the books that children read outside of school and through conversations that are had at home.

A huge well done to all the staff for continuing to bring books to life!

*Vanessa Bailey*





# Not That Different

Before the pandemic, which seems like it was a long time ago now, I ran a small business called Not That Different. I provided disability awareness training to student professionals (such as social workers and occupational therapists) and also worked with local primary schools children and staff, to instill positive thinking and attitudes around disability. Unfortunately, when Covid-19 graced us with its present, all this stopped and I made the difficult decision to let my business go.

Recently, however, Mr Kenny invited me to work with Brookside again and so I dug everything out, updated some of my materials and was very excited to bring Not That Different back into school.

As it's been a few years, I began with a training session for the staff team. My presentation focuses not on children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, as they have plenty of training and experience in that area, but instead looks at a variety of issues which affect adults, parents and other family members living with disability and the impact that these can have on children within school. It requires that staff think outside the box and look at ways in which they can not only improve access but be more inclusive and supportive of families where disability exists.



I then introduced myself to the children during a Friday afternoon assembly, giving them a sense of how I live as 'A Real Disabled Person', through a photographic presentation. I spent one day a week throughout May going into every classroom and so I got to work with all the children from right across the school. The main impact is of course, that I'm very obviously quite severely disabled and I get to 'wow' them with

my super cool wheelchair! Through various interactive activities and games that I have designed, I'm showing them that although we are not all the same, we each have plenty in common. I'm a parent just like their parents, I work and can teach them just like their teachers, I can have fun and play just like them, thus illustrating that disabled people are Not That Different.

I think the most important thing for children on this issue is to have their questions answered and this is at the heart of everything I do. At the end of each session, I give them the opportunity to ask me absolutely anything (within reason, of course!), and I will give them very open and honest answers. Brave of me, I know, but having curiosities settled is, I believe, the most impactful way to learn. Questions can range from children wanting to know my favourite colour and what I like to eat, to what it's like being in a wheelchair and whether I have ever been bullied. I get their teachers to join in and ask me things too because, often, the adults can learn as much as the children!

During the final assembly, I encouraged the children to talk about what they had learnt. I then suggested that they come home and tell you all about what they now know about disabled people, thus raising awareness outside of school that we really are Not That Different. Hopefully, they have done so and you may have learnt something too!

When we see difference in others, whilst appreciating that there are many ways in which we can find common ground, the important thing is that treat each other equally and with respect.

*Reesha Armstead*



# Finally...

Although we all look forward to the summer holidays, there is always an element of sadness as we say our goodbyes to our fantastic Year 6s. We nurture and watch them grow, see them learn and develop into the bright young people that they are today, ready for the next challenge. We wish you all the very best for whatever the future holds.

We are also saying a fond farewell to Mrs Rachel Clark, who you will know from the Foundation Unit. She has made enormous contributions to Brookside over the past 30 years, and she will be sorely missed. Having secured a full time role with OPAL Play, we'll still get the benefit of her expertise and we all send her our good luck for her new venture!

Phil Palmer, CEO of Equals Trust, is retiring too. Phil has been a huge support to Brookside and we are grateful for all he has done, both for the Trust and for the school. Our warmest wishes for a Happy Retirement, Phil!

Jenny Cooke, Executive Head of Cropwell Bishop Primary and Burton Joyce Primary Schools, has been appointed as the new CEO of Equals Trust and we very much look forward to working with her from September.

All that remains is to congratulate Brookside on yet another successful and exciting year and to show our gratitude and appreciation to everyone who plays their part in making this happen. A heap of thanks goes to our wonderfully committed governor team, Mr Kenny, all the teaching and support staff, our office staff, caretaker, kitchen team, midday supervisors and play leaders. The same goes for you, our parents and carers, the various companies and volunteers who have given their time freely to help with various projects and not forgetting all our brilliant children who make it all worthwhile!

We hope you have an enjoyable summer holiday and a well deserved rest!

