

Message from the Chair of Governors – February 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As Governors at Birch Copse School we are extremely proud to serve on the Governing Board at a wonderful and unique school. An important part of our role is to share what we are doing within the school so that everyone can understand better why we have governors and what we actually do. I am keen to encourage communication between parents, carers and the governors and we welcome your questions and comments. In this respect our annual Parent Survey will be coming soon, and you can contact me via governors@birchcopse.w-berks.sch.uk.

Some of my personal highlights at our monthly Governing Board meetings are the reports received from governors with special responsibilities or from those who have taken part in learning walks around the school. I would like to share a few extracts with you so as to provide an insight to the daily life and activities at Birch Copse.

As part of our annual SEND report the Governing Board was pleased to hear that the Sensory Room is now finished and that it is proving to be an excellent facility. It has created a lovely, calm and safe environment for pupils who are unsettled or anxious. Gill Hearn (Co-opted Governor) was very impressed with the SEND provision. During Gill's visit and meeting with Mrs Whittington it was clear that pupils are treated very much as individuals and the level of support is carefully tailored to their specific needs.

Thank you to both Gill and Mrs Whittington for providing such an insightful report. A special thank you to all the staff involved with the creation of the Sensory Room which I am sure is a very special addition to the school.

At the start of last term the Governing Board received the annual governor literacy report. I am sure that all parents and carers are familiar with one of the most popular areas of Birch Copse, the library! The report detailed a number of positive developments in line with the School Development Plan, one focus being to encourage all children to read for pleasure. The school have limited the number of books that can be taken out at any time to two – this is to try and focus the reading on a single book, rather than a child having multiple books on the go at one time. It was exciting to hear from this year's report that the school has decided to take part in scholastics "We are Writers" again this year, with the topic "When I grow up". Thank you to governor Jennifer Folliard and Mr Cooling for the detailed literacy report.

I am always astounded by the level of creativity at Birch Copse and I am confident that this feeling is now also shared by one of our newest members of the Governing Board. Michael Smith (Co-opted governor) recently visited the school as part of a Learning Walk along with myself and Mr Micklewhite. Before starting our Learning Walk we chatted about the Christmas production that Michael had recently attended. I am struggling to put into words just how impressed Michael was with the performance of the children. Needless to say, not only is this down to the hard work

and talent of the children but the wonderful teaching & support staff we have here at Birch Copse who put so much time and effort into making school productions a success.

As for our Learning Walk I particularly welcomed the opportunity to sit down with some of the pupils and chat about life in school. It was an absolute pleasure to talk to such bright, intelligent and enthusiastic children. I was left in no doubt that everyone at Birch Copse strives to be the best they can be in everything they do and to uphold the school values.

As the Governing Board we are always aware of the need to support Birch Copse in maintaining outstanding work, and to identify areas for improvement. The excellence of the school would not be possible without the marvellous dedication of all the staff, and on behalf of the Governing Board I would like to say "thanks" to each and every one of you it is very much appreciated.

Finally, the Governing Board are saying goodbye to Jennifer Folliard who has been a governor for a number of years at the school. We wish Jennifer all the best as she moves into a new governor role at a school closer to home. Thank you Jennifer for your many years of service and commitment that you have given during your time with us as Birch Copse.

Looking to the year ahead the Governing Board has recently welcomed new Co-opted governors James Masterton-Smith and Marta Karolina Pawlak-Uramowska, and new Parent Governor Richard Beck. If becoming a governor is something you are interested in or wish to know more about please feel free to contact myself or Mr Micklewhite either via our Clerk Mrs Marsh, based in the school office, or via governors@birchcopse.w-berks.sch.uk .

With all good wishes,

Mathew Graham

Chair of Governors.