

Friday 11 December 2015

Our Christian value for the term: Trust

governor news

From the Chair

Another busy start to our school year, with iSingPop and the KS1 and EYFS production, we seem to have a school of budding thespians.

The Governing body have had our usual round of meetings (I try to get to most of them) discussing everything our children need from the school, I also catch up with Jo once a week. The Governors are also coming in to visit our curriculum leads to find out how the curriculum is being developed and what focus is being given to subjects other than Maths and English. This is done individually and each Governor reports back.

The building works are now complete and we are looking at the next projects for the school, further details are in the rest of the newsletter. Finally I hope to see you all at the fabulous PTFA Christmas Fayre tonight. Merry Christmas to you all!!

- Liz Maisey

meet the governors



Caleb Evans

I trained as a Mechanical Engineer in West London and after several years designing medical equipment I moved into website design. I now own a graphic and web design business which I run from my home in Tetbury.

I started as a foundation governor in May 2013. Since my appointment I've been present on the teaching and learning committee and last year I took up the position as chair of the communication and inclusion committee. I have two children at the school currently in

years 1 and 4. I'm driven by a wish to help create the best possible environment for learning in all subjects.

fundraising

Below is everything you ever wanted to know about school fundraising.

How is my school funded?

We receive revenue funding from the Government to cover our day to day running costs. This is used to pay for staff costs and training, teaching and learning resources, support services, utility bills, insurances, refuse collection

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and grounds and building maintenance costs. We also receive a small capital grant each year which can only be spent on infrastructure/building projects.

Why does the school always ask me for money?

The day to day money we receive from the Government is only sufficient to cover the 'must haves'. However we want the children's time at school to be as interesting and varied as possible and to enrich our children's learning and develop their curiosity. Our funding is insufficient to stretch to cover the extras, for example trips, and therefore like all schools we ask parents for voluntary contributions. Without your contributions we would not be able to continue to take the children on learning experiences beyond the classroom. Thank you.

Our fantastic PTFA (volunteers) work exceptionally hard raising money to buy extras which, most recently, have included a significant contribution to the outdoor Forest School Classroom, the Year 5/6 trim trail, funding the annual trip to the Young Voices concert, additional laptops and iPads, playground equipment, netball bibs and a chicken coop. They are currently raising money for a Year 3/4 trim trail. Your support at the PTFA run discos, film/quiz nights and school fayres is much appreciated and again of great benefit to our children.

Why are the Governors now asking us for money as well?

We actually only receive 90% of our capital grant. The Governors (volunteers who govern and support the school) have to provide the remaining 10%. Furthermore, the grant is insufficient to fund the cost of a major infrastructure project. Therefore, each year we put a bid in to the Gloucestershire Diocesan Board for Education for additional funds. Our bids compete against the needs and priorities of other schools. Again any successful bid comes with the requirement that the Governors contribute 10%.

The Governor 10% money does not come from their own pocket and nor are they allowed to use the Government funding we receive. Therefore, as a school, we need to raise money to cover these 10% contributions. Due to the age of the school many of these projects are not exciting ones but are fundamental yet significant maintenance projects. In the last 2-3 years they have included replacing and updating four boilers and the electrical system, repairing the flat roofs and replacing internal water pipes. The Governors have also funded the installation of a new school kitchen meaning we can serve hot school meals and an improved, secure reception area. We have only been able to do these projects because the Governors have committed to paying over £40,000.

Whilst it can be a challenge to raise the Governor contributions every £100 raised means that we can bid for £1,000 of funding. Therefore your support of the Governors' fundraising efforts will make an amazing difference to our school.

Why was money spent on the curved blue wall in the Reception area rather than on books or school trips?

Ofsted required us to improve the security and safety of our pupils. This included installing fences around the playgrounds and building a secure reception area in the school entrance. We put in a bid for a grant from the Gloucester Diocese and the Governors contributed 10% of the costs. As mentioned above funding we receive for building projects cannot be spent on books and resources and vice versa money we receive for books and resources cannot be spent on building projects.

Who decides which infrastructure projects to undertake?

The Governors and the School Leadership Team decide which infrastructure projects are needed and place bids

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for funding. We are continually striving to improve the school and are currently discussing next year's priorities. We will keep you updated regarding any successful bids. Your continued support with the Governor fund raising activities is much appreciated and means we can continue to bid for funds to improve our school.

What's been done recently?

Pie, Pate and Puds

A great evening was enjoyed by 58 friends and governors of St Mary's school. The setting was a delightful Georgian Mansion in Uley and everyone tucked into a very "Edwardian Cold Collation" of Raised Pies, Assorted pates and some delicious puddings. Plenty of cheeses with bread, biscuits and pickles made sure that no one left Stouts Hill hungry! There was plenty of wine flowing and lots of good conversations, with particular joy on behalf of the more senior guests who loved talking to the "young" governors. Liz our Chair of governors made a delightful speech as well. In all we managed to raised well nearly £700 which represents the best part of £7000 of government money for capitol projects. A list of which I am sure Jo Woolley already has lined up! Thanks to all who supported this fun evening.

The long walk

As you may already know if you have been keeping up to date with the school newsletters, Liz and Clair, with the help of Clair's husband Mike did a mammoth walk earlier in the year. They raised £1000 for Governor funds.

The quiz

Anthony Carter Rasied £150 by organising a fantastic quiz earlier this year. It was a well attended event and great fun was had by all.

Upcoming events

We're planning some brilliant events for next year so do keep an eye out. We'd love to see you there.

committee news

Resources

As well as the ongoing review of the school's spending against the budget set, our focus has been on identifying the building work required over the next few years. This is so we can apply for any money required from the Diocese (as well as working out the fundraising we will need to do ourselves).

Tetbury Fire Service have held an evening training session at the school to ensure they are familiar with the layout and entry points. They undertook a review of the premises and have fed back any changes that needed to be made.

Finally, the Governors have decided to separate staff matters and overview of any related policies into a new Staffing Committee (which I will chair as well as Resources). The new committee will meet on a flexible basis when required.

- Clair Hodgson

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Teaching & Learning

The committee has been looking at the further embedding of changes introduced by the Government, both to the curriculum and to approaches to the assessment of pupil progress. Notable developments include the introduction of 'Talk for Writing' and enhancements to the monitoring of 'depth of learning'.

- David Greenwood

Communication and Inclusion

Our main focus this term has been on how the school is promoted and how the great gains in this area can be built upon. This included looking at greater community engagement including the continued improvement of the website.

We've also been looking at an updated version of the Home/School agreement and were given an update on safeguarding within the school.

- Caleb Evans

**Have a very
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year**

