

# GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2016



## DEAR PARENTS AND CARERS,

It seems such a short time since the start of term in September, and here we are already in seasonal festivities with shops awash with tinsel and trees! As 2016 draws to its close in this busy autumn term, we can reflect on a year that has been marked by remarkable change and some startling moments in history – exciting many people whilst challenging others, and with a backdrop narrative of extraordinary events – some causing sorrow while others offered reason to celebrate. In a world that can change overnight or indeed in moments, our schools have remained oases of safety, respect and care, where children flourish and this is clearly evident on visiting them.

La Fontaine and Heathfield Academies have achieved consistently exceptional reputations and, unsurprisingly, both have attracted large numbers of attendees at their Open Day events this term. As governors, we receive regular updates on the new permanent sites - excitingly, work is progressing apace for both academies so that the move to our permanent locations will be as smooth as possible in time for September 2017; a world of opportunities will open up for Heathfield in its new build in Aberdeen Road, Croydon and for La Fontaine in the Widmore Centre, Bromley!

## THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

As you may be aware, the Governing Body is a voluntary group of people, from a wide variety of backgrounds, made up of staff and parents, augmented with community and co-opted representatives; our governors work as a team. Our main role is to provide strategic management and promote ongoing improvements to standards throughout the academies, whilst the Headteachers provide the professional expertise and leadership so that the schools are suitably equipped to meet their aims and targets. Governors assist with the long-term direction and progress evaluation, along with some staff appointments, (including the Headteacher). Our role is sometimes described as a 'critical friend'. This does not mean that we are there to criticise the head, but to provide "challenge" by asking probing questions, examining data and offering critiques of the school performance. We are accountable to parents, the local community and the Trustees and we are always interested in hearing from anyone who has an interest in our schools. If you have a suggestion for the governing body or would like more details about our work

you can contact us via the clerk (contact link on the website)



## NEW GOVERNORS

We would like to welcome three new governors who joined us in October and bring a range of welcome skills to the team; Eva Allotey, an experienced languages teacher who joined the governing body as a Parent Governor, Beth Faherty who brings creativity and teaching experience to her role as Staff Governor and Jason Hewer - originally from Canada, Jason has made London his home and brings expertise in school data management as a Co-opted Governor.



## ACADEMY VISITS

Members of the Governing Body make regular visits to La Fontaine and Heathfield as part of their monitoring role. In addition to talking to the head teachers and staff, whenever possible we talk to parents and carers who offer real insight into how the schools work, what the schools do well and what they'd like developed – we are always grateful to parents and carers for their willingness to work with us in partnership. Governors undertake informal “learning walks” and spend time in classrooms watching children acquire skills in the different curriculum areas and often developing subject mastery. Pupil voice is very important to us - it is the opportunity for children to be heard and shape the future of their school. Children say what they think and frequently offer astonishingly mature thoughts and ideas!

You will often see us attend workshops, Breakfast Club or sessions such as “Learning Together” and we accept invitations to attend Family Dining with alacrity. We find that children are keen to look after each other and they have learned to be charming, mannerly hosts. During one governor visit at the Family Dining session a boy in year one was keen to explain “PUPAC” to us – “PUPAC” of course represents the values that underpin each academy’s mission, vision and motto – he went on to not only offer the definitions of Passion, Urgency, Positivity, Aspiration and Commitment, but to tell us why it was so important to his school and indeed so important to him that he expected his family to share the same values.



## HEATHFIELD ACADEMY

Heathfield’s transition to their second temporary site has been very smooth - staff and children settled very quickly. Esther Brooks, who is the Headteacher at Chestnut Park School, deserves particular thanks as well as the GLF trust, for being so accommodating and welcoming.

It has been an exciting and busy term for everyone at Heathfield Academy.

In the first half of the autumn term there were two special visitors. Firstly, a Hindu priest came to tell the children the story of Diwali, when the festival was approaching, the children loved dressing up as the characters.

The second visitor was a vicar from a local church, who came to discuss Harvest with the children. Families were very generous with their donations for the homeless people of Croydon.

Reception children started Autumn 2 with a trip to Selsdon Woods. The children got a taste of forest school, exploring the woods and the outdoor environment. They collected twigs and sticks for the camp fire and got a chance to use the tools to start a fire, the children then sat around the camp fire and enjoyed their packed lunch.

Year one children have been learning all about toys during their International Primary Curriculum (IPC) topic, they went on a trip to the Build a Bear workshop in Croydon. They built a bear for each class, naming them Maple and Sam. All the children said the ‘bear promise’.



Heathfield approached the British the Legion who supplied us with poppies for Remembrance Day on 11/11; the children took part in a minute’s silence and all raised money by selling the poppies and wearing an item of red clothing.

Heathfield Academy continues to promote a love of books and reading. This year they have entered the World Book Day competition. They were asked to create a display which was inspired by the books that they love. Each class chose an area to create,

Chestnut Class worked on the ocean, Maple class created the beach and Birch class created the sky element of the display. We are all looking forward to hearing the results in March and hope that Heathfield has won some books to fill the library.

As Christmas approached the children designed and have printed their own Christmas cards for their parents to purchase and the children also created salt dough tree decorations to sell at the Christmas Fayre. On the last day of term our children joined Chestnut Park children and watched the Christmas 'Panto', Aladdin.



#### LA FONTAINE ACADEMY

Earlier this term we were thrilled that Dr Chapleau received a letter of congratulations from the Minister of State for Education who was delighted to confirm that La Fontaine is in the top 3 per cent of all primary schools in the country for phonics and thus assuring a very strong start to reading for the children.

As a counterpoint to academic exercise, La Fontaine is encouraging children into sport and fitness. We applauded the team for winning a bronze medal in the very first Football Tournament they had participated in! Gymnastics, ball mastery, movement, the muscular system, diet and even language skills seem fun when sport is the focus while talking to people from across the national and local careers landscape – from opera to sport, helped our children “dream big dreams and build a hopeful future” during Creativity Week and Inspiring Children Day.



La Fontaine is very much a family and this was perfectly illustrated by their wonderful Christmas Night Market – we were impressed to learn that over eighty parents volunteered their time to help make the event a real success!

Finally, we would like to thank you for all your support and commitment to the academies, and we wish you a very Merry Christmas and Peace in the New Year!

Allison Allen, Governor

On behalf of the Strategic Governing Body of La Fontaine and Heathfield Academies

**MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR STRATEGIC GOVERNING BODY**

**[WWW.LAFONTAINEACADEMY.ORG/GOVERNANCE](http://WWW.LAFONTAINEACADEMY.ORG/GOVERNANCE)**

**[WWW.HEATHFIELDACADEMY.ORG/STEP-GOVERNANCE](http://WWW.HEATHFIELDACADEMY.ORG/STEP-GOVERNANCE)**

