

“Quality education brings confidence and independence”

Governors Newsletter

Norwood School

Issue 3
December 2007

This term has seen significant changes in our staffing structure after the departure of Mr Evans, Mrs Shaw, Mrs Olive and Mrs James at the end of the last school year. Our plans to ensure a smooth hand over to Mrs Reynolds as Head teacher and Mr Warn as Deputy Head Teacher have gone very well. Our other new members of staff Mrs Williamson as Year 5 Teacher, Mrs Coolbear as Higher Level Teaching Assistant and Miss Odain as Teaching Assistant have settled into school life at Norwood. We have also had an Ofsted inspection. It has been a very busy time indeed!

As with all new starts this has involved a number of changes. All staff and especially the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher are working very hard with the Governing Body to ensure that the school continues to run smoothly during this period of transition. We hope you feel as we do, that Norwood School has an exciting and positive future ahead. I would like to take this opportunity to thank, staff, governors, parent/carers and the Local Authority for their support and congratulate our children on their continued success.

We look forward to your support in our forthcoming Christmas activities and wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and New Year

Reg Miller, Chair of Governors.

OFSTED

As stated above Norwood was inspected recently and we received a Good Ofsted report. The system of inspection has changed since our last one in 2003 to sharpen the focus of inspections. The school had implemented the recommendations for improvements that were raised in 2003 and has regularly updated an on-line Self Evaluation Form (SEF) which formed much of the background for our recent inspection.

On Friday 9th November we received a phone call to inform us of our inspection only 2 school days in advance. We had been allocated a one-day visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, Mrs Linda Killman. Mrs Reynolds and her Senior Leadership team of Mr Warn, Mrs Jordan and Miss Swift then had some additional administrative documents to provide alongside the 'SEF' and standards data already available to Ofsted.

Mrs Killman began the inspection process on the Tuesday afternoon, meeting with members of the Leadership team and having a tour of the school. On the Wednesday she returned to continue meetings with governors, staff and children. She also observed lessons, playtime and lunchtime. Judgements were made on teaching and learning standards and the overall effectiveness of the school, in addition to the ability of the school to evaluate 'where it is now' and the capacity of the Leadership Team to improve the school.

At Norwood we know it is important not to stand still, and areas for development had already been identified. Mrs Killman was pleased to see that we are continuously evaluating our effectiveness and that was reflected by the action plans in progress. We were pleased to have her feedback on the areas we need to continue to build on especially because most of her points were about areas we had already identified for development. The report provides us with an opportunity to independently validate the work we have done and concentrate on areas in our action plans we will be developing. Staff and governors will continue to evaluate the progress of our plans.

Governing Body -

We are pleased to introduce you to the new Community Governor, Mrs Mullan and the new Clerk to the Governing Body, Mrs Dawson, both of whom took up office at the start of term in September.

Mrs Mullan

Mrs Mullan joins Norwood School as a Community Governor. She is currently Deputy Head Teacher at The Voyager School with responsibility for Learning and Teaching. Since September 2006 she has been working with the Head Teacher, Hugh Howe and other senior members of staff to develop the vision, values and culture for learning in the new school. Prior to working in Peterborough her teaching experiences have been in mixed comprehensive schools that have been committed to learning and teaching and where staff and students work together, in a caring environment, to ensure that all students reach their potential.

Mrs Mullan says “I am totally committed to this new role as a governor at Norwood School. I am looking forward to working with students, staff and parents in promoting the highest of academic standards and a culture where students continue to strive to achieve their best.

I very much look forward to working with you all in developing Norwood as a primary school at the forefront of education and a place where the whole school community can celebrate the richness and diversity of our school and wider community.”

Mrs Dawson

In August 07 the Governing body advertised for a new clerk to the governors so as to relieve the school office of some of their increasing administrative burden. We were very lucky to successfully appoint Mrs Dawson to the role. Mrs Dawson has been involved in business administration for over 20 years. She has lived in Hong Kong where she ran her own website business, and has also had a successful career in the UK. Since starting her family, she now has 3 young children, she has turned her attentions to a more community and educational role.

Currently she is a teaching assistant at Jack Hunt School in the science department, working with year 7-11 pupils. She is also vice-chair of governors at her local primary school and has a good understanding of the clerking role.

As clerk, Mrs Dawson does not hold the same role as the Governors; she is not allowed to make decisions for Norwood. She is, however, expected to advise the governing body on its legal duties, keep records of the meetings and ensure the smooth running of all the committees. She attends regular updates from the Local Authority and updates us on any relevant issues. We are very pleased to welcome her aboard our team and hope she enjoys her time with us.

Queries to the Governing body

The governors, whether Community, Local Authority or Parental appointments all share the same role.

They should (on liaison with the Leadership Team of the school) -

- Plan for improvements
- Monitor progress towards these improvements
- Evaluate improvements achieved

The day to day running of the school is delegated to the Headteacher, and the staff. If you have any questions affecting your individual child you should first approach the teacher, they are regularly on the playground or contact the school office to make an appointment to see them privately.

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The next point of call would be to the Headteacher. Most issues are then resolved by speaking with the people who deal with your child most regularly.

If, having followed the above procedure, you feel that the situation has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you should write to the Governing Body outlining the issues. Please note because Governing Body meetings happen half termly you may not receive an immediate response, however we will endeavour to reply as soon as practicably possible.

Governor Training

An important part of the role of Governors is to keep up-to-date with the many changes that are being introduced into schools by the Government and the Local Authority (LA). It is therefore essential that Governors take advantage of the courses provided by the Governor Development Services of Peterborough City Council.

Schools that subscribe to the service can send governors free of charge on courses. They can also ask for one individual governing body development session each financial year.

This term Norwood School asked for In House training on Finance which was provided by Norwood's Finance Officer, Di Sharpe, on Wednesday 31st October 2007. This was attended by 10 governors including our Headteacher and was very useful in explaining the Finance and Budgeting systems, requirements and changes. Di Sharpe was extremely well prepared and clearly explained points even for those governors who were not as proficient in financial matters as they would like to have been. All questions were answered knowledgeably and Di even managed to make us laugh. We are extremely grateful to Di for her input. It was also valuable as a team building exercise for all governors present to get their heads around a difficult and complicated subject.

Paston School had also arranged In House training on Ofsted and Using Data to Monitor School Effectiveness to which they kindly invited Norwood Governors to attend. 9 Norwood Governors attended the course led by Malcolm Massey of the LA and again this was extremely informative and helpful enabling the governing body to be better prepared for the Ofsted inspection, which we received sooner than anticipated. We are grateful to Paston School for making us so welcome and it was interesting to meet with another Governing Body.

In addition this term, 3 governors have also attended the Headteacher performance management course and 6 governors attended an earlier Ofsted Course. Last week Mrs Reynolds attended training along with two Governors about the new Financial Management Standards in Schools.

We hope that you have found this newsletter informative and interesting. If you have any comments/suggestions please send them via email to tricia@triciapengelly.wanadoo.co.uk or via the school office.

Norwood School Governors

Governors: -

Community Governor
Reg Miller
Bethan Charles
Jane Mullan

Headteacher
Deborah Reynolds

Teacher Governor
Sue Scott

Parent Governor
Sarah Betambeau
Warren Fenwick
Paul Osker
Nigel Smith

Staff Governor
Sharon Spillet

LA Governor
Nicola Brooks
Tricia Pengelly

Clerk
Louise Dawson