



April 2011

South Wilts Grammar School for Girls

Governor Newsletter

Welcome to our newsletter—please read on!



Maths & Computing



Science

Since our last newsletter, we have officially become an Academy (with effect from 1st January 2011). Although a great deal of hard work took place before the school term ended in December last year, there was still more to be done during the holiday period to ensure that the procedure to deal with our finances was in order by the due date, including the setting up of a new bank account to enable us to receive income.



Diane Atkins
Chair of Governors

Dates to note:

- 26th April 11 Term begins
- 29th April 11 Bank Holiday
- 2nd May 11 Bank Holiday
- 30th May to 3rd June 11 Half Term
- 6th June 11 Term begins
- 21st July 11 Term ends

All the Governor's Committees have met since the beginning of the year, with the most recent being the meeting of the full Governing Body on Monday 28th March. Our Academy Status has impacted a great deal of committee business. For example, all our statutory policies have had to be reviewed in order to ensure that they meet the needs of an Academy. Some have proven straightforward, perhaps involving a simple deletion of a reference to the Local Authority, whilst others are more complex and may take some time to bring into line. Academy Status continues to represent a steep learning curve for the Governing Body and will continue to be so for some time into the future.

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You will be aware that our Headteacher, Mrs Stratton, is to retire later this year. The recruitment process got underway late last year, and in February a panel of Governors began an intensive two days of interviews for the shortlisted candidates—more overleaf. You will already know the result; Mrs Michele Chilcott was selected and her appointment was endorsed by the Governing Body on Tuesday 8th February. We congratulate her on her success and will give her our full support when she takes up the post in September. Mrs Tracy Harris, currently an Assistant Head, will be the new Deputy Head for next year.

Did you know? All our articles will be uploaded and linked to the school website, so that you can refer back to them.

One final note: many of you will have seen a Parent Governor 'on duty' at the Parents' Evenings. This has been a long standing arrangement and provides all parents with an opportunity to get their views across face to face. Please come and talk to them - words of appreciation are as welcome as well as ideas for improvement! Finally, we wish you all a very Happy Easter holiday and to the girls who return to face their Public Exams, much success.



South Wilts Grammar School
for Girls
Stratford Rd
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP1 3JJ

Phone: 01722 323326

Fax: 01722 320703

E-mail:

governors@swgs.wilts.sch.uk

Full list of Governors:

Mrs Diane Atkins

Governor (Chair)

Mr Wade Graham

Governor (Vice Chair)

Mrs Julie Allen

Staff

Ms Lisa Ball

Governor

Mrs Kristina Beard

Parent

Mrs Angela Brown

Parent

Mr Chris Child

Parent

Mrs Helen Hollinghurst

Staff

Mr John Raisbeck

Governor

Mr Edward Richards

Parent

Mrs Helen Stewart

Governor

Mrs Frances Stratton -

Headteacher

Mr Chris Whiteley

Governor

Mrs Elizabeth Wrighton

Staff

Mr John Youings

Governor

Mrs Valerie Bryan

Clerk

Focus On — The Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee continues to deal with a variety of HR issues, including grappling with numerous policy changes imposed by the previous and current Government. The appointment of the new HR Manager, Antonia Corp, has been a great help to the Committee and will ensure that all HR issues are dealt with promptly and in full compliance with the latest legislation.

The committee spends much of its time overseeing staff changes, and several key posts have recently been filled at SWGS. It is pleasing to have noted the number candidates that continue to apply, and of course the high quality of those that are successful. Although astute budgeting is essential, when it comes to staffing this school, we always seek the very best people—they may NOT necessarily be the cheapest!

The most demanding agenda item in recent months has been the selection of a new Headteacher. The detailed planning took place towards the end of last year and a Selection Sub-committee was appointed. After the usual round of advertisements in TES and elsewhere, a number of very high quality candidates applied. A sift was undertaken and those who were selected for interview were invited to attend the two-day selection process on 7th and 8th February. This process involved students, and staff, as well as the Governors. The considerable planning paid off as the tests, sample lessons, informal 'meet and greet' and more formal interviews, all went without a hitch. In the end, the right person was selected—a very well done to Mrs Chilcott!

Who's who? Kristina Beard — Parent Governor

How long have you been a Governor?

I was elected in February this year; it is still early days to know what it is like to be a Governor although the professionalism and warmth with which I have been welcomed is encouraging.



What is it like?

The learning curve has been steep! Despite having been a Governor at Woodford Valley School, there is a huge amount to take in before one can really start to make a meaningful contribution. Every school has its own personality and culture and SWGS is no exception! With a new Government, Academy Status and a new Headteacher, the immediate future is likely to be exacting, exciting and challenging. It is encouraging, however, that the school faces these times of change and financial pressures from such a solid base of achievement and reputation - this is clearly the result of strong, measured leadership and a great staff commitment.

Tell us a little about you. I have three girls (12, 11 and 8) and we live in a small, rural, village on the outskirts of Salisbury with Nick, my husband, who works for Oracle. I enjoyed a career for about 18 years in HR and Employment Law; coupling a Law degree, HR experience and an MSc from LSE into an advisory Employment Law and Training service (I have untold admiration for all those who manage to juggle career and children!). We have recently returned to the UK from spending an amazing two years living in the USA, and have returned to our previous home, the wonderful primary school in the Woodford Valley and to St. Paul's Church. I have now settled back into the familiar chaos of friends and family, outdoor life, animals, various sports, music, bits and pieces of Employment Law and voluntary service. Our eldest daughter, Georgie, is at SWGS in Year 7, and Becky is due to start in September. Emily is in Year 4 at Woodford