



15th July 2010

South Wilts Grammar School for Girls

# Governor Newsletter

Welcome to our newsletter—please read on!



Maths & Computing

## Dates to note:

- 1st September—Year 12 (am) Year 13 (pm) in school
- 2nd September—Year 7 only in school
- 3rd September—Years 7–11 and 13 in school
- 6th September—all years in school
- 16th September—Speech Day

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In the future all our articles will be uploaded and linked to the school website, so that you can refer back to them.

The Summer Term has been dominated by exams at all levels, and SILENCE notices have appeared all over the school. However, a great deal more goes on which Governors visit in order to get an insight into what pupils are doing; the Real Game, Enterprise Day, Industry Days, and so on. These all show the ability of the girls to think hard and come up with ideas or solve problems. The final weeks of the school year see the girls going on trips, attending the Year 13 Ball for those departing, induction days etc. All this after a busy and successful year.

Since our last newsletter, meetings of all the committees have been held (Admissions, Curriculum, Personnel and Resources), as well as General meetings, and the January Strategic Meeting. This year, the latter was run as a 'workshop' in which the Governing Body was assessed as 'Outstanding' based on Ofsted criteria. We also used this opportunity to consider what Ofsted would cover at the inspection and what the responses should be. The whole event provided much food for thought and reinforced what the Governing Body is there for. We came up with our own list, which is a useful summary, albeit by no means exhaustive:

- *TO PROVIDE A STRATEGIC VIEW*
- *Deciding what the School is to Achieve.*
- *Setting aims and objectives.*
- *Agreeing policies, targets and priorities.*
- *BE A CRITICAL FRIEND.*
- *Support the SMT.*
- *Give constructive advice.*
- *Be a sounding board for ideas.*
- *Be a second opinion on proposals.*
- *Help where needed.*
- *Challenge—Ask questions*
- *Seek to arrive at the best solution for all.*
- *ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY*

The Governing Body is ultimately responsible for ensuring good quality education is provided by the School. It may discuss, question and refine proposals, but must always respect the professional role of the Head and other staff who manage and run the School. The Governing Body in its turn is accountable to parents and the wider community for the overall performance of the School.



Diane Atkins  
Chair of Governors

The School has now completed its first year as a member of the South West Academic Trust (SWAT), and the Board of Directors (Chairs of Governors) and Headteacher Groups have met. Much progress has been made across the Trust, particularly in the sharing of 'best practice' and good ideas. The SWAT continues to go from strength to strength.

You will have heard of the Government initiative to encourage schools to move to Academy status. As an Outstanding school, SWGS was invited to apply in the first tranche, and the Governing Body agreed that we would send an Expression of Interest. After much debate about the implications of doing so at our General Governors meeting in June, it was decided to postpone a decision until more information became available. There are simply not enough facts out there to allow us to establish what it would mean for us. A further meeting will take place in September and a consultation period will follow after the summer.

Finally, to the girls waiting for exam results and to those who are leaving us, we wish you every success for the future, and we sincerely hope you all have a wonderful summer.



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#### **Full list of Governors 2009/2010:**

Mrs Diane Atkins - Foundation  
(Chair)

Mr Wade Graham - LEA (Vice  
Chair)

Mrs Julie Allen -Staff

Mrs Lisa Ball - Community

Mrs Angela Brown - Parent

Mr Christopher Child - Parent

Mr Bob Corcoran - Parent

Mrs Helen Garside - Parent

Mrs Helen Hollinghurst - Staff

Mr John Raisbeck - LEA

Mr Edward Richards - Parent

Mrs Susan Selby - Parent

Mrs Helen Stewart - Community

Mrs Frances Stratton -  
Headteacher

Mr Chris Whiteley - Community

Mr Stephen Worthington -

Parent

Mrs Elizabeth Wrighton—Staff

Mr John Youings - Community

Mrs Valerie Bryan - Clerk

## **Governing Body Committees—what does the Curriculum Committee do?**

The Curriculum Committee meets once a term and has delegated responsibility to oversee the school curriculum and review and, when necessary, revise a number of the school policies. Additionally, the Senior Leadership Team briefs the Committee on statistics and performance data, timetable issues and examination results. The nominated Governors for Child Protection, SEN and Careers and PSD are committee members. Before each meeting a visit is organised to one or two departments for the committee members to see, first hand, life in the classroom and talk to the teachers. In the past academic year departments visited have included Geography, English and Design & Technology. These visits are always very informative and worthwhile, allow governors to establish the 'ground truth' about what goes on in the classroom, and help ensure discussions by the committee are put into context.

## **Governing Body Committees—what does the Personnel Committee do?**

As a Foundation school, the Governing Body is the 'employer' of all the school staff and therefore is responsible for adhering to Employment Law. The Governing Body delegates responsibility for doing so to the Personnel Committee, which exercises a duty of care for all teaching and support staff. From this duty of care stems the committee's responsibilities, which include staff pay, discipline, performance management, personnel policy documents and governance. A committee report is provided at every full meeting of the Governing Body. The most recent June 2010 report included such items as staff development, the Vetting and Barring scheme (CRB checking), the National Support staff structure, progress against a review of staff disciplinary procedures, and so on.

## **Who's who? Julie Allen — Staff Governor**

### **How did you come to be a Governor?**

I was asked to stand for election by some colleagues on the staff and initially declined. However, when no-one else came forward to join Liz Wrighton as a Teacher Governor, my resolve weakened and I agreed to do it. Despite many years of teaching, I have never previously served as a Governor but I hope that my experience as a Head of Department and an ex-union representative will enable me to make informed contributions.

### **So, how is it going?**

I have so far attended two Personnel Committee meetings and one meeting of the full Governing Body. I was made very welcome at the first committee meeting which, despite its seemingly quite informal approach, was very thorough in its discussions of key points. Likewise the full Governors' meeting was run very professionally. I also participated in the 'Governors' Ramble! This was advertised as a gentle summer stroll but turned into a 3½ hour hike but well worth it for the glorious display of bluebells at the top of the hill. The pub lunch was well deserved by all.

### **Tell us a little about you.**

I have been Head of Mathematics at SWGS for 3 years now after teaching for over 30 years in a girls' school in Southampton. I am enjoying the different challenges posed by teaching in a grammar school. I live in the New Forest and enjoy walking and photography. I play a little golf but not enough to be good, or even consistent - that will have to wait until retirement!

