



July 2018

South Wilts Grammar School for Girls

# Governors' Newsletter

## Welcome to our Summer Term Newsletter

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

Phone: 01722 323326

Fax: 0172 320703

E-mail: [governors@swgs.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:governors@swgs.wilts.sch.uk)

[www.swgs.wilts.sch.uk](http://www.swgs.wilts.sch.uk)

### Dates to note for the Summer Term

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 3 Sept  | Staff Training Day<br>Selected Year 12 and 13<br>Students in school p.m.<br>Years 7-11 studying at<br>home |
| 4 Sept  | Year 7 only in school.   |
| 5 Sept  | All years in school  |
| 13 Sept | Speech Day at Salisbury<br>Cathedral   |
| 26 Oct  | Staff Training Day and<br>Joint Citizenship<br>Conference  |



Dear Parents/Carers

During the academic year, a particular focus of the Board of Governors has been reviewing and revising the Vision and Strategic Objectives of SWGS. It was a very interesting and, of course, important process, putting into place strategic objectives that will ensure the continuing educational and business success of the school. It is critical that these objectives are aligned to the SWGS ethos, values and guiding principles. At last week's Summer Term Board meeting, the strategic objectives were ratified and can be seen on the school's website.



**Helen Stewart**  
Chair of Governors

As with all things in life, it is very difficult to plan for the future when there is continual change and unexpected events. An example of this is the Government announcement that it will provide capital funding for Grammar Schools (The Grammar Schools Expansion Bid) to increase places for disadvantaged pupils. As improving social mobility and ensuring inclusivity are such important objectives of the school, this was an opportunity that needed to be taken. The school intends to bid for funding and a great deal of work is taking place to put all the necessary plans and paperwork together by the end of the current summer term. We can only hope our bid is viewed favourably.

Another important area that the Board has been looking at is the catering provision of the school. It has been decided that Innovate Services will operate the catering provision from November 2018. During the autumn half term break, the dining facilities will be significantly updated and a new sixth form café will be created. Cashless tills will be installed and parents will be able to top up online and see what is being purchased by their daughters. The café will be open before and after school. The school and Innovate will be providing further information to parents, pupils and staff in due course.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff for their commitment and sense of purpose in providing a high class education for the girls. A great deal of effort has been put into supporting them pastorally and academically this past year. I am sure that everyone's hard work will reap benefits on examination results days and, before those important days, a rest and break from work is richly deserved by all.

*Helen Stewart*  
Chair of Governors

## Welcome to our new Governors

A very warm welcome to our two new governors appointed at the Summer Term Board Meeting.

Lucy Rigden has been appointed as our Alumna governor and was a pupil at South Wilts between 1998-2005. Lucy is a qualified primary teacher and has a wealth of experience in education and school life. She will bring to the board a different perspective which will add to the skill set of our Board members representing a wide range of stakeholders in the school. Lucy will sit on the Curriculum Committee.

We also welcome Will Davies who is a MCIPD qualified Human Resources Director and brings to the board 20 years' experience across a number of industries including an educational background. Will joins the Personnel and Admissions Committee where his experience will be very much appreciated.

*Jane Walsham, Clerk to Governors*

## Committee Updates - Curriculum

### **SAFEGUARDING, STUDENT WELLBEING & ATTENDANCE**

Attendance rates continued to be monitored with Governors checking that the very small number of students with higher absence rates were being supported and helped to attend as much as possible. Their absence was mainly due to medical reasons. There continues to be some illness related to stress and mental issues. Governors discussed the report from the new School Counsellor, Kate Luker. She has introduced a successful six-week programme for those students who need support. At the end of this time, some students with exceptional circumstances will receive continued focused support or be referred to outside agencies.

As expected, Governors reviewed the outcome of the safeguarding case involving a member of staff (December 2016) which finally concluded in May. A small number of Governors had been overseeing this matter over the last year and a half. It was agreed that the case had been dealt with according to professional and legal protocols ensuring no further risk to students. The Local Authority had praised the School for the way in which it had handled the case. One outcome from this case was to provide an explanation of such procedures and protocols to parents so that they understood the need for complete confidentiality. This can be found on the school website.

There has been an audit on how safeguarding and risk are taught in the curriculum and this was discussed with governors. Overall, it was felt that students were taught how to keep themselves safe very well apart from raising awareness of FGM (female genital mutilation). Governors suggested that risks involved in misuse of prescription drugs should be explicitly mentioned as there had been some incidents in the Salisbury area.



**Jacqui Goodall**  
Chair of Curriculum  
SEN and Child  
Protection Governor

### **ACHIEVEMENT**

Governors looked closely at Year 7 progress along with current and predicted levels. The new system for assessment is still in its infancy but is working well and focuses on an expectation that students should achieve at Level 1 by the end of the year to achieve the South Wilts Standard. The system is being reviewed and adjusted as necessary as it continues into Year 8 in September. Overall, student progress in KS3 cohorts is good.

There was a discussion about the predicted results for Year 11 students in their GCSEs. Although it is the second year under the new grading system for English and Maths, nearly all other subjects are waiting to see how the grade boundaries will be measured. Most significantly, it is difficult for schools to predict how well students will achieve at the top end of the spectrum. This will be discussed again in the Autumn Term when examination analyses will be available.

A Level results are expected to be roughly in line with expectation.

### **CURRICULUM**

The Learning Resource Centre is being used very well with younger students participating in events such as the Salisbury Schools' Book Award, Bookbuzz and Book Club. Sixth formers now enjoy increased space with the newly created study area.

Additional teaching groups in English and Science will be put on for Year 10 in September as this is a larger cohort. Staff are discussing how the groups will be arranged in order to provide the greatest support and challenge for students.

As teacher shortages in some subjects are creating difficulties for schools nationally, South Wilts is working with other Salisbury schools to try to find ways to staff A Level courses in particular. Collaboration may help to ensure that students are offered a broad range of subjects.

Governors were pleased to hear that 40% of the applications for Oxbridge were successful this year, compared with 30% last year.

### **POLICIES**

Governors reviewed and agreed the International Policy and the Appropriate Teaching Material Policy.

*Jacqui Goodall, Chair of Curriculum*

## Committee Updates - Resources



**Chris Child**  
Vice Chair and Chair  
of Resources

We have managed to keep the School budget on an even keel this year, despite unexpected additional costs and funding initiatives. We started the year with a forecast in house deficit budget but expect to end the year broadly on target. This despite significant unplanned expenditure on legal fees and roof repairs and lower than expected income from Joint Courses with Bishops. There are several reasons why our financial position has been better than expected. The Fairer Funding Formula has of course, made a huge difference, bringing with it an additional £200K into the budget. Furthermore, the 2014 increase in our Published Admission Number (PAN) from 150 to 160 continues to bring in year on year increases in the total basic per pupil funding as more students are added to the roll.

Looking ahead, you will be aware of our proposals to expand the school further and benefit from the Selective Schools Expansion Fund (SSEF). If our bid is successful, we can look forward to a further increase in the PAN, along with an expansion of our outreach programme and increased access for disadvantaged pupils. However, there would inevitably be some disruption as building work will be required to create the extra physical space needed.

Although we have recently approved next years' budget, you may have read in the press that it is not clear whether the 1% pay cap will be lifted for teaching staff, and the difficulties that schools now face in setting budgets for the new academic year. Staff salaries are by far the greatest proportion of any school budget and the scale of any pay rise is uncertain, as is whether there would be any additional funding to deliver it. Although a budget has been approved, further adjustment may be required when the Education Secretary's intentions become known.

We are working with the City of Salisbury Athletics and Running Club (CoSARC) to try to establish a longer term agreement needed to underwrite the replacement of the Athletics Track. If Wiltshire Council are able to meet the replacement costs, and we can get a workable agreement with the Club that provides the funding needed to ensure its long term financial sustainability, then if all goes well, we may have another major building project underway next year as the existing track is replaced with a new track.

As if this was not enough, there will also be changes to the School catering arrangements next term, which is to be outsourced in the near future. The School is planning to work with Innovate, a company with a long track record of successfully providing catering services for schools. The new arrangements are expected to bring a raft of benefits, such as less queuing, greater choice, healthier options, vegan and vegetarian meals, and so on. More details to follow.

I would like to conclude this report with two appeals. Firstly, Post 16 Bursary funding is set aside each year for those who need extra financial help in paying costs associated with their courses, such as routine travel, visits and trips, stationery and IT, and so on. The allocated funding is there to be used, so I encourage those who need it to apply. Secondly, although there are variations from year to year, parental contributions to the school fund have fallen. The School Fund makes a huge contribution to the discretionary school budget, helping us purchase items and pay for activities beyond the reach of statutory funding. Please contribute if you can.

*Chris Child, Chair of Resources*

## Committee Updates - Personnel

### Recruitment & Retention

The Personnel Committee has continued its work to oversee all aspects of the employment of our teachers and support staff over the year. We have been monitoring recruitment and retention particularly closely, and I am pleased to be able to report that we have seen strong fields for most of our vacancies. By careful management and some imaginative solutions, the school has managed to appoint and retain high calibre individuals. As chair, I was personally involved in the selection of our new HR Manager and I very much look forward to working with her in the new school year. Finally, we have recently welcomed Will Davies, a highly experienced HR professional, to the Personnel Committee to strengthen the team further.

### Pay & Progression

A closely linked aspect of the committee's work is to review pay recommendations and the appraisal process for all our staff. Despite unremitting financial pressures, we have been able to support national agreements for pay increases for both teachers and support staff that maintain commonality with other schools across the country and have improved the pay scales for support staff, particularly at the bottom end. We have also reviewed the appraisal process and made recommendations for improvements aimed at improving consistency, reducing the burden on those applying for progression and developing all our staff.



**Nick Lay**  
Chair of Personnel

Continued ...

## Committee Updates - Personnel Continued

### Admissions

Following the increase in our Published Admission Number to 160 in Year 7, we have continued to monitor the numbers of girls applying and the proportion passing to ensure that the pass mark remains appropriate. The second year of operating with a PAN of 160 has mirrored the first, with application numbers remaining healthy. This has reflected a highly successful outreach programme to local primary schools led by Dr Smith, who has our congratulations and thanks. At sixth form we recognise that the choices available in Salisbury are increasing and it is to the credit of the school that we continue to see good numbers of applications.

At the end of the year we have been involved in the recent consultation on increasing our PAN to 180 at Year 7 in order to be able to increase the opportunities for children in receipt of the Pupil Premium to benefit from coming to SWGS. Increasing access to the school for disadvantaged children has the full support of both governors and staff and a great deal of work has been put into our bid for funding to enable us to put this into practice.

### Into the Future

Over the next year, we will be working to continue to develop all our staff and to maintain an attractive and affordable offer to recruit and retain the best. We will be developing our marketing, particularly at sixth form level, so that we can sustain our numbers and offer the widest curriculum choices possible. In the meantime, I wish all of our staff team a restful and enjoyable summer break.

*Nick Lay, Chair of Personnel*