

Dear parents,

I would like to wish you a happy new “school” year and hope that your children are settling into their first term with new teachers at Stafford Leys. For me, a new academic year is synonymous with new beginnings and fresh starts and the governors are extremely keen to carry this motto forward following our disappointing Ofsted result in April 2018. We would like to update you on the progress we have made against the key priorities of the post Ofsted action plan. As you will know from the report, Leadership and Management was rated as “inadequate” and as a school, we are doing everything possible to address this and ensure we improve rapidly.

Ofsted recommended that we carry out an External Review of Governance, so I contacted Matt Miller MBE, who is a National Lead Governance Advocate and well recognised in this field. He met with myself and Mr Kitchen as well as the governing body in July and we recorded and collated evidence of our effectiveness. After making a thorough assessment of this, Matt presented us with an action plan and a list of findings (which I have shared on the school [website](#) should you wish to read more). To summarise, he rated the governing body as “requires improvement”; strengths were identified in our financial management of the school, the positive relationships between the governing body and senior leadership team and our frequent monitoring in classrooms. Priorities identified have enabled us to create our own action plan and we have implemented a number of changes so far. For example, we have set up our own Academy Improvement Board, which meets fortnightly with Mr Kitchen, to monitor the post Ofsted action plan set by the leadership team. Governors have requested a new data tracking system be in place for September and we are pleased that this has happened and are confident this will allow better tracking of all pupils’ progress. We have also appointed lead governors for pupil premium and SEND as well as making clerking amendments to ensure all of our minutes demonstrate challenge and consistency. Most recently, our Leadership & Management advisor carried out an extremely useful training session with the governors, focusing on our role, contribution and abilities. We feel positive that the changes we are making will improve the capacity and effectiveness of the governing body and when Matt returns next April, he will rate the governing body as “good”.

“Governors are very aware of the challenge they face in delivering the improvement necessary for the school to be judged good when next inspected. However, judging by the very positive steps taken in the weeks since the inspection, they have demonstrated that they have the capacity, resolve and skills to achieve this. Governance is now increasingly effective and I am confident that the PIR element of the review in Spring 2019 will be able to report further improvement.”

Matt Miller, MBE, 11th July 2018

As you know, we currently have two parent governor vacancies, and the deadline to apply is 12pm on Thursday 20th September. We are very much looking forward to strengthening our body and after completing our skills audit and reviewing our committees, would particularly welcome parents with skills and expertise in either HR, charity law and governance, finance or health and safety. Training for all new governors will be given as well as an induction pack created by our Training & Development governor. Volunteering as a governor can take up a lot of time, but knowing that you can help to make a difference (particularly in our current situation), to not just your child, but all children at Stafford Leys, can be ultimately rewarding.

As a parent, you might also be interested in attending our next parent forum meeting in October (date to be confirmed). The parent governors at Stafford Leys set up the parent forum two years

ago, because we felt that parents/carers should be given opportunities to discuss general school related issues. If you would like to get more involved in the school, but don't have much time, attending the parent forum meetings might suit you as we only meet once a term in the Community lounge.

Our informal meetings are chaired and minuted by governors and start with one or two items introduced by Mr Kitchen. This is a really useful way for the school to gauge parents' opinions on current issues and will be a chance for you to get your views heard. The second part of the meeting gives parents the opportunity to raise general school-based issues they feel are important and get a direct response from Mr Kitchen. If parents have particular issues, but are unable to attend, we have a parent forum email address parentforum@staffordleys.com where we can raise your concern on your behalf. Each meeting usually lasts around an hour, and tea and coffee is always provided. If you would like to find out more, please see the school website <http://www.staffordleys.com/parent-forum.html> or email us at the above address.

I look forward to updating you next term on the progress we are making.

Kind regards,

Mrs Alli Hammond, Chair of Governors