

The Director's Annual Address to Governors

The Message from Alex

The Director of the Customers, Communities and Learning Directorate, Alex Hopkins, hosted the Director's Annual Address on 17th November. It was a great opportunity for governors to hear Alex's key priorities for the 2011/2012 academic year and the progress and improvement of schools in the county.

Alex's slides are attached to this newsletter for you to share with your governing body.

Governor Recognition 2011

We received 9 nominations for Governor Recognition which recognised the success and commitment that these governors have made in their schools. Each nominee was awarded a certificate of thanks by Councillor Andrew Grant. Please find below a list of the successful governors with a summary of their nomination statements.

Governor: Derek Ward
School: Rushden Community College
Nominated by: The Governing Body

The Governors nominated nominate Derek Ward for his significant contribution to the school and the governing body. He has been a governor since 2005 and unfortunately has had to resign recently from ill health.

It is in recognition of his significant contribution and commitment to the Governing Body illustrated by example, when, despite not being able to drive and his wife being in hospital, Derek still made the great effort to attend an evening meeting and also took part in student interviews as part of the Governors contribution to monitoring improvements in teaching and learning.

Governor: The Governing Body
School: Rushden Community College
Nominated by: Mark Lester, Head Teacher

After two successive periods under notice to improve, the school went into special measures in 2008, with governance cited as one of the key issues for improvement.

Two years on, under the leadership of the Chair, Alan Dodds, the governing body had a new committee structure aligned with the school's development needs, had supported the newly appointed head

through a process of staff reduction and financial recovery planning, was providing clear challenge to the senior leadership team, and had even welcomed students as associate members

Since then, improvements have continued. The governors give freely of their time to support the school's ongoing monitoring and evaluation, for example by interviewing students to gather their views.

They take an active part in meetings with middle leaders to evaluate student performance and exam results, probing issues of under performance and praising where praise is due. The staff no longer views governor involvement, challenge or support with scepticism.

The committee structure now supports sustainable improvement, with the governors engaging directly with the key strategic aim of 'Developing the Learning Community' which effectively interprets the school's collaborative ethos.

They have remained loyal and committed to seeing through the improvements for the sake of students, present and future. The governing body as a whole deserves recognition for its excellent work.

Governor: The Governing Body
School: Abington Vale Primary
Nominated by: Mark Currell, Head Teacher

Mark nominated the whole governing body at Abington Vale Primary School.

The hard working team have been praised by OFSTED and have guided the school from special measures four years ago to Outstanding now - an amazing turn around in a very short space of time.

They are constantly challenging and motivating and are always looking to better the school. Their passion and commitment to the school have seen it through the horrible times, deficit budgets, and they have supported the staff, driven the school on and ensured that their visits, observations and reports are always of the highest standard.

They are an outstanding board of governors and they deserved to be recognised. The Head is confident that with the support of these talented people the school will continue to grow and develop.

Governor: Peter Lord – Chair of Governors
School: Grange Community School, Kettering
Nominated by: Vivienne Harvey, Kevin Marchand, Janet Marchand, James O'Leary and Kirsty O'Leary

Peter has been a governor at the school for many years and his contribution to the school is outstanding in almost every aspect. He fully supports the Head, the Staff, the Governors, and most importantly his work helps the children.

The school has been through difficult times and Peter has been a tireless worker both up front and behind the scenes. He is modest and would just do what he thinks is required which is well beyond the norm.

He spends a lot of time not only during the evenings at full governing body and sub-committee meetings but also at school during teaching hours absorbing the school atmosphere and standards. Peter always has the Grange children as his priority and every decision he makes has them at the core of his reasoning.

Governor: Sue Jones – Vice Chair of Governors
School: Grange Community School, Kettering
Nominated by: James O’Leary and Kirsty O’Leary

Sue has been a governor for a many number of years and spends a lot of free time in and around the school helping and supporting the staff. She is the deputy chair, SEN Governor and lead on finance.

Sue can be found helping at all levels from one to one reading with children to organising fund raising events and ‘mucking in’ at any given opportunity. She has left a positive and lasting mark on most children who have attended Grange and someone who truly has the children’s needs at heart and will do anything to make their schooling life the best it can be.

Governor: Mary Payne – Chair of Governors
School: Havelock Junior School, Desborough
Nominated by: Marilyn Rooke, Head Teacher and Rosemary Sawford, Vice Chair of Governors

Mary was nominated for her complete commitment and tireless energy to the school over the last 30 years – 25 of which have been as Chair of Governors.

She is as committed and enthusiastic now as she was when she first became an LEA governor in 1981 - if anything she is even more so, especially since she has retired and can devote more time to the role. Mary is the absolute archetypical governor. She is the critical friend but always ready to challenge and ask questions.

Mary likes things done properly whether it be Minutes of meetings, a protocol for GB visits or how the Governing Body operates. She doesn’t tolerate the ‘maverick’ governor with their own agenda but loves to see all stakeholders develop and ‘grow’ during their time with us. We don’t always agree and that’s healthy but we do respect each other immensely and I know that, I as Head and Havelock Junior, as a school would not be the place it is without her considerable experience, commitment and wisdom.

The pupils know and care about her. Once in assembly someone likened her role to the Mayor which made us all laugh. She knows everything about us all from whether the plant beds need weeding, to how Year 6 proudly showed new parents around recently. She is an advisor, friend and once or twice a ‘shoulder to cry on’ for the Head Teacher who feels honoured and privileged to have her as their Chair.

Mary is extremely proud of the Governing Body being judged as Good in the recent Ofsted Inspection. The school would like to celebrate and acknowledge the monumental contribution she has made over all these years to their school, its stakeholders and the Desborough community.

Governor: John Brewer – Chair of Governors
School: East Haddon CE Primary School
Nominated by: The whole school

East Haddon CE Primary wanted their Chair of Governors, John Brewer to be recognised as being an outstanding contributor to both the governing body and the school itself.

He was elected as Chair of Governors in January 2001 and since then has filled the position with unlimited dedication and enthusiasm. He is willing to give time to the school and is always available when help is required. He is involved with the schools' finances, giving support to our school bursar and loves visiting the classrooms, where he is always welcomed by the teachers and children alike.

The head teacher, who has recently retired after some thirty years, was able to discuss important issues with Mr Brewer and they had an excellent working relationship. He always appreciated to support Mr Brewer gives to the school and often relied on his judgement. The school now has an acting head for 12 months and she feels the role would be untenable without Mr Brewer's guidance.

Mr Brewer's knowledge of the education system and especially matters concerning the governing body are invaluable to the school.

Governor: Anja Sacke – Chair of Governors
School: Rowangate Primary School
Nominated by: The Governing Body

The Governing Body nominated their Chair of Governors, Anja Sacke who has fully supported the school as a parent Governor and Chair of Governors since 2005.

Anja has been a great support to the school and leadership team over the years and has been involved in moving the school from "a school causing concern" in 2007, to achieving an outstanding Ofsted Report in March 2011, with governing body effectiveness being rated as outstanding.

Anja gives many hours of her time to the school. She has attended training courses, has supported the Silver award winning School Council and the Silver award winning Anti Bullying Committee, as well as leading the Governing body and ensuring that Governors support and challenge the school.

Rowangate would like to show how much they appreciate and value her commitment to the school and its pupils.

Governor: Enid Jarvis – Chair of Governors
School: Spratton CE Primary School
Nominated by: Judith Frenchman, Teacher

Judith nominated Enid Jarvis, who has been Chair of Governors for more than 10 years. In that time she has been totally dedicated to the school and has steered it valiantly through some very turbulent times, including going into Special Measures and enabling the school to come out of special measures in less than 18 months.

Also countless difficulties with changes of headship, including a failed partnership, two interim heads and two acting heads - through all of this Enid has been able to provide vital stability in an unstintingly professional way.

Judith has been a teacher at the school for 13 years and teacher governor for several years too so she has firsthand experience of the dedication and selflessness Enid has shown for the good of the school.