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Welcome from the Chair

My name is Alex Macdonald and I have been the Chair of Governors at Ash Lea School for nearly five years. I'm sure many of you will remember my son, Dominic, who was a student at the school for three years before moving on to college in 2012. I have been a family doctor in Cotgrave for 20 years and so I have known Ash Lea for a long time! It is a remarkable school, with dedicated and inspirational staff and fantastic students. As a governor and parent, I am very proud of all that the school has achieved and continues to achieve, particularly in gaining "outstanding" status in our latest Ofsted inspection. I hope you will enjoy reading our new newsletter. As governors we are all keen to be open and available to you and we hope that it will give you an insight into what we do.

Who are the Governors?

Ash Lea's governing body is currently made up of four governors who have been elected by parents, three members of staff, including Mrs. Wigley, three community governors and two governors who have been appointed by the Local Authority.



Mr. Macdonald



Mrs. Foden



Mr. Gardener



Mrs. Wilson



Mr. Swales



Mrs. Wigley



Mrs. Parry-Evans



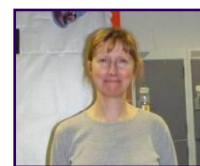
Mr. Pickering



Mrs. Nicholson



Mr. Winkett



Ms. Gell



Mrs. Clark

What Does a School Governor Do?

- The key role of our governing body is to both support and challenge Mrs. Wigley and the staff to ensure our children receive the best possible education.
- we constantly ask challenging questions and monitor the school's progress towards meeting agreed targets.
- we are responsible for managing the schools budget and try to ensure we get the best value for our money.
- we help school to carry out honest evaluations of itself, so that we are always striving to improve and are not just content with our excellent achievements to date.

When do the Governors meet?

The full governing body meets once a term.

There are two committees within the governing body – the **PUPILS, CURRICULUM AND STRATEGIC PLANNING** committee and **FINANCE, PERSONNEL AND GENERAL PURPOSE** committee each with its own chair. Governors are allocated to one of these according to their skills and interests. These committees meet once a term, just prior to the full governing body meeting where they feedback.

We will have reports from the committee chairs in a future newsletter.

Policy Reviews

Governors are responsible for reviewing school policies. Those updated this term include

- Supporting Children with Medical Needs
- Hydrotherapy
- Global Dimension
- Intimate Care

Thank You to Residential Staff

A questionnaire was sent out to parents following the last programme of residential visits.

One of the biggest returns ever recorded was received with an overwhelming response that the visits were of huge benefit. Parents felt they provided the opportunity for challenge, independence, spending time with friends and had a huge impact on families, allowing respite in the knowledge that their child was being well cared for.

The governing body would like to say a big thank you to all the wonderful staff who give their time voluntarily to enable these visits to take place. The questionnaire results make it clear their hard work is much appreciated by students and parents

A questionnaire was also given to staff who were also very much in favour of the visits taking place. They offered some suggestions to offset the impact of staff absent from school and also to help to alleviate the tiredness due to lack of sleep whilst on the residentials.

Their suggestions are being discussed by the schools Health and Wellbeing committee and the governing body is very supportive of any measures to improve the experience for all the staff.



Ash Lea School's involvement with 'Inspiring Leaders'

Inspiring Leaders is a recently formed "not for profit" partnership company consisting of five outstanding Teaching Schools and one outstanding Special School; Ash Lea School. This group of schools came together through a shared passion and commitment to develop the inspirational school leaders of tomorrow.

As a governing body we welcome the opportunity for involvement with other schools and sectors both locally and nationally.

All lead schools have a proven track record of outstanding leadership and the development and delivery of outstanding leadership programmes. Ash Lea delivers leadership courses at three different levels:

- Level 1 National professional qualification in middle leadership (NPQML)
- Level 2 National professional qualification in senior leadership (NPQSL)
- Level 3 National professional qualification for headship (NPQH)

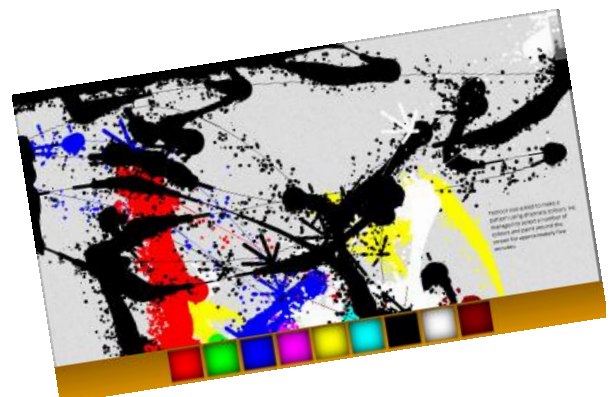
We passionately believe that great school leadership has the power to transform children's lives and we are therefore committed to provide the best possible learning opportunities to all of our participants.

Ash Lea felt it wanted to be part of this exciting initiative to ensure quality continuing professional development for its own staff but also to support the other leaders in their understanding of the needs of children and young people with special needs.

Our involvement in this company also brings income in to the school which is targeted at continued professional development of our own staff.

Ash Lea Trust Fund

Did you know that governors also act as Trustees for the school Trust Fund? After each termly meeting of the full governing body, we discuss the accounts, review donations and fundraising activities, and agree how to spend the money available. In the current financial year (since April 2013) the fund has purchased a wide range of equipment including books, iPads/cases and apps, iTobii eye gaze computers, outdoor tables and bikes, and sensory processing equipment, to the tune of £17,000. It has also supported the very successful Fun week (£10,000) and residential trips (£15,000). We already encourage and receive regular requests for funding from staff and pupils via the school council, but it would be great to hear from parents with YOUR IDEAS on how best these funds can be spent for the benefit of pupils and to enrich the life of Ash Lea School.



Teaching school

Ash Lea School is also a strategic partner in Candleby Lane 'Teaching School'. Teaching schools give outstanding schools a leading role in the training and professional development of teachers, support staff and head teachers, as well as contributing to the raising of standards through school-to-school support.



Schools work together within a teaching school alliance – a group of schools and other partners that are supported by the leadership of a teaching school. This will include all those schools that benefit by receiving support, as well as strategic partners that will lead on certain aspects of delivery. A school can choose to be involved in more than one alliance and a school could be a strategic partner for more than one teaching school.

Strategic partners are schools, universities and others (that could include the academy chains, private sector, diocese or local authorities) that deliver particular aspects of the alliance's activity such as ITT, continuing professional development (CPD), leadership development or school-to-school support.

Ash Lea School leads on developing special educational needs provision across the alliance and training. We run a support group for special educational needs co-coordinators (SenCo's) and deliver appropriate training. We also involved in the delivering and training initial teacher training.

Governor Training

Training attended by governors this past term has included

- Safeguarding training
- Health and Safety
- Ofsted effective governing bodies

Contacting Governors

Governors are interested in the views of parents. If there are any issues, concerns or feedback that you would like to bring to our attention you can contact the Chair of Governors - Dr.Alex Macdonald - via the school office, either by letter or e-mail

office@ashlea.notts.sch.uk

Dates of next meetings

Full Governing Body – 27th Feb 5:30pm

Full Governing Body - 5th June 5:30pm

Frontier

We would like to bring to your attention a link on Frontier. To access it go into 'School Reception' and click on Governing Body Information link.