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Welcome to our Second Annual Newsletter

You probably know that every school has a Governing Body but do you know what it does? In a nutshell, the Governing Body is legally responsible for overseeing the running of a school. It is made up of parents, volunteers from the local community and staff from the school.

The Full Governing Body of Ash Lea School meets at least once a term to discuss important general matters that affect the school. Much of the actual work of the governing body is then carried out by subcommittees, which meet separately.

Finance, Personnel and General Purpose Committee

One of these subcommittees is the Finance, Personnel and General Purposes Committee, which meets at least every term and more frequently around the time of budget-setting at the end of the financial year. It is responsible for the finances of the school, personnel matters regarding staff and some other general matters at school.

At our last meeting in early February, we looked at how the school budget of about £1.8 million per year was being spent and whether we had overspent or underspent so far this year. We analysed quotations for work that needed doing and discussed future catering arrangements for the school. We also considered the workload and continuing professional development of the staff. Finally, we discussed some general matters regarding school policies.



At our next meeting in a few weeks' time will look again at how we are progressing with our current budget. We will also set a budget for the next financial year. Our overall aim is to ensure that the budget given to the school is spent wisely and used in the best interests of our students.

Alex McDonald (Chair Of Finance)

Pupils, Curriculum and Strategic Planning Committee

This committee has a range of responsibilities to support pupil progress, to monitor the curriculum and to make strategic plans and decisions e.g. about the building and policies. The committee meets once a term to discuss these things and feeds back to the full governors' meetings. The committee is fully involved in the life of the school through activities such as learning walks with members of the senior leadership team, linking with classes and spending time sharing activities with link classes.

The committee's governors have a responsibility to ensure that all groups of children are making good progress and they do this through monitoring and reviewing policies and attendance and reviewing the school improvement plan. They look at targets set across the school and check that school is on track to meet targets.

Sandra Gell (Chair of PCSP)



Ofsted update

The governors were pleased with the comments made by the Ofsted inspectors on their effectiveness as a governing body it stated:

The governing body knows the school well and provides good support and challenge to leaders. Governors are fully involved in checking teaching and behaviour and looking carefully at how well pupils are doing. They regularly check the effectiveness of the school, so that they know what is working well. Governors have received training and have a good range of skills which they use to benefit the school. They understand the use of data and know how it compares with similar schools. Frequent checks on the evaluation of pupils' achievement through the school's review of its performance, ensure that governors know how effective the school is. Good management of finances means that the additional government funding is used to improve the learning of those pupils for whom it was intended. It is used well to provide additional support and resources so that eligible pupils' achievements and progress are as good as those of their classmates, and sometimes better. Governors rigorously ensure that the best teachers and staff are rewarded and they understand the process of setting targets for teachers well.

Post release of the Ofsted report

Extra FGB meetings were held and a post ofsted action plan has been drawn up. A press release was formulated by staff and Governors. Excerpts from this included the statements :

In its most recent Ofsted report, the school lost its outstanding status largely due to the state of its buildings and the resulting impact on student and staff. The Ofsted report said that, 'Although the school has worked diligently to improve the accommodation, it does not meet the need of all pupils and this sometimes has a negative impact on their progress and their behaviour.'

The staff and governors were devastated that all their efforts had been let down by the quality of the accommodation, especially as the buildings and their undoubted problems are completely outside their control. As a Nottinghamshire County Council maintained school, the maintenance and replacement of its buildings are the responsibility of the council.

Despite the problems it faces, everyone at Ash Lea School is determined to maintain its proven standard of excellence and to fight for the resources it needs. As Nottinghamshire County Council prepares to allocate budgets, the staff and governors urge it to make the right decision for the pupils with some of the greatest needs in the locality. With all the expertise that the school has to offer, and all that it has achieved so far, it makes no sense to jeopardise the future of its pupils by denying them the educational environment they deserve.

The press release resulted in East Midlands Today broadcasting a film and The Nottingham Evening Post writing an article about the school. There have since been several offers of donations to the school and this can be done online.

<https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/ashleaschool>

WHAT CAN YOU AS PARENTS DO TO HELP?

Firstly **please** write to the Local Authority and Rushcliffe Borough Council using the templates emailed to you or using your own words. Secondly **please** try and come to the meeting on **Thursday 26th March at 4.30pm**. Even if you can only commit to a very small involvement together, we can all achieve more. Child care can be provided at school. If you cannot make the meeting but are happy to help please tell the office, your class teacher or e-mail Mrs Wigley.



Governor Visits - Governors make visits to classes, school events and trips throughout the year. They fill in governor report forms which are passed on to the Full Governing Body.

Prom 2014 Leavers

This summer six students left Ash Lea School. Dressed to impress, as instructed by the invitation, they arrived by limousine to the venue where staff had decorated the function room brilliantly and the disco was already under way.

All the post-16 department students had been invited. Many staff attended – the headteacher, teaching staff and assistants, support staff and governors. The staff had organised a really delicious buffet.

There was a presentation when each leaver was given a book with photographs, memories and personal messages from the staff at Ash Lea. Then everyone toasted their success before dancing the rest of the evening away.

A really lovely evening and the efforts put in by the staff to give the pupils such a lovely send-off demonstrates just how special the staff / pupil relationships are at Ash Lea School.



Hollygate Scout Camp Summer 2014

I visited the scout camp late on the Saturday afternoon after the scouts returned from a great day's activities including walking and climbing at Mill Base. There was a great sense of community at the camp with the more able students helping to look after the younger and more profoundly disabled.

There was a high staff and volunteer to student ratio and, despite the open nature of the campsite, all students were very safe because everyone knew their responsibilities. Students were encouraged to put up their own tents where possible, help with meals and clearing up and be as independent as they were able to be. They helped prepare for the family BBQ the following day as well as playing many games. There was a lovely camp fire sing song in the evening.

Sunday lunchtime saw the very well attended family BBQ followed by the AGM and the presentation of many badges for all including some Duke of Edinburgh awards. The visiting local scout commissioner acknowledged and praised the commitment of the staff and volunteers and voiced how much more work was involved than for other scout groups.

I was particularly impressed by how the staff had left work at 3.15pm on the Friday to prepare for the scouts arrival at 6pm. Sharing a tent with students, some of whom had never slept in a tent before and found changes in routine difficult, meant that there was significant sleep deprivation for many. Despite this lack of sleep they remained remarkably cheerful. Amazingly the group included four class teachers would be back in class on the Monday morning prepared and teaching to their usual high standards.

Ash Lea is extremely fortunate to have this well-established scout group and the wonderful opportunities and experiences it provides for all the students.

Marie Nicholson



Wildlife Garden Project

I visited Mrs Wood's class to help with some gardening. We attacked the weeds in the wildlife garden with vigour and power tools! I was very impressed with how mature and sensible the students were with the tools. After clearing the long grass we were able to plant some water-loving plants around the pond and lots of other plants in the raised beds. Some of the students tidied up the willow tunnel weaving the willow around the frame. We all worked hard tidying up and filling up the wheelbarrows! It was lovely to spend some time outside and I really enjoyed the company of the students, they also make a very good cup of tea!! It will be nice to revisit the wildlife garden this year and see how our planting has grown.

Jacqui Parry-Evans



Foals Fundraising

The governors would like to thank all the members of FOALS for their fantastic fundraising which has included contributions this year to:

Fun Week	974.80
Limo for Prom leavers	170.00
Xmas party	104.00

Governor Training

Training this term:

Health & Safety
Governor Leadership
Safeguarding Children

Dates of next meetings

Prebudget -	23/03 5:30pm
FGP -	18/05 5:30pm
PCSP -	20/05 1:00pm
Full Governor -	04/06 5:30pm

Fronter

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

Contacting Governors

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

Ash Lea Governors



Mrs. Foden



Mr. Gardener



Mrs. Wilson



Mr. Swales



Mrs. Wigley



Mrs. Parry-Evans



Mr. Pickering



Mrs. Nicholson



Ms. Gell



Mrs. Clark



Mr. Macdonald