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giving thanks to God the Father through him.  
Colossians 3:17



## Governing Board Newsletter

### Letter from the Chair - Stephanie Ajayi Strategic Update

As we approach the festivities of the Christmas period we reflect on the amazing contribution to the life of the school of the children, teachers, parents and wider community through these unprecedented times. Whilst we appear to have hope for the future at the end of a year of turmoil, it's been heartening for governors to see that throughout the pandemic, the school has continued to provide the stability so sorely needed when much around the world is changing.



It has been encouraging to reflect on the many achievements this term with the creation of an interactive prayer table so children can engage in the RE curriculum in richer ways through the writing of their own prayers. It was also wonderful to see the celebration across the year groups of the valuable contribution made by black people and the inspiration that can be drawn from their experiences as a beacon of light to many as well as the donations of food made by our school community, many of whom are experiencing their own hardships but nonetheless sought to help others through giving at Harvest.

These acts remind us of our vision for the Blue School;

***'Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him'. Col 3:17***

This vision is at the heart of all we as governors seek to do and acts as a guide in our discussions as we reviewed the school's strategic priorities at our annual Strategy Day in September. The impact of Covid 19 on the function of governance was assessed in the key areas of strategic leadership, accountability, people, structures, compliance and evaluation to ensure we continue to provide the high-quality teaching and learning experience expected by us all. The culmination of this resulted in a one-year plan which governors felt more appropriate to the usual 3-year plan given the rate and pace of change in the current uncertain climate with a view to revisit the plan in 2021 whereby the picture will no doubt be somewhat clearer. This plan showcases the depth of skills and practices within our community that contribute to the driving up of educational standards enabling us to continue to set ambitious goals and with key priorities being set that are designed to provide the best learning outcome for all children. These priorities for 2020/21 includes:

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- Performance achievements
- Training
- Financial Management

In support of our vision four key pillars emerged as the key tenets of our mission which guide how we engage with each other and our wider community;

- **Hope** – for us all to aim high building our faith as we strive
- **Community** – collaboration and support of one another being mindful of the mental health and wellbeing of us all whilst at the same time strengthening links with the wider community
- **Dignity** – provision of educational access for all respecting and valuing diversity in all its forms
- **Wisdom** – securing exceptional practise and learning through and beyond the pandemic

These four pillars form the bedrock of our community and our school structures as we face the challenges posed by these extraordinary times and we continue to provide exceptional education and pastoral care to our whole school community.

As we hold onto the wonder of Advent and we celebrate Christmas albeit in a different way this year, we pray that as we leave 2020 and enter into a new year that the hope we share as a community will propel us to greater heights in 2021 and beyond.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy Christmas.

### **Meet the Governors.**

We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome two new governors to our community Ruth White and Stuart Minster who have already started to make a valuable contribution as they settle into their new roles.

#### **Stuart Minster – Foundation Governor at The Blue School**



Having recently retired, I find that I am not yet ready to 'put my feet up'...

In terms of my background, my career started as an electrical power engineer within the Civil Service. I then transitioned from public service into Financial Services and the private sector where I have spent the last 30 years living and working in the UK, Europe and US acting as a catalyst for change and business transformation.

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Although I have enjoyed many wonderful family years, I sadly did not have time to directly support their schools but, with time now available, I am delighted to have an opportunity to give back. My four children have benefited from a faith school education and in my opinion, the solid foundation laid by a great primary school will serve pupils throughout their lives and be at their very core. For me school success can be measured by a young person's confidence, respect and endeavour and when I visited The Blue School recently, I saw polite, confident and happy children. This is a credit to everyone involved and my hope is that going forward, I can add further value.

#### **Ruth White - St Johns PCC**



I was appointed to be on the school governing board to represent St Johns PCC at the end of the summer. I am a regular attendee of St Johns church and my son is in year 1 at The Blue School. I'm originally from Coventry but have lived in London since my university days aside from a 4 year stint in New Zealand before my son was born which was amazing.

As a parent and active member of the Isleworth community I have a significant interest in the school. I feel very blessed to be working alongside such a talented team of governors and teachers in order to monitor the schools progress and performance to ensure that it continues to be an outstanding establishment for our children to learn, develop and thrive in.

#### **Focus on staff and pupil wellbeing**

##### **Matthew Koster-Marcon.**

Mental health and wellbeing provision for pupils and staff are considered throughout all aspects of The Blue School experience.

The Link Governor role creates a connection between the governing board and the wider school. It's the wellbeing governor's job to support the school to embed its mental health and wellbeing provision across the entire school, ensuring the school has given thorough thought to how mental health and wellbeing can be embedded in the curriculum and other school activities.

The vast majority of the active work is carried out by staff members. As governors we seek to use our wider knowledge and professional networks to add value to the school and broaden awareness of, and access to, opportunities they may otherwise be unaware of.



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Link Governors act as the point of contact on the governing board for the staff member(s) tasked with overseeing mental health and wellbeing provisions within the school, ensuring mental health and wellbeing is discussed in committee meetings and as an agenda item in full governing board meetings.

### **A Practical Approach to Wellbeing - Rev'd Ali Walton**



The idea of looking after our Wellbeing and our mental health is something that has been in the news recently. The Covid-19 pandemic and the stress it has caused us has been the biggest challenge to wellbeing and mental health that many of us have ever faced. A pharmacist I know said to me recently that since the beginning of the first lockdown in March he has seen a huge increase in prescriptions for antidepressants, which is an indication of how stressful this year has been.

I grew up in a generation whose parents were very much of the British 'Stiff Upper Lip' approach to wellbeing. The idea of 'Me Time' was a totally unknown concept. The shift in our society to a positive focus on our wellbeing and investing in our mental health is something people of my generation have had to learn.

A psychologist told me that taking steps to guard our wellbeing and mental health is not selfish. It's like the safety protocol on planes when you're told to put your own oxygen mask on before trying to help others. If you can't breathe you won't be able to help anyone else. I thought this was a very helpful way to think about looking after my wellbeing.

So what have you been doing to look after your wellbeing? The trick is to know yourself. How do you respond when you're stressed and exhausted? What do you need at that point? I've realised over this year that I need time on my own, listening to soothing music, focussing on keeping my breathing smooth, even and slow. I also add prayer to that mix.

We will each differ in what we need. But if we can identify that and then adopt the oxygen mask approach to wellbeing, rather than the stiff upper lip 'I'm going to carry on regardless' approach then hopefully we will be a good way along the road of safeguarding our wellbeing and mental health.

### **Diversity working group**

This term we welcomed the inaugural meeting of the school's diversity working group. The group comprises parent's, governors and staff. Positive progress has been made already within the curriculum. There is a strong focus with Knowledge Organisers ensuring diversity throughout our curriculum and a review of the school library and sharing resources is now

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ongoing. Our year 6 curriculum team is in the process of an anti racism audit. Another key focus of the group will be encouraging and supporting our children to be courageous advocates for change in our local, national and global communities, equipping them to stand against inequality in all its forms.

### Christmas message - Rev'd Peter Vanzozi



'I wish it could be Christmas every day.'

Roy Wood

'Humbug.'

Scrooge

The above must represent entirely opposite views of Christmas. The first quote is from a relentlessly cheery pop song of the 1970s which still gets an outing every year. At the moment it is appearing in a TV advert. A couple of years ago a newspaper said that until this song was heard, Christmas had not arrived. In which case this year it began in late October! Yet it is a 'feelgood' song and I reckon we all need a bit of that at the moment!

Perhaps there is a sense that everyday is Christmas Day. For Christians, in Jesus God has come and remains present with us. One of the titles given to Jesus in the Bible is Emmanuel, 'God with us.' Day by day, the challenge is to know what that means. What does it mean to say 'God with us' when we have to negotiate the complexities of life in the time of a pandemic and so much undermining uncertainty? For me, it means I can live with a sense that I am deeply loved even when I might not feel it.

I wish you a very happy Christmas.

Please follow the link to the website for more information on the day to day work of the Governing Board. [Governor Page](#)

### NOTE

*We welcome comments from parents directly and letters should be addressed to the Chair and delivered or emailed to the school office. Whilst we welcome letters and value your comments, we will be unable to respond to issues relating to the day to day running of the school.*