

# *The* Governor

July 2018

---

Dear Parents and Carers,

In September last year, I announced to governors and to the wider school community that following eight years on the governing body, I would stand down in August 2018.

As this is my last week as Chair, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of you. Serving on Muswell Hill Primary's GB has been enormously rewarding - far more than I could have foreseen. I've learned a lot about myself, a lot about the school, and the experience has cultivated in me a real passion for early years and primary education. There is a unique joy in volunteer work which I wasn't expecting. Everyone should try it...

The children represent the very best of our school. I consider myself uniquely privileged to have spent so much time with James touring the classrooms and speaking to the staff and children, and I can't overstate the positive impact the enthusiasm of the children has on the rest of my working day. The reception class morning dance, or the children's glee over the chicks hatching keeps me smiling for the rest of my day.

Parents have been a supportive, caring and fun community to work with. Even when faced with challenging circumstances, you have engaged with the process, and I'm grateful for your understanding that the driving force behind every decision I've made has been the welfare of the children in our care. The willingness of parents to contribute to the school astounds me, and this is never more perfectly demonstrated than by the work of the SPA. We are lucky to have such a talented, committed bunch of people. You inspire me; we owe you big time.

It takes significant effort to run our little school. All of our staff are supremely dedicated to our children, and this manifests both in the kindness and creativity our children show, as well as the top-step results our children achieve. Make no mistake that this is a team effort. The teachers; LSA's; breakfast, lunch, MASC and kitchen staff; office angels and sports teachers – you're the essential moving parts, and you should be proud.

Helen, Gillian, James and I have worked together for the past five years, and it has been a huge privilege to work so closely with them. I find it hard to believe a more professional, dedicated and devoted group of individuals exists anywhere. There can be no better role models for our children.

Six years ago, our governing body devised a tough interview process and I recall James's clear vision and plan for the school. He has over-delivered on every one of his promises, and his commitment to making a positive difference to children's lives is as strong today as the day he joined. Much of his work with children falls under the spotlight, however, there are numerous acts of extraordinary kindness, support and encouragement that take place discreetly and without fuss – particularly with the less advantaged children that attend our school. His determination, focus, warmth and sense of humour will be missed. James – you have been an exemplary leader of our school and we wish you all good things for your future.

This has not been a year without challenges. For any governing body to find itself in a position where the simultaneous replacement of the HT / DHT / SENCO is required is thankfully rare. Given the arms-length approach of the local authority, and amid a landscape of shrinking budgets, a small team of governors have borne a heavy responsibility for the success of this comprehensive change at senior level. That we have appointed a Headteacher and restructured the SLT within a 4-month time frame is an outcome that I wouldn't have dared hope for at the start of 2018.

Thank you to staff and governors who helped to facilitate and support this process. I'm proud that we collaborated so effectively and achieved a magnificent result for the school. Thank you for seeing it through despite the challenges. I stand down as Chair, firm in the belief that Mandi will join us in September bringing passion and vigour to continue driving us forward, and that our new SLT will bring exciting changes to the school. Dan Salem will take on the role of Chair in September; we are in safe hands with much to look forward to.

Thanks to all on the GB both past and present. Thanks to Hinal, Iain, Ted and Sheila - remarkable governors of years gone by. People that you have never heard of, but who have shaped our school as it is today, and special thanks to our previous Chair (now school office megastar), Sarah Gray, who has been extraordinarily generous with her counsel and seemingly infinite patience.

Finally, on a very personal note, MASSIVE thanks to Jessica and my children who have shared me with the school without complaint. I'm proud that in eight years I've not missed a governing body gathering; less proud that school meetings in the early morning and late evenings mean I've missed the occasional sports event and sharing assembly and not walked you to school as much as I would've liked. And I'm super sorry that HT recruitment meant I spent too much time on my phone in half term, and not enough time enjoying France with you!

To the remarkable group of volunteers committed to next year's governing body:

**Susi Finer**  
**Nilesh Goswami**

**Suzi Fotheringham**  
**Dan Salem**

**Sarah Gray**  
**Enrique Sacau**

**Alexa Charnley**  
**Sarah Lima**

Keep up the good work.

Thanks all. I'm deeply proud of how much we have achieved. We are a close-knit community. We look out for each other, and we move forward together, safe in the knowledge that our children are yet to enjoy even greater things in the years to come at Muswell Hill Primary.

Hope you all have a wonderful summer.

'18 / '19 is going to be stonking!

Simon Wantman