



BEECHEN CLIFF

December 2021

Dear all,

I am pleased to be writing to you at this time as Governors have had a busy start to the year. I would like to begin by thanking the staff who have as ever worked really hard to mitigate the difficulties of the last 2 years not just in teaching, but also in the range of trips being offered and extra curricular activities. I love seeing the updates on the school Twitter and Instagram accounts of the amazing activities that pupils at Beechen Cliff are offered. I also want to pay tribute to the fantastic efforts of our Sixth Formers who are not only working incredibly hard at their studies and applying for universities but also staged an excellent TEDX. The speakers were both impressive and interesting and it was a most enjoyable evening.

I also want to thank Tim Markall our new Headteacher, who despite catching COVID himself has stepped up into his new role seamlessly and is eager to develop initiatives within the school, the new Bath Hub (the group of Trust secondary schools in Bath - Beechen Cliff, Hayesfield and St Mark's), and the Trust. As governors, we have appreciated how Tim has worked with us to achieve greater insight into the mechanics of the school. This has included a Learning Walk which I gather was very well received by the governors who attended and also facilitating better link governance to ensure that what we do serves the school effectively. I am so proud that we were able to appoint Tim to this role as I believe that his enthusiasm and passion for the school will take it to new heights.

In other news, I am extremely sad to lose two of our most diligent governors- Gavin Lewis who served 2 x four year terms as a parent governor and Vice Chair and was completely devoted to seeing Beechen Cliff succeed. Also Clare Thompson who many will know is the Administration Manager who has always been tireless in both her actual role and her governor role to support the school. We also sadly received a resignation from Alex Elmes at the end of last year who stood down as a parent governor due to time commitments and finally as I write this, I have now received a further resignation from Tom Phillips one of our Safeguarding governors. Tom has had a change of circumstances making it difficult to continue. I must say a huge thank you to them all for their work for and commitment to Beechen Cliff which has facilitated governance to being considered a strength in the school and I can honestly say that they will be missed.

With resignations, brings new governors and I am delighted to welcome Juliet Taylor our new staff governor, Neil Drinkwater and Neil Mckim our new parent governors. It is always a pleasure to welcome new governors who come to the role with new eyes and see things which those of us who have been around for a while may have missed. They bring new skills, ideas and new vigour and I am pleased to advise that Neil Drinkwater has been nominated as Vice Chair. I look forward very much to working with all our new governors going forward as I believe they will all bring strength to the school.

Headteacher: Mr T D Markall

Kipling Avenue, Bath BA2 4RE

T: +44(0)1225 480466 E: headteacher@beechencliff.org.uk www.beechencliff.org.uk Twitter: @BeechenCliff

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We are also now looking for a new community governor for the school. As part of the work the school has done with the Equalities Review, I am keen to fulfil one of the Governor objectives which was to create a more diverse LGB to reflect the diversity in the school. With this in mind, I would like to actively promote the recruitment of a more diverse LGB and we are therefore seeking someone from the local community with experience of working with DEI groups or organisations to join our governors. Being a governor allows the opportunity to change from within and therefore it is for anyone who is passionate about the education offered at Beechen Cliff. As it is a community role, it is better if it is not a parent, however, I wouldn't rule out a parent if this is of interest. Judy Green will continue as our Safeguarding governor and it will revert to a single role in Judy's more than capable hands,

Last year, one of the ways that governors worked with the school was to support the review of the exclusion process and collaborate to develop a new system for the school together with a new Behaviour policy. My thanks to James Oldham and Kant Mann for their work and am pleased to report that not only has the number of exclusions at Beechen Cliff been reduced, the new procedure has been adopted by B&NES for all the schools in the authority.

Another initiative for last year was that we arranged a deep dive faculty link governance using Zoom and breakout rooms. We were able to arrange for each link governor to meet with a faculty head in a breakout session to ask a number of set questions. This was deemed as a really positive event for both staff and governors with the only issue being that they didn't have enough time to talk as much as they would have liked. Building on this success we are going to repeat this exercise 3 times this year to check in with faculty heads to discuss their plans for the year. The first one of these evenings took place on the 29th November and I look forward to seeing the outcomes of the event. Initial reports are good!

We have also allocated areas of the School Improvement Plan for governors to investigate and report on this year. This is to provide a portfolio of evidence for the school to use alongside deep dives into teaching learning delivered by the trust to demonstrate school improvement over the year. I am always excited about this as it is great to see how staff manage their areas and to hear about the initiatives adopted to ensure that children are safe and educationally making progress.

As I write this, I do hope that I will see many of you at the Carol Service this year. I am so happy that events like this are able to happen despite the new COVID arrangements in place. The Carol Service is a lovely way to appreciate the talents of the choir and the music department and a great way to start Christmas.

All that remains for me to say is that on behalf of the LGB we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year and look forward to sharing news with you again in the coming months.

Helen Eastwood
Chair of Governors