



BEECHEN CLIFF

15th December 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing on behalf of the governing body to reflect on the period since the start of this new academic year and to look forward with the plans that governors have made for this next year.

We have had an excellent start to the new school year with the publication of our progress results for last year. Both our Progress 8 score and Attainment 8 score place us in the top 8% of schools Nationally. Our progress scores were half a grade higher than the national average, which is an excellent result. Starting the school year with such a mark of success evidences the impact of improvement work which has taken place over the last year.

I cannot write without mentioning the Ofsted Inspection, which as you know took place in Term 1. I cannot begin to describe the efforts that all members of the school community made over the last 5 years to secure that "Good" judgement. It felt as though we had all been holding our breaths for that one moment of the judgement and once heard, we were all finally able to breathe again. During the Governor session with the Lead Inspector, there were six of us in attendance. We were easily able to demonstrate not only our knowledge of strategies for school improvement, but also our shared passion for Beechen Cliff School and the community it serves and that our dedication and diligence over the last 5 years has been unwavering.

Straight off the press today - we have had the Ofsted Inspection of our boarding facility this week and whilst we are waiting for the report, all the indicators are positive. My thanks on behalf of the LGB to all involved. The rigour of an inspection at this late stage of the term is not for the faint hearted and to come out positively demonstrates that we are not only meeting the National Minimum Standards for boarding, but we are doing so as a matter of course. This, once again is a tribute to the fantastic staff involved.

At the start of Term 2, we had our Governor Away Day when we discussed our strategy for the rest of the year. Having had an External review of Governance at the end of the Summer term, we were keen to incorporate some of the recommendations into our Governor Improvement Plan. Our key improvement areas for the year are:

1. To continue to do effective Link Governance, and explore strategies for more effective scheduling and triangulation with other reports from the Senior Leadership Team.
2. To engage better with stakeholders.
3. To access all the available training and keep training records up to date.
4. To support the school to create a 3-5 year development plan.
5. Succession planning for the future as governors' terms come to an end.

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

We have already made good headway with this plan with most governors attending Trust governor training at Hayesfield this term and all governors have met with both a Head of Faculty and a member of the Leadership team this term and so we are on target with 1-3 of our improvement plan.

On the subject of succession planning, I must advise that this is the last letter that you will receive from me as Chair of Governors. I have been a governor at Beechen Cliff for 6 years and the Chair for the last four and it is now the right time for me to stand down and let someone else lead the board. I am delighted that I will be succeeded by an excellent governor- Sonya Butters who joined us last year and very quickly became the obvious choice for Chair as she embraced the role with sensitivity and intelligence and I am confident of her success in leading the board.

I would just like to briefly reflect on my time as Chair of Governors at Beechen Cliff as I am immensely proud of what we have achieved over the years. It has not always been an easy time as we have seen COVID come and go and there has been a huge amount of change to the school which always comes as a challenge.

Being a Governor at Beechen Cliff is an incredibly rewarding experience, but it is a commitment which requires training, time and dedication. We review many documents, we meet with staff and we hear Disciplinary appeals. We give of our time freely as we recognise the importance of an LGB that works alongside a school to support school leaders to develop the school strategy. The LGB at Beechen Cliff are a fantastic team who not only support the school, but we support each other to ensure that all governor functions are completed. I would like to say that the strength of the Beechen LGB should not be underestimated, but should also not be taken for granted and with this message I invite all members of the Beechen Cliff School parent body to consider this when there is a call for a new governor. Being a governor is an opportunity to influence from within, develop strategy and ensure that the school continues on its journey to Outstanding from a position of strength.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow governors and the school staff for their hard work and commitment to the school community. It has been a joy to work with such an amazing team. I have loved my term as Chair of Governors and am handing the baton on knowing that we are in a position of great strength.

All that remains to say, on behalf of the Governing Body, may I wish you and your families a Very Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Helen Eastwood
Chair of Governors.