

Governing Body Update

We believe as a Governing Body that it is useful to update our community on key pertinent issues that formed the basis for healthy debate/agreement/ratification at our recent Governing Body meeting on Weds 11th November.

Firstly, we would like to publicly thank Kelsey Clark-Davies (our outgoing Chair of Governors) for all her hard work, passion and commitment towards the continued improvement of the school over the last four years. Kelsey has been a real driving force as the Chair of Governors in both a supportive and leadership capacity and her expertise in education and school development will be missed. We do know that her supportive ear remains close at hand. Thank you so much.

The Governing Body would like to introduce your new Chair and Vice-Chair.

Sarah Lord – Chair of Governors



I am mum to 2 girls and a part-time Radiographer. We moved to York over 10 years ago following my husband's army posting and chose to stay after he retired from the Army.

Both my daughters have attended RWPA and I have been involved with RWPA since my eldest started in Early years in 2011. I can often be found volunteering in the pool on swimming days.

I have been fortunate enough to have been involved as a governor for the last 6 years and enjoy the challenge. My background is not in education and learning how things are done within a school is a huge learning curve and a real eye opener to the work teachers do.

In my spare time I can be found in my sewing room designing and creating bags and memory cushions which I sell through my Etsy business.

Ewan Cochrane – Vice Chair of Governors

- My wife and I have lived in Strensall for over 10 years and have 3 kids.
- Our daughter is in Year 1 and both of our boys are now at Secondary School having attended Robert Wilkinson.
- I have a keen interest in rugby and running.
- My background is in finance and I currently work at Homes England, a Government Agency providing residential development finance to house builders across England.
- What I enjoy about the Governor role is the chance to make a difference and use my experience and knowledge to contribute to the successful running of my child's school.



School Key Priorities discussed in detail during the meeting.

- *To develop IT capability across school and the curriculum, in order to support attainment so that children and families are equipped to access a range of learning both in school and remotely.* There has been a lot of work in the background to support the steps around home and remote learning. So far you have received much information regarding how and when home learning will take place. Planning home learning, especially live learning, presents many challenges, ensuring the children's safety is paramount. Look out for the new remote learning information coming out shortly that will introduce the possibilities of some 'Live learning' to take place should it be needed. There will be a number of permissions needed and careful rules to follow.
- *To continue to develop and enhance a highly linked "real and relevant progressive curriculum for all Robert Wilkinson" children with a specific focus on the linking of vocabulary, reading and writing.* School recognises that this is a challenge at the present time, but this makes it all the more important that children have the opportunity to develop vocabulary and excitement about the world around them and appreciate the benefit of maintaining a broad curriculum and avoid narrowing the curriculum to just reading writing and maths.

- *Early identification of learning deficits and planned intervention, in order to provide a comprehensive catch up programme to ensure that good progress can be made by all our pupils.* After receiving a comprehensive data overview, the governors are hugely reassured that over the last half term the teachers right across school have been assessing the children carefully and implementing many strategies to support pupils right across school. The use of the government “catch up” funding is high on the school’s agenda and is already being used to enable relevant interventions to be put in place.

Covid update

Governors were reassured that the risk assessments and procedures put in place by the school are having a key positive effect on keeping transmission rates low in school.

Attendance at school has been high and we believe RWPA is in the top 5% of schools for attendance rates since September which is fantastic.

In the last half term we have had 4 pupils test positive out of 591, and 3 staff out of 115. Crucially there has been no evidence as yet of local ‘on site’ transmission of Covid within the school. School continues to monitor their systems and make changes where necessary.

The Governors also extend a thank you to our parent community for continuing to embrace the guidelines around mask wearing and social distancing within the school grounds and urge our community to continue to maintain distance at morning drop off and at the end of the day, resisting the urge to form groups or gather at entrances and exits. Everyone should be able to maintain a sensible space if we work together. There should not be the need for members of staff to remind community members, as it is all of our responsibility.

Staffing Update and Leadership Structure

The school has steadily been growing in its leadership capacity since Gail Brown was successful in moving from being the school’s Executive Headteacher into the role of Chief Executive of The Ebor Trust.

Chris Evans has stepped into the Headteacher role from his Head of Teaching & Learning role and we know that all of you will have met or at least seen Chris out at the school gates and enjoy his parent communication letters.

Jo Sutton, a key member of the Ebor Trust specialist team, has successfully taken up the post of Deputy Headteacher and will lead on Teaching and Learning across the school. We know many of you have met Jo when she is out at the school gates too. She is keen to bring her specialism in mathematics teaching to the team.

Rachel Williamson (KS2) and Nicola Clay (KS1) continue to thrive in their roles as Key Stage leaders and they are supported by team leaders and their fantastic year group teams who really do drive and support our school effectiveness and day to day running.

We are pleased to announce that this week, after a robust interview process Rachel Cummings has been appointed as a new Assistant Head Teacher. Many of you will know Rachel well through her dedicated SEN work across school. She will add the key responsibility for Safeguarding across school to her role and will be fully operational from mid December.

Rebecca McGuinn, Ebor Trust’s Lead for Safeguarding, Behaviour and Wellbeing, who has been an integral part of our Senior Leadership Team at Robert Wilkinson over the last two years and the School’s Designated Safeguarding Lead will continue to lead and develop our school systems and support Rachel to transition into her new role before resuming her role across the Trust later in the year. We are very grateful for the work Rebecca does and we know many of you were highly appreciative of the safeguarding and check in systems that Rebecca masterminded during the school closure.

We want to finish the update by celebrating the resilience of the staff and children at the school. The staff continue to work tirelessly creating a fantastic, safe learning environment for our children whilst adapting to new learning methods as a result of Covid19. The children continue to come to school each day with enthusiasm and positivity ready to learn. This is reflected in the school’s attendance figures.

If you would like to become a school governor, the opportunity will be arising very soon. We have vacancies that will be advertised very shortly and we welcome keen applicants.

Keep well and stay safe.

RWPA Governing Body