



The Pinnacle Schools Federation



Governor Newsletter Summer 2021

Dear parents, carers, staff and all

I am writing this on the first day the children have returned after the Easter holidays, the sun is shining and all feels as if there is a sense of normality returning!! I thought it would be a good time to reflect on what we have learnt, what went well and what are we missing as a community due to the last year.

For me, I feel there is a bit of a disconnect with school and other parents. I miss the informal passing chats with those of you I used to see while picking up or dropping off or visiting the schools. I have missed not meeting this year's reception children and their parents, the meeting of prospective new parents at the open afternoons or at parents evening. I have even missed the squishing into the school hall or church for celebrations but most of all I miss the general sense of community that our schools provide to our villages and beyond. This is truly what makes our schools the caring, nurturing environments that have helped us through the pandemic and attracted us to them in the first place.

We have learnt that there is no substitute for our children's development than to be in school. We have learnt that home-schooling is sooooooo hard and that all our staff are amazing!!! Many of us have learnt that our children are far more resilient and adaptable than us adults. We have mastered google classroom, gained IT skills, understood the power of zoom and the need to connect with each other. These new found skills and knowledge should not go to waste and may well be a useful tool in supporting our children, parents, staff and the school community going forward.

Spending as much time outdoors is something we have learnt to embrace and we are so lucky to have our amazing school fields as well as village parks and plenty of local green spaces to explore and enjoy. Let's use the benefits of this with regard to reduction of covid transition rates and also a chance for us to appreciate our local areas, respect and connect with nature and our environment.

As time goes on we will hopefully be able to mix classes within the schools and for the children to meet up with their peers across the federation. The prospect of sport matches, joint trips and projects are on the horizon, all of which will strengthen the communities that we are privileged to be a part of. Let's embrace it, we all need to contribute to ensure that we and our children benefit in every possible way. As restrictions ease, support the PTA / Friends events, offer reading support or to run an afterschool club (crafting, running, guitar, photography, dressing up! whatever skills or fun things you can think of!) and engage with school and those within our communities in any way you can. There is a brighter future to come.

Best wishes to all

Ellie

Parent feedback summary – Charlotte (Parent Governor)

Thanks to all of the parents that fed back on the remote learning experience – either through the online surveys or via the governor/parent meetings. As governors, we were pleased to see that there were good levels of engagement with remote learning and that the vast majority of parents were happy with the schools' remote learning provision. Feedback from both schools was overwhelmingly positive and many of you took the time to tell us both what you appreciated and what you felt could be improved. All of these comments were incredibly useful – providing teachers with a much needed boost to morale, highlighting the importance of their feedback to our children and most importantly giving valuable pointers as to how governors and teachers can work together to ensure we improve not only any future remote learning (which I think most of us hope we won't have to go through again!) but also everyone's day to day experiences of the school and education.

What are we doing? –Iona (Parent Governor)

The Federation governors have been working with our local authority Challenge and Support partner (CSP). The CSP has provided training for governors to help us to plan even more effective monitoring visits, to feel more confident in our governance work, to be better equipped to validate the impact of the schools' leaders' actions and to hold leadership to account for the educational performance and finances of the schools. This should support the schools' continuing improvement programme and when the time comes for OFSTED to visit again we will be able, as a community, to be confident that our schools are definitely worthy of a positive judgement. Most importantly governors work to ensure that the ethos, education and experience of the children (and their families) provides a secure base for their next stage in life.

Please get in touch if you have ever considered a governor role, if you would like to know more about what the role involves so that you can check whether you will be able to make the commitment. There will be spaces for associate governors come the start of the new school year in September – associate governors are not fully fledged members of the governing body but attend meetings in order to get up to speed with the requirements of the governor role, with a view to joining the governing body when ready. A really strong governing body is one that plans for the future; it would be great for us to have a succession plan with potential new governors identified and given plenty of time to get up to speed with the role.

School governors have a varied and important role helping the school run effectively. The governor role is strategic rather than operational. Governors don't get involved with the day to day running of a school, instead supporting and challenging the school's leadership team to drive school improvement. We usually attend around 6 meetings a year. Being a school governor is a commitment and a responsibility, but offers you the chance to see first-hand the impact you can make in improving education for children in your community.

A wide range of skills is required to support the school – you don't need to be an expert in education policy! It is really important that we have governors from a wide range of life and work experiences, but most importantly bring common sense, ideas and enthusiasm to the oversight role.

Federation Vision – Jill (Foundation Governor)

Both Hawkesbury and Iron Acton schools already have their own, individual Vision statements. Governors are now working on a Vision statement for the Federation, to enhance and supplement these and define what we want to accomplish by working together. Creating a Vision statement enables an establishment to clarify why they are unique, their core purpose and what they aspire to be.

Some examples are;

Nike "To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world."

NSPCC. "A society where all children are loved, valued and able to fulfil their potential"

To monitor the impact of our visions two Governors recently talked to a group of year 5 and 6 pupils from Hawkesbury School about their school Vision. "For every child to enjoy and flourish through a culture of lifelong learning and curiosity"

Here are some of their comments showing how they relate to this.

- Everyone can flourish and grow.
- Flourishing is celebrating your learning and education.
- People flourish at different times ... and in different ways.
- It encourages you if you are good at something you should keep doing it.
- It is a good way to say we are all important.
- We are all good at something, not just learninglike making friends or sport or being respectful to new people.

A similar exercise is taking place with Iron Acton pupils in May.

As our Federation Vision statement will be central to everything we do, it is important to get it right. Governors have started to debate possible ideas and wording that reflect the ethos of the Federation. Later on in the year we will be asking other stakeholders such as parents, staff and pupils for their input and opinions to help us all understand and engage with it. Please do share your thoughts, at this time as it will shape the Federation as we go forward.