



**New Christ Church Primary School
Governors Newsletter to Parents
November 2008**

Welcome to our second newsletter! A whole year has gone by since we last wrote to you and there is much to report. Familiar faces have gone, with our best wishes, and new faces have replaced them. From the staff, Miss Chilvers, Mrs Redsell, Ms Poppat and Mrs Beville have left us, Mrs Cross, Mrs Thornton, Mrs Purvey and Miss McQuillan have joined us. After many years of valuable service, Stephen Wallis and Andy Klemz have both left the area and have resigned from the Governing Body and we were also sorry to lose Serena Diment at the beginning of this term. However, we are very pleased to welcome two new members: Mrs Siobhan Wheston, our LA Governor, and Mrs Ghada Sampat, a new parent governor. We send our warm congratulations and very best wishes to Miss Bowles who became Mrs Howarth at Easter time. During the summer holidays two portico cabins appeared to cater for the planned expansion and seem to be working well after some initial teething troubles. The playground is now rather cramped but we are 'on the case' and hope to make the field more suitable for the winter weather. The Friends have made an important contribution by providing extras for the children with the money raised by the events they organise. The school continues to provide a varied and interesting programme of activities outside the prescribed curriculum and Father David, a regular visitor, does much to nurture the spiritual development of the children and the caring atmosphere which is so much a characteristic of our school. Many changes and exciting times ahead and through it all New Christ Church continues to make steady and pleasing academic progress, thanks to the hard work and dedication of Maria and her staff. We thank them all. We have much to be proud of and much to be grateful for.

The Governing Body

Mrs Judith Thurlow (Chair)	Mrs Stacey Howarth	Mrs Lynda Stokes
Miss Michele Bond	Mr Graham Kirke	Fr David West
Mr John Daniel	Mr Nigel Pounds	Mrs Siobhan Wheston
Mr David Grimes	Mrs Ghada Sampat	Ms Maria Soulsby

Mrs Tracey Sandland (Clerk to the Governors)

From the Head Teacher...

New Christ Church continues to make good progress towards improving education for all its pupils. Last year, our results at Key Stages 1 and 2 show continued improvement in English, maths and science. We were re-awarded Investors in People and the Basic Skills Quality Mark and became the first primary school in Reading to receive the Inclusion Quality Mark, which recognised the good work we do to ensure that all our children make good progress at school.

External Agencies collect attainment data at 3 points in a primary child's life: at the end of their Foundation Stage (FSP), at Key Stage 1 (end of Y2) and at Key Stage 2 (end of Y6). It is this information, as well as visits to the school, which is used by Ofsted and the Local Authority to make judgements of a school's performance.

At the end of the Foundation Stage, children are judged according to whether they achieve the 'Benchmark', which reflects Good Development. At New Christ Church, the number children in the Foundation Stage who have reached the Benchmark improves year on year, and we have achieved higher than the Local Authority average for the past 3 years. We know that we are doing well in ensuring our youngest children make good progress in their first year of school.

At Key Stage 1, it is expected that most children will achieve Level 2 in English, maths and science. In Key Stage 1 last year, our priorities were maths and reading. All of our children achieved a Level 2 in Reading and maths, with the majority achieving Level 2B. We are delighted with these results, and are confident that this will ensure continued good progress during KS2. For reading, writing and maths, we have had good year on year improvements for 3 years.

At Key Stage 2, average attainment is Level 4. We are judged according to the numbers of children who attain Level 4 and Level 5, and the progress children have made during KS2. At KS2, our results continue to improve in English, maths and science. Those children who have spent 7 years at NCC did particularly well, with many of them achieving the higher Level 5 - in reading, 82% of our 'core' pupils attained the higher Level 5, this is a great achievement.

Our school, however, is not just about working towards achieving high academic standards. Our school ethos is incredibly important to us all, we want our children to know that they are loved and cherished, and to feel safe and secure at school, enjoy their learning and grow up to become fulfilled young people who can make a positive contribution to the world in which they live. I am grateful that at NCC we are blessed to have a wonderfully talented staff, supportive parents and governors, who work together to make our mission statement a reality.

Who are We?

Judith Thurlow: *I have been a Foundation Governor at New Christ Church for almost three years. I taught German at Reading University for almost thirty years until I took early retirement five years ago. As a regular member of the congregation at Christ Church I particularly welcome the opportunity to share in the life of the school.*

John Daniel: *It gives me great satisfaction to support Maria and her team knowing well that they are on a mission to build and shape the lives of our little ones. I work with specialised software for a living but keep active my core interests in agricultural development by working with charities in India and Burma. I am one of the school representatives for Aspire 2 (a charity which supports excellence in the Whitley area). I also serve at Christ Church as church warden.*

David Grimes: *I have lived in Reading for about 16 years and am a lecturer in Meteorology at the University of Reading. I have one son at New Christ Church (Patrick) in Year6. I am on the Governing Body and Curriculum Committee as a parent governor and have taken on the role of overseeing the maths teaching within the school.*

Michele Bond: *I am a full-time working mum with a year 4 boy who attends NCC. I have completed a year in the role of Parent Governor which I have enjoyed immensely, it has been nice to give something back to a wonderful school, acting as a team player as well as a critical friend. Also I have had the opportunity of gaining a much better insight into the workings of the school and its leadership and hopefully I have fulfilled a useful role as a parent representative. Already in the short time of being involved in NCC my eyes have been opened and a new respect has been formed for all the staff and associates of NCC. Named Governor for Child Protection*

Stacey Howarth: *Stacey has worked at NCC since September 2006 and became our Deputy Head Teacher at the start of the last academic year. She is the nominated Teaching Staff Governor.*

Graham Kirke: *Graham has worked at the school since the Fresh Start in 2000 and is currently employed as an LSA as well as our Caretaker. He is also a bit of a computer whiz so helps out the staff whenever he can!*

Ghada Sampat: *I would like to say thank you for giving me the chance to support a school we all love and have faith in. I work for an International Telecom Company in a very demanding job that requires a lot of patience. At the moment I am studying for my CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associate) as part of my development. I am originally from Sudan and due to my father working for the UN I had the privilege of living in different countries and experiencing different cultures.*

Nigel Pounds: *I am 42 years of age and (other than a few years in France and the West Country) have lived in Reading all of my life. I am married with two young daughters, one of whom attends the school. I am actively involved in the Church and work for the Civil Service.*

Lynda Stokes: *I am the Bursar at NCC. I have 5 children; currently with two of them still at school attending Theale Green Community School. I was a parent governor at their primary school and am now a staff governor at NCC. I have completed the Certificate in School Business Management course and my job is to support the teaching and learning by managing the finances and premises. I ensure the budget is allocated, spent and monitored appropriately and that the school buildings and grounds are maintained to make the environment a place where Teachers can teach and Pupils can learn.*

Fr David West: *As long as I have been in Reading, since 1995, I have had a link with NCC trying, in various ways, to help make our school a happy place for children and grown-ups alike. It is a wonderful privilege for me to be a member of the NCC family!*

Siobhan Wheston: *I am delighted to be accepted onto the Governing body of New Christ Church and I am really looking forward to my involvement with the school. I work as a manager in a technical environment and have a background in Broadcasting and IT Engineering. In my free time I love the outdoors and especially camping. I also play local league badminton.*

Maria Soulsby: *I am the Head Teacher and have been at NCC since the Fresh Start in 2000. I've always enjoyed working in this community, taking great pride in the achievements of the children and the school.*

Committees

Strategy & Finance	Premises	Pupil Matters	Staffing
Chair: John Daniel	Chair: John Daniel	Chair: David Grimes	Chair: Fr David West
Members: Judith Thurlow David Grimes Maria Soulsby Lynda Stokes Fr David West	Members: Lynda Stokes Graham Kirke	Members: Michele Bond Stacey Howarth Judith Thurlow	Members: Maria Soulsby Nigel Pounds Siobhan Wheston

Governors Reports:

Literacy

Last year, we had a big push to raise the profile of reading across our school. We want all our children to become good readers and to enjoy their reading. Every child has a reading record and we ask them to read at home every day, preferably with an adult or an older sibling. In school, we continue to teach reading using the Read, Write Inc scheme; this is held from 9.00 every morning for an hour - this is why it is so important to get children to school on time in the mornings. Our results in reading across the school continue to improve and children are making good progress with their reading. We held two open mornings for parents to come into school and find out how we teach reading; responses from these were very positive and we hope to continue these sorts of events in the future.

We have developed a range of strategies to improve standards in writing, linking key skills to reading and speaking and listening. Writing is taught as part of a unit of work which often lasts for 2 weeks. For the first part of the unit, children are given opportunities to talk about their ideas and act them out, this helps them clarify ideas as well as experiment with different vocabulary. We have had great success with these approaches and know that our children are making good progress.

Mrs West and Mrs Morbey continue to support those children who require additional support with literacy skills and Mrs Elahi is with us for a day a week working with children for whom English is an additional language - we now have 20 different languages represented in our school! All these children make very good progress because of the intensive support they receive.

Maths and numeracy

We have faced many challenges in raising standards in maths over the past few years. Maths always seems to be the one subject that children seem to find particularly tricky and we know that many parents become quite anxious about how best to support their children. Standards in maths are improving year on year:

- At Key Stage 2, we have moved from 50% attaining Level 4 in 2006 to 74% in 2008.
- At Key Stage 1, we have moved from 86% attaining Level 2 in 2006 to 100% in 2008. We are pleased to see this improvement which is the result of lots of hard work from all our staff, especially Mrs Howarth, our maths co-ordinator. However, we are not complacent and know that we still have lots to do in order to maintain improvements.

Over the past year, we have invested in a new maths scheme, and have also agreed a calculations policy, which details exactly what is taught to each year group. These measures ensure that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of maths, allowing structured progression through the syllabus, ensuring there are no gaps in understanding.

Termly tracking of individual progress allows teachers and senior staff to evaluate progress for all children each term. Where children appear to be making slower progress than expected, support can quickly be put in place to keep children on track.

We are committed to making further improvements with maths. Our plans for this year include restructuring teaching groups in Key Stage 2 to allow us to have 4 maths groups instead of 3. This will create smaller classes for maths teaching with a narrower focus in terms of learning objectives. This year we are participating in a project which will introduce a new approach to the assessment of learning in maths; this will help teachers develop a clearer understanding of children's misconceptions, allowing them to plan activities to improve skills and understanding. We would also like to invite parents to come into school for open mornings to observe maths teaching and learning in our school.

Being a Parent Governor

I have been a Parent Governor for a year now, during this time I have enjoyed the role, gaining an insight into how the school is run, having my eyes opened as to what is involved, with a great deal of respect for all the hardworking and dedicated staff.

Being a parent governor is a rewarding and responsible experience, to be a part of a team contributing to the running of the school, helping to improve children's education and supporting the school with its strategic direction for standards and results, setting school values, vision, agreeing plans and policies, monitoring and evaluating performance and learning how the leadership team works and how the finances are run. Overall being a part of the Governing body team enables me to work closely with the staff to ensure a happy progressive future for the pupils.

To be a parent governor you need time, energy, common sense, willingness, honesty, enthusiasm, commitment, and availability to attend a full governors meeting and one committee meeting each term, well prepared. Most importantly to be a team player and to be a critical friend, supporting but not intervening with the staff and head teacher with the day to day running of the school.

Parent Governors play a vital role on governing bodies, having a parental viewpoint of the school. Through the children they have first hand experience of the delivery of the curriculum and how the school is perceived. This enables Parent Governors to bring a different perspective with personal experience to the strategic management of the school, all the time remembering parent governors are representative parents not representative of parents. They make careful considered judgements and vote according to their own convictions while remembering that they have to put the good of the school before any personal interests and loyalties, never using the Governing Body meetings for the concerns of their own child.

I have also gained in personal growth and confidence, developing new skills with the availability of training away from my everyday work, meeting other school governors and more involvement with extra curricular activities. Looking forward to the rest of my term in supporting the Head, all the staff and the New Christ Church family.

Michele Bond

The Friends

The Friends of New Christchurch have had a very busy year with a Christmas Fayre, Easter Egg Hunt, several discos and a summer Fun Day. Each event has been very well attended and we have raised a substantial amount of money, some of which will be spent on equipment for the children. The Friends sent a letter home to ask the pupils what they might like us to spend the money on and we had some fantastic ideas. We have ordered some playground equipment which we hope the children will enjoy using. The Friends of New Christchurch is a very small group of parents with one who has stayed, even though her child no longer attends the school, a couple of the Friends attended the new parents meeting held at school in September and we are hoping that some of these parents will be able to join us. Although we are a small group, we always have plenty of willing volunteers when we hold events and this is very much appreciated. We hope that this will continue over the next year.

Serena Diment

Church and Community

We are working hard to strengthen our links with the community and are continuing to support the Kuruneipuri orphanage in Tamil Nadu, S India in partnership with Christ Church. Similarly at harvest time we joined together to provide tins and other goods in aid of CIRDIC, Reading's centre for homeless people. The monthly Family Service continues to be popular with children and their families. The children always produce wonderful artwork and excel themselves in their reading skills!

Father David West

Special Educational Needs

(Report presented to the Governing Body, July 1st 2008)

During the current academic year the school has continued its excellent work in making provision for children with Special Needs. There are currently 33 children on the register, approximately 25% of the school as a whole and above the national average. There are 6 pupils with a statement. The spectrum of need ranges from a child with a 25 hour statement- for whom an imaginative, innovative and so far successful programme has been devised - to children with less serious problems who can be helped through intervention and booster groups. In the light of the recommendation of the Ofsted report, the school has also given thought as to how the needs of the more able children can be met, and, as appropriate, they are given work which will challenge and stretch them. Whatever the level and nature of need, however, the school seeks to cater for each individual child with the same degree of care and attention.

The register of Children with Special Needs is regularly revised and carefully maintained. All children with a statement have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and children with less severe and similar needs may be catered for with a group plan. The format of the plan is sensible and helpful and provides for independent comments by the child and parent/carer as well as details of the provision the school makes. Provision is clearly related to need and appropriate targets are set. Termly, tracking which monitors children on the SEN register as a separate group, shows that their progress is similar to that of their peers.

The school has an obligation to ensure that as far as possible no child is excluded from any aspect of educational provision, especially not on the grounds of disability or special needs. The kind of provision made by the school ranges from ramps and a disabled toilet to aromatherapy. An Inclusion Manger, Mrs Jan West, has been in post since September 2006. We were very proud when the school was awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark in the summer term, the first mainstream primary school in Reading to receive the award. We are very grateful to all those who were involved in the inspection and especially to Mrs West for all the hard work and time which she devoted to the preparation. The objectives of the 2006-2009 Accessibility Plan have almost all been met and certainly will have been by 2009.

A successful and productive relationship with the Avenue School has been established to the mutual benefit of both schools. Two pupils from the Avenue regularly spend one day a week with New Christ Church and pupils are invited to attend school functions. In turn staff in our school benefit from sharing the experience and expertise of their colleagues at the Avenue, including a summer dance performance at the Hexagon.

Judith Thurlow

What the kids say!

I had the great pleasure of coming into school to talk to several pupils from each year group. I wanted to ask the children what they thought of the school.

I started with R/1 and 1/2, I asked them if they were all happy and if they felt safe in the school. They all agreed that they did and they think their teacher is great but they had a few requests: they want a bigger playground and playing field, they want the playground resurfaced with the squashy tarmac and they want more things to do in the playground, they want a secret forest and they want to redesign the school badge, they also want the teachers in school uniform because it's not fair that they should wear it if the teachers don't, although Ms Soulsby wouldn't have to wear one as she is special and last but not least, they wanted me to stop the rain!

Overall all the children I spoke to in these year groups were very happy to be at New Christ Church and they all feel safe and none had experienced or witnessed any bullying at all. They all said they would tell their teacher if they had a problem and they would even tell Ms Soulsby.

3/4 and 4/5

Again an absolute pleasure to talk to. They all feel very safe in school and are happy to come to school every-day. They all said that they learn new things on a daily basis. I had one child tell me that they found it boring, that they repeat in year 4 what they did in year 3, and was looking forward to moving up a class. They all said that behaviour in the school is good most of the time but there are a couple of children who are silly and a bit noisy but their teachers deal with them quickly. They all listen to the teacher and they have a good understanding of what is being asked of them.

5/6

These children were very polite and keen to talk to me. They are also very happy at New Christ Church and they all feel safe and had never known anyone to be bullied. They enjoy all of their lessons and get on well with their teacher, they find the lessons interesting and varied and they feel behaviour is good on the whole. The one thing they can't figure out is how their teacher knows that they mess around when she leaves the room!

I have never done anything like this before but I have enjoyed it and I would love to do it again. I was also impressed that I didn't need to introduce myself to any of the children as they all knew me already. All of the children I spoke to were brilliant and they made me feel very welcome. They are a credit to the school and their parents alike.

Serena Diment

And finally ... two reminders

The School Profile

The latest version of the School Profile - which replaces the Governors' Annual Report to Parents - is now available on line. Please do take the time to look at it ... it is an important document which reports in detail on what the school has achieved during the past year and how it has cared for the pupils. If you would like a hard copy, just ask at the office.

AND

Arriving and leaving!

School starts officially at 8.50 and ends at 3.15 for KS1 and 3.25 for KS2. Unsupervised children should not be left in the playground before 8.40am and children should be collected promptly at the end of the day. The school will always be sympathetic in the case of emergencies and unforeseen circumstances which make it unavoidable for a child to be left early or collected late, but as a general rule it is vital for the smooth running of the school and the welfare of the staff that parents do keep to these times. Teachers arrive at the school as early as 7.30 and they leave late, but they are fully occupied throughout the day with teaching, meetings, after school clubs and other matters. They are responsible people and would never knowingly leave a child unsupervised, but the need to supervise children outside the specified times adds yet more responsibilities to an already overcrowded day! As a Governing Body we are responsible for the welfare of the staff and would be very grateful for your cooperation and understanding.

Judith Thurlow