

July 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

At this time of year, one of the Governors writes to you, giving an outline of what the Board has done during the past year, along with a little information about ourselves and our role. This year, the report is attached as usual, but what I really want to say and to celebrate is:



That is children, parents, staff, Mrs Jackson and governors together achieved an 'Outstanding' grade in our recent inspection.

For my part, I have felt the school has been outstanding for quite some time and the inspection grading was a recognition of this. What I also think even more strongly, is that it is due to everyone involved with Kingswood Nursery School. Your children were absolute stars, but it would not have been achieved without the support you give and the governors would like to thank you for this. I would also like to thank Mrs Jackson and all her staff for all they do, each and every day to make 'learning an exciting adventure' at Kingswood, and for making our job as governors so rewarding.

If you want to comment or require further details about our work, I can be reached through the School office.

I would like to wish you all a safe and happy summer holiday and for those families and children moving on to other schools and settings, I send my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Harvey

Melanie Harvey
Chair of Governors
Kingswood Nursery School

KINGSWOOD NURSERY SCHOOL – GOVERNOR ACTIVITY 2016-2017

At Kingswood, our Constitution states that the Governing Board is made up of the Head teacher, one staff governor, two parent governors, one LEA Governor and five co-opted governors; making a total of nine. We do not have Committees, but each Governor undertakes to monitor particular areas. Governor names, together with their category and the areas(s) they monitor are listed below:

Name	Category	Areas Monitored
Mrs Jackson	Head teacher	
Melanie Harvey (Chair of Governors)	LEA	Progress and Attainment Appraisal and Performance
Chris Munro (Vice Chair)	Co-opted	Equalities and Inclusion, Special Needs, Safeguarding, Appraisal and Performance
Petra Charles	Staff Governor	
Louise Jones	Parent Governor	Safeguarding, Developing Links with Parents and Carers
Natasha Thomsit	Parent Governor (until May 2017)	Finance
Clive Goodchild	Parent Governor (from June 2017)	
Alison James	Co-opted	Finance 30 hour trial
Mick Martindale	Co-opted	Health & Safety, Premises
Carole Racher	Co-opted	Teaching & Learning, Finance, Mentor to New Governors

GOVERNORS – APPOINTMENT AND RESIGNATIONS

Natasha Thomsit's term of office expired in May and she decided it was time for her to stand down. Natasha has served Kingswood as governor for seven years, starting when her oldest child was with us. She has overseen our finances, contributed to our meetings and played a vital role in getting Kingswood to the place it is now – not least in being one of the governors who appointed Mrs Jackson. We owe her a huge debt of gratitude and extend our thanks for all her hard work on behalf of Kingswood Nursery School. With Natasha deciding not to serve again, we had a vacancy for a parent governor. It was advertised to all parents and carers. Only one nomination was received, which meant that Clive Goodchild was recently appointed without an election, subject to the usual checks.

In January 2017, family commitments meant that I felt it best to stand down from Chairing for the term and the Vice Chair, Chris Munroe, took over the role. I extend my thanks to her for doing this.

GOVERNOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governors of all maintained schools have three main duties:

- To set the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school
- To hold the school leaders to account for the performance of pupils and the performance management of the staff
- To ensure the school's finances are well spent

The governors fulfil these duties through meetings of the Board of Governors, visits and individual meetings with Mrs Jackson and other members of staff.

TRAINING, BRIEFINGS AND MEETINGS

Governors at Kingswood understand how important it is that we all keep up to date with legislation, national issues and current practice, so we attend courses that we feel will help us fulfil these commitments. Every Governor undertakes a full day of induction training and we also have an annual in-house training session for all governors. This year our in-house training focussed on OFSTED preparation and every Governor updated their Safeguarding training. In addition to attending Governor Briefings and Update sessions, one or more Governors attended the Annual Governor's Conference and training on being a link Safeguarding governor and fraud prevention.

Last year we started a mentoring programme for new governors and Carole Racher continued this support. All governors have felt this has been a very successful innovation and we will continue to provide high levels of support for every new appointment.

In addition to formal training, before each Governors Meeting we have a short information sharing session where we learn about an aspect of practice – this year these sessions have included The Transition Programme, The Appraisal Cycle, Governors' Responsibility for Pay Policy, Learning Journeys and Staff Induction.

VISION AND ETHOS

At Kingswood our vision is to provide the best opportunities and achieve the best outcomes for every child in our care; where every day is an exciting adventure. We have also developed a set of Core Values, which underpin all our work and that of every member of staff in the setting. The OFSTED inspector acknowledged this when she opened her report with the words 'Kingswood Nursery is a special place to learn', going on to say, 'all staff and the governing body share the head teacher's determination to provide the very best for every child'.

FINANCE

As a shareholder in Herts for Learning, we are able to buy in financial support, and we have visits every month from a member of the Financial Services Support team who helps Sam Godfrey complete monthly returns and monitor the budget.

For the past few years we have had two Governors who are very experienced in the field of Finance who have led our discussions in this area. This year one of our new governors has taken over this role from Natasha, which has enabled us to continue to provide effective scrutiny and support.

Every year the Board is required to complete a Schools Financial Value Standards assessment form which we submit to Hertfordshire County Council to demonstrate we have secure financial management in place. This year, as in previous years, we were able to do this, with no action points to take forward.

As a Board, we feel that Kingswood is most effective if we spend a very high proportion of our budget on well qualified dedicated practitioners. Our adult-to-child ratios are high and we feel this is a major factor in our success.

Governors are aware that our budget is likely to be under pressure in future years, and will do all we can to ensure we continue to achieve the best possible value for money under difficult financial circumstances.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Governors also decided it would be advantageous for the setting to buy into the HfL Standards Package; which allows us to work with and benefit from the experience and expertise of a Hertfordshire Improvement Partner. The HIP works closely with Mrs Jackson and Governors to identify the strengths and challenges of the setting and to set priorities for the year ahead: she then makes termly visits to measure progress against these targets, which is then reported back to meetings of the whole Governing Body.

As part of the strategic direction of the school, Governors regularly update and review policies.

We are particularly careful to ensure all safeguarding requirements are adhered to and even before the recent OFSTED inspection we had an 'outstanding' grade for this area.

This year, Kingswood has acting as a hub in the pilot of the new 30hours provision. Governors have supported Mrs Jackson and staff in its implementation and monitored it in action.

This year Kingswood has been visited by our local MP, Richard Harrington and a member of the House of Lords, Lord Listowel, who have been keen to find out about our provision.

Together with Mrs Jackson, two or three Governors have attended each of the All Party Parliamentary Group hearings on the future of Nursery Education and they have written to and lobbied their MP's about Nursery Funding. Governors see their duty extends beyond just supporting Kingswood but to support high quality Nursery education nation-wide.

HOLDING SCHOOL LEADERS TO ACCOUNT

Having set the priorities for the year ahead, each governor undertakes to monitor particular areas of interest or expertise and to report back to the full Board. Each governor commits to at least two monitoring visits per year to fulfil this task. You can see the areas each Governor undertook to monitor in the table above.

Nursery schools are due to be inspected every three years. Our last visits were in February and May 2013, where Nursery and Pre-School were inspected separately, so all staff and Governors knew an inspection was likely to happen this year. At the last inspection we received a 'Good' grade and we were all aware the school had made improvements in its procedures, practices and outcomes since then. We felt the school to be outstanding and were keen for an inspection to happen which would validate Governors firm belief that the school was indeed outstanding. Being fully prepared for an inspection and achieving an 'outstanding grade' has been our main focus for the year. It was prioritised in the School Development Plan and was a focus for our governor training; our monitoring visits and our meetings. We were, therefore, tremendously pleased and proud to receive the 'Outstanding' grading following the combined inspection which was carried out in March of this year.

Inevitably, this judgement means that our challenge in the future will be to maintain this grade in the face of changing circumstances.

If you would like more information about us, the Governors and our work, please visit the school website and take time to read the Minutes of our meetings which are posted on the notice board near the office.

Being a School Governor involves legal responsibilities and a huge time commitment to fulfil this voluntary role and many schools have difficulty filling all their vacancies. I am proud to say this is not the case at Kingswood. We have a full Board of Governors and each one has fulfilled their commitment to make at least two monitoring visits and attend most meetings. I would like to thank all my other Governors most sincerely for their dedication and support.

We are all proud to be part of the 'Kingswood family' and I can assure every parent that we will continue to play our part in securing the best possible outcome for each and every child at the setting.

