

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As the governors of your child's school we feel that it's important that you are kept up to date with what the governing board are doing in ensuring that your child's time in education at our schools is as enjoyable, safe and successful as possible as well as providing you with what information we can about what the future of our schools management will look like. This letter, therefore, is designed to be a Governors' Report to you of the academic year 2017 - 2018.

Throughout this year we, as the Governing Board of The Dartmoor Federation, have continued to endeavour to ensure that all children attending our schools have every opportunity to reach their learning potential. We have done this by supporting and challenging, when necessary, our senior teaching staff and by ensuring that each school environment is a safe place to be.

We passionately believe that the Federation model continues to safeguard the future of our small primary schools in particular. Whilst there are proven benefits to being part of a federation we also never want our schools to lose the feeling of individuality and independence that makes our children so proud to represent their own school.

As a Full Governing Board, we meet at least once every half term to discuss emerging issues. The Board also has three sub-committees, namely; (i) Teaching and Learning, (ii) Safeguarding and Behaviour and (iii) Finance, Health and Safety and Human Resources. Currently, these sub-committees also meet each half term. In addition to this we have individual governors with specific interest in important areas such as Special Education Needs and Pupil Premium.

At the Teaching and Learning meetings all aspects of the primary and secondary curriculum are discussed and performance data scrutinised. This year, our primary Heads of School have spent time teaching and observing at other federated primary schools with the aim of raising teaching standards and sharing methods of best practice.

At the Safeguarding meetings we discuss such diverse subjects as attendance, safety on school trips, healthy eating, online safety and supporting our LGBT students and staff.

The Finance committee are responsible for overseeing how the school budgets are spent and ensuring that our schools remain financially viable. At this particularly challenging period of education funding, you can be confident that our school leaders and governors are striving to secure additional finances from as many sources as possible for the benefit of our children.

We try to visit our schools as often as possible to speak to pupils and staff as well as to check site safety and record keeping.

National education policy and reform is ever-changing as governments and ministers come and go. We continue to attempt to keep up to date with the latest issues and proposals being discussed so that we can react and plan where necessary. The current government's plans to increase the number of grammar schools nationally has, I believe, been put on the back-burner somewhat whilst other more **E Urgent** matters are the subject of attention.

This year saw the biggest change in the management structure of our schools since the Federation was formed. The formation of The Dartmoor Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), in January 2018, brought 15 Devon schools together with a shared vision and common values. Our Federation is part of this Trust. The principal difference between now and this time last year is that our schools funding now comes directly from government rather than via the Local Authority and, as a result, there is now a bit more flexibility and choice in how the money is spent. This change also means that there is now an additional layer of governance at Trustee level with individuals such as Daryll Chapman and Ian Courtney, who have held important roles within the Federation in the past, now forming part of the Trustee Board and being involved in overseeing the management of the MAT as a whole. This new structure means that Federation governors are able to focus on a few more local operational issues rather than strategic ones which, in my view, makes the role more interesting and rewarding. The transition to the MAT has not been without its teething problems when it comes to some administrative functions, however, and we are grateful for our staff's patience and co-operation whilst our senior leaders work towards resolving these issues. I think it is safe to say, however, that the majority of our children will have been blissfully unaware of the change in their school's status over the past year and have instead been able to focus on continuing to enjoy their time at school and making sure that their white socks are visible beneath their turned up black school trousers.

One event that undoubtedly did have an impact on many of our students and staff members at Okehampton College in particular was the sad passing of one of our teachers, Mr Ed Davis, who will be greatly missed. We continue to wish Ed's family well and, as governors, we will ensure that we continue to treat the health and wellbeing of our staff and students as our highest priority.

There are regularly opportunities for new governors to join our federation board. Any vacancies arising will be communicated via your child's school.

The minutes of our meetings are available to view by clicking on the 'governors' tab of the Okehampton College website.

If you have any questions about any aspect of your child's schooling your first point of contact should always be with your child's class teacher, however, if you would like to contact the governing board you are welcome to do so via the Chair of Governors c/o Okehampton College.

Enjoy the summer holidays !

Regards,

Gavin Jordan

Co-opted Governor on behalf of the Governing Board of The Dartmoor Federation.