

# NKS GOVERNORS' UPDATE

Easter 2023

**Message from the Co-Chairs. Andrew Judd & Jane Burnett**

As we reach the end of term, it is worth pondering what governors have been doing since the last newsletter at Christmas.

We have continued to meet both as the full board and in committees and have spent time looking at staff wellbeing and further ways that we can continue to offer an excellent work environment for all staff.

We have also been in receipt of student questionnaires regarding diversity and have noted the excellent work the school continues to do around the theme of *'how we treat each other'*.

The Education Committee has focused on the Curriculum Review taking place across all subjects and governors have now started working with individual SLT to monitor progress with curriculum handbooks. Alongside this the committee has also been considering the results from year 11 and 13 exams and noting the plans to enable all students to achieve their very best in the summer exams.

We welcomed two new parent governors on the Education Committee this term, Charlotte Burke & Salena Hiron, both of whom have been able to get up and running very quickly because of previous/current school experience.

The Finance Committee continues to keep close tabs on the money and best value expenditure and have reviewed plans to start upgrading both Science labs and toilet blocks by the end of the academic year.

After four years of service Will Trafford has stepped down as teaching staff governor. We would like to thank him very much for all his time and commitment and, in particular, for some very insightful questioning in meetings. Marianne Highwood has agreed to continue for a second term, for which we are really grateful as Marianne brings tremendous experience in Higher Education. Following a closely fought election we welcome Beth Rowlands as the new staff governor. We also welcome James Dearden who was appointed Community Governor. They bring different skills and experiences and we look forward to working with them both.

The Governors School Lunch project has continued, and four sessions have now taken place across year 7-8 and 11-13. Governors have really valued the time spent with students and have gained valuable insight into their views on school life. The project has also helped with the aim of raising Governors' profile within the school and has given students the opportunity, in some cases for the first time, to interact directly with Governors. We look forward to meeting with years 9 & 10 next term.

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## We welcome two new Governors



### **James Dearden, Community Governor**

James started his career as a governor in 2017 at his daughters' primary school; He was motivated by an interest in my daughters' education and a desire to contribute to the school. Since then, he has found the experience enormously rewarding. "I enjoy using my professional skills to support the school and ensure that it has a long-term vision which meets the needs of the children, staff, and the local community."

James' professional career of over 20 years has been as a technology consultant working with large organisations to deliver business and technology change; This involves project management, financial control, stakeholder management and the definition of technology and corporate strategy. On a more practical level this means reviewing data, making decisions, resolving conflict, and communicating complex issues in a clear and concise manner on a daily basis.



### **Beth Rowlands, Staff Governor.**

Beth has worked at NKS since September 2019 and has been the Subject Lead for Art since September 2020. Her knowledge and experience of NKS is lifelong, with both family and friends having attended the school.

Beth is deeply passionate about continuing to support the Creative Arts subjects in the school, ensuring that they are well promoted and invested in, to secure their future legacy within both curriculum and extra-curricular enrichment. She understands on a personal level how the arts can play such a pivotal role in boosting confidence (and attainment) of those students whose social mobility may be limited due to economic inequality.

As one of the deep-dive subjects in last year's Ofsted visit, Beth wishes to further explore, share and develop best practice in preparation for future inspections and is also looking forward to working towards embedding long term strategies that secure successful futures for all the students and reaffirm the school's ethos and culture to being one that is progressive in all aspects.

**Biographies of all our governors can be found on the school website:**  
[NKS Governor Biographies](#)

## The Arts at NKS

### **By Michael-John Knatchbull, Link Governor for Creative Arts**

I have worked in creative arts all my life and believe it is a fundamental element of human life. So, it was an uplifting experience to spend time talking to staff and students; creativity is alive and well at The Norton Knatchbull across Art, Drama and Music.

On arrival in the drama studio, I was plunged straight in by Mr. Gooch with a student giving a stirring performance of a passage from Dr Faustus. Followed by year 8 all filing in through the studio door and in role as they passed the doorway.

Then to the Music department and Mr. Thomas' students learning how to play Toto's 'Africa' on newly delivered electronic keyboards. And a chance to drop in on students in two rehearsal rooms, one on electric guitars, the other on a newly acquired mixing deck.

From there to the Art department with Mrs. Rowlands to experience the newly refurbished Art department. It's barely recognisable from when I last visited before the CIF funded transformation. It's now flooded with much more natural light and feels like a place to get the creative juices flowing.

The visit ended with a round table discussion on how the school might be able to find ways to encourage the students' interest in the arts particularly given the enormous contribution our creative arts industry makes to the country's GDP.

I left the school as I always do after an immersive experience in the arts with a feeling of spiritual nourishment.

## Silver Award

**By Natalie Pearce,  
Wellbeing Link Governor**



Governors have continued to support the school with Wellbeing, spearheaded by Richard Scarr, and following on from the successful achievement of the Bronze Award in May 2022, we are delighted the school was awarded a Silver Award via the Kent and Medway Healthy Workplaces Programme in March 2023.

The Silver builds on our Bronze Award and indicates that we have put in place positive changes to be a healthy workplace.

The free programme supports businesses like ours in addressing their workplace health needs. We decided to sign up to ensure that the workplace environment is supportive for good health and wellbeing.

We have already accessed some of the support and training available to us to build on our work so far, including staff training sessions on topics such as financial health and mental health first aid.

The Silver Award certificate will be on display on our new noticeboard, but it's important to note that our commitment to health and wellbeing extends beyond the award status and that we sincerely want our staff to feel looked after and valued.

There are two further levels of the award that can be achieved: Gold and Platinum. However, next term we will be stepping away from this programme because it will no longer be available to us in Kent, but rest assured that we are committed to ensuring the workplace is healthy.

To help achieve this, the Senior Leadership Team and Governors will continue to work with staff to identify and develop their health and wellbeing priorities.

## Parent Survey

In place of the parent questionnaires which usually take place on parents' evenings, governors are launching a parent survey to take stock of parents' views of their sons' and daughters' experiences of being a student at the school.

The aim is to give governors, and the school, a chance to gauge opinion on aspects of school life. The results will be used to help us with future school development and governor monitoring plans.



**Look out for this survey coming before the Easter holidays.**