

# NKS GOVERNORS' UPDATE

Christmas 2022

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## Message from the Co-Chairs of Governors

Jane Burnett & Andrew Judd

This term we have seen the launch of the Governors Lunches. This is an opportunity for Governors to meet with Students across all year groups and explore the experiences of student life at the school.

Alongside the lunches we have held a number of committee meetings including Education to review the summer exam results and we were delighted that the school achieved its best set of GCSE and A-level results for many years. The Education Committee also elected Daisy Butler-Gallie as Vice Chair of the Committee. Daisy has been with the Governing Body for a year now and is also busy working with students on Oxbridge Interviews.

On November 11th the Governing Body all visited the school for the day. The chance to spend time looking at the variety of school life and interact with staff and students is really worthwhile. One very uplifting aspect of the day was that it was Armistice Day and, we as Co-Chairs, laid a wreath on behalf of the Governors. We were also party to the annual turning of the page of the Book of Remembrance. This book, in Reception, lists the names of all former students and staff from NKS that have died serving their country in one of the wars that we have been involved in as a country up to the current day.

We were very pleased that the Ofsted inspection report outlined the many very good points about the school, such as behaviour and the quality of teaching and staff subject knowledge. The Governors have discussed the points made in the report and the need to look carefully at Key Stage 3. We have agreed that we should move to a three-year Key Stage 3 from September 2023. The Board will work closely with the Headteacher and his team during the forthcoming months to ensure that we deliver the very best for all the students in readiness for an inspection in the next 18 months or so.

Parent Governor elections have taken place and we would like to thank parents for such great support and enthusiasm for the posts available. We welcome Salena Hiron and Charlotte Burke to the Board.

Wishing you all a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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Philip Sibbald & Andrew Judd

## **The Head Boy and Head Girl meet Governors**

By Freddie Jennings

Being appointed Head Boy at The Norton Knatchbull came as a huge honour to me and my family. The school has taught me valuable life lessons and continues to provide its students with the tools necessary to succeed. I have been handed a platform from which I can start to help present and future students on their academic path, and for that, I will forever be immensely grateful.

We have been busy implementing new initiatives and ideas throughout the school, most notably with the new mentoring system between members of the Sixth Form, who will be providing guidance for those new to the school in Year 7. One of the biggest impacts of the pandemic was the enforced segregation between year groups due to health purposes, and this meant that older and younger students were deprived of interaction. Bridging this gap has allowed us to create a stronger school spirit, and this is a principle which underlines mine and Faith's (our new Head Girl) intentions.

A Governors meeting gave us the chance to underline our goals for the academic year and we were delighted to meet the board in person. We hope that this was a worthwhile experience for the group. It would be excellent to attend further meetings in order to track our progress throughout the year, and thanks again to the board for our invitation.

Honouring the work of the last Head Boy, Thomas Staddon, has also been something prominent in our thought process. He helped to institutionalise a new school council structure which we have used to our advantage, as meetings have become more efficient and regular, so we can make a greater influence. In late September, the council decided on new house events for the next calendar year, a tribute to the late Queen as well as the allocation of different charities that we will be running fundraising events for over the different terms. The first term will be dedicated towards raising money for the local Pilgrims Hospice, whilst the second and third terms will look at CLIC Sargent and the British Red Cross respectively. The general consensus was that these institutions would contribute to our local community as much as wider society, something which the student body at Knatchbull has always prided itself on.

The key now is to build on these elements which we have laid the framework for, and we feel that by working closely with Governors, we have a genuine chance of making everlasting change at the school.

## **We welcome two new Parent Governors**



**Charlotte Burke**

Charlotte brings 10 years of experience as a primary school parent governor body, having been actively involved in two Ofsted inspections, supporting curriculum development and pupil progress. She has a son in Year 7 and has a background in festival and event management.

Charlotte believes that a vivid and inspiring education can and should open horizons for all pupils and that the whole school community can work together to achieve this.



**Salena Hiron**

Salena also has a son at the school and is a trained secondary school teacher of science and deputy head teacher at Fort Pitt Grammar School.

She has taught across a variety of settings in the Southeast and leads on quality of education, curriculum design and reporting/assessment.

Salena holds the opportunities that education provide very dear and believes that that students deserve and are entitled to the best education that the school can provide.

# Year 7 Transition

By Tom Saville

## **Extract from Governor monitoring report:**

On Governor Day Philip Sibbald and I had the opportunity to observe Year 7 students in a variety of lessons and selected Art (lesson on colour, shape and form), History (Battle of Hastings) and Computer Science (E Safety).

Having observed the lessons we then had a free hand to speak with the students and ask them about that particular subject and then more generally how they had found the transition into Year 7 during the past couple of months.

The transition from Year 6 to 7 seems to have been highly successful. As in any year, there were the usual initial reservations such as moving to a much larger school and being the youngest and smallest students again; navigating their way around the school and the volume and standard of work that would be expected of them.

There is always going to be some nervousness when starting a new school but transition staff at Norton Knatchbull are experienced and incredibly well prepared to meet the demands of each new intake. It is quite clear to see how passionate, dedicated and thorough they are about this crucial transition period.

The evidence of this approach and hard work is quite clear - the students spoken to were confident, open and honest. They seemed settled and happy and enjoying school life with all the opportunities it offered them both inside and outside the classroom. Well done all!



# Governor Day

By Daisy Butler-Gallie

On 11th November, we as Governors had the wonderful opportunity to spend the day at the school gaining insight into the day to day running of the school and to spend time understanding the thoughts and feelings of the students. It gave us a chance to see the things we cover in our meetings in practice and gather evidence around the policies we discuss.

We replicated the format of last year's highly successful day and focused primarily on spending time with the students and in class as well as looking at some of the more operational elements. The day began with a poignant Remembrance Day assembly to show the school's respect for those who gave their lives to war before heading into a range of different lessons to speak to students.

We covered a range of areas including academic subjects like Modern Languages, Science and Mathematics as well as the Student Hub and Sixth Form experience. We also looked at non-student facing elements including Staff Wellbeing and Health & Safety.

We wanted to say a massive thank you to all the students and staff who took the time to speak to us and show us what they are working on. I personally enjoyed speaking to a real range of students from Year 7 up to Year 13. Everyone that I spoke to was clear, confident, and considered in their answers.

They were a real credit to the school!



# Governor Lunches

By Philip Sibbald & Andrew Judd

Recently, the school Governors have started a new opportunity of having "Governor Lunches" with each year group. The Governing Body decided it would be a good way for pupils to get to know the Governors and to hear who they are and speak about any issues they want to raise.

On the fourth Friday of each month, eight or nine students from a set year group are selected to have lunch with the two Governors in the school Canteen. We have a set of questions tailored to each year group plus a few generic questions about safeguarding etc. Anything that the students say is treated in confidence and while we will discuss answers given at Governor Meetings, students names are not mentioned.

Since the start of the school year, we have had had two of these lunches. One in September with Year 7 and December with Year 11. I am happy to report that both lunches have been very successful, as each group of students were very open and honest about time at the school (Yr11) and how it felt to be new at NKS (Yr7).

Andrew reported that the Years 7s were very engaging and articulate. Each boy spoke about their experiences at the NKS to date. They all stated that they felt safe whilst within the school environment and that they knew how to and who to go to for help should the need arise.

Considering the short time, they had spent at the school they were all enjoying Year 7 after making the transition from Primary School.

We look forward to meeting the rest of the year groups throughout the rest of this school year.

