



Friday 2nd October 2020

Dear Parents and Friends,

On behalf of the governing body I would like to welcome all of our children back to the school, and for those children who have just joined us this year I sincerely hope they enjoy their time with us. I am proud to say we have a “good” school with a lot of potential. Our children are happy, work hard and are supported well by all staff within the school.

The new academic year is always a good time for change, with this in mind I am writing to inform you that I have elected to step down from my position on the Board of Governors. I had initially intended to step down earlier this year; however, with the rapid advancement of the Coronavirus, I agreed to stay on to ensure continuity over the initial outbreak of the crisis. I have been on the Board of Governors since 2013 and the Chair of Governors since 2014. It has been my pleasure to work with everyone to improve our school and I feel we have had a long journey over the last seven years.

Over the last seven years the school has gone through a significant amount of changes. When I first joined the Board of Governors we had a large governing body with numerous subgroups. Due to changes in national guidance in 2014 we reshaped our Governing Body and meeting structures. This resulted in significantly reducing the number of governors within the school and changing the way the Governors did business. All governors came together to make this new way of working succeed and I would like to thank them for their professionalism which continues to this day.

One of the first improvements we made to the school was the introduction of the before and after school club, which continues to be an asset to the school. I know like myself when my son attended the school, many parents use this service and their children enjoy attending. As a parent and as a Governor I am grateful for all of the hard work which has gone into making this an ongoing success.

A significant change to the school occurred when we were approached by the Local Authority to extend the school to provide more placements for children due to the increase in housing within Morton on Swale. This resulted in the new classroom for Reception/Year 1 which greatly improved our school and continues to give our children a wonderful environment to learn and grow. Again, this was an example of how school staff came together to support the development which resulted in a lot of disruption for a number of months.

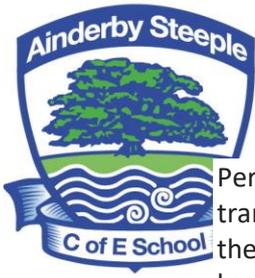
Another important developmental milestone for the school was the inclusion of the pre-school which was previously managed separately to the main school. When the Board of Governors learned that the pre-school may close, our governors were united in recognising the importance of the pre-school as a vital gateway to introduce children to school life. The pre-school allows children as young as two to build relationships with other pupils, teachers and staff. The transition to amalgamate the pre-school with the rest of the school went smoothly thanks to everyone involved and continues to be an asset.

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Perhaps the single biggest change in school which I have witnessed was the transition to an academy. When Mrs Sharp and I were initially approached about the school becoming an academy our primary concern was that we continued to have a good school. Our priority was to ensure the best for every child in school, both now and in the future. As a Board of Governors we explored many different scenarios to be sure that changing to an academy was best for the school and children. All staff and governors worked hard to make the transition a reality and to have minimal disruption on children attending the school.

Throughout all this change, we have also been subject to inspections from Ofsted and the diocese. I am pleased to say that these inspections found our school to be good identifying that “leaders have established a warm sense of community in the school which values inclusion and equality highly” and that “pupils are enthused by teaching in lessons in the wider curriculum”.

The last six months have been unprecedented in the history of the school. The outbreak of Coronavirus has placed a great strain on everyone as we have felt the full impact of lockdown and the virus on people we know and love. In rising to the challenges the lockdown has created I want to thank Mrs Sharp, all our school staff and the governors for their hard work throughout the crisis.

There will be many unforeseen challenges for the school in the future. I am confident that through the governing body and staff we have a strong team who are dedicated to the development of our children and the future of the school.

Thank you for your time and best wishes for the future.

Haydn Rees Jones

Chair of Governors
Ainderby Steeple CE Primary School

