



Emerson Park Academy

A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

ENDEAVOUR
PERSEVERE
ACHIEVE

November 2016

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Head Teacher: Mr S McGuinness

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we begin a new academic year, I thought it timely to write to parents and carers having recently been re-elected as Chair of the Governing Board and update you on the work carried out by governors over the last year, and on our future plans.

I am very much aware that the work carried out by the governing board often appears to be a bit of a mystery to many, so thought in the first instance, it would be worthwhile explaining what value the governing board work adds to our school, and why it is so important.

Governors are one of the largest volunteer forces in the country and have an important part to play in raising school standards. The role of the governing board is absolutely key to the effectiveness of a school. Time and time again Ofsted (the national inspection body for schools) has noted that the most effective schools demonstrate effective leadership and management which importantly must include the governing board at the forefront.

Strategic Leadership

School governors provide strategic leadership and accountability in schools. They appoint the headteacher and deputy headteacher. It is governors who hold the main responsibility for finance in schools, and it is governors who work with the headteacher to make the tough decisions about balancing resources.

The governing board is represented by different groups which include parents, teachers (including the headteacher) and members of the local community. The overall purpose of the board is to help the school provide the best possible education for its pupils, in order to develop every child's full potential.

Governors and trustees set the aims and objectives for the school, and set the policies and targets for achieving these goals. They then monitor and evaluate the progress the school is making towards achievement of these objectives and act as a source of challenge and support to the headteacher. The headteacher remains responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school and the implementation of the strategic framework established by the governing board.

The Past Year

Our school remains committed to our ethos and values of being fully inclusive, aspirational and community focused. As part of this commitment we are continuously looking for improvement in school performance monitoring progress for all our pupils; financial performance to ensure we



provide value for money and make the best use of the financial resources available; and for the best physical environment to stimulate the learning process.

Below I have set out some of the work and initiatives we have completed this past year in meeting our strategic aims and our key functions.

New Headteacher

One of the most important roles of a governing board is to appoint the headteacher and this became necessary this year with the retirement of Mr Walsh.

The recruitment process proved very positive with us receiving nineteen applications for the position, proving the popularity of our school within the teaching community. From these applications we invited six candidates for a two day rigorous and challenging selection process with the governing board and senior leadership team. This included a mixture of panels, examining a number of leadership and management qualities considered essential for any candidate to be considered as head of our school.

By starting this recruitment process early we were able to remove uncertainty and anxiety within the school and I was delighted to confirm the appointment of Mr McGuinness as our new Headteacher. Mr McGuinness comes to us with excellent credentials and a proven track record. The governing board are confident he will make rapid progress in improving the outcomes for our pupils and our school.

Rest assured that the governing board will continue to hold our headteacher to account by supporting and challenging Mr McGuinness throughout the academic year. Importantly this will be reinforced by specific, measureable and aspirational targets as part of his performance management criteria.

Partnerships

We were keen to explore the benefits of partnerships with other schools who shared our values with a view to improving both school and financial performance by the sharing of best practices and resources. We set up a specific working party who worked diligently and professionally to review our options both locally and within the near boroughs.

The outcome of this was an agreement in principle to enter discussions with the Brentwood Academy Trust (BAT) about joining their Multi Academy Trust (MAT). The benefits we have identified include:

- ✚ Enhancing teaching, learning and professional development through rapid access and availability to sources of excellence and specialists;
- ✚ Better curriculum and extra-curricular offer and more;
- ✚ Leadership and management improved as succession planning is enhanced by wider range of developmental opportunities;
- ✚ Economies of scale including sharing of business staff and policies/procedures, improved deployment of resources; and procurement of joint services;
- ✚ More effective governance, including comparison of schools.

The consultation communication on this initiative where your views will be most welcome is available on the Academy's website under the tab – Letters home for Parents.

Financial Performance

All schools are currently under significant financial pressure with considerable increases in costs not matched by funding. I am pleased to report that we are in good financial health and have put in place measures to ensure we maintain a contingency in our 3 year forecasts.

- ✚ We made the difficult decision to re-structure our support staff enabling budget savings from this year on, and going forward. We believe the impact on the school of making these savings will be minimal and the school will continue to operate efficiently.
- ✚ On request from the Local Authority we have also agreed to increase our published admission number (PAN) by taking on an additional 18 pupils in year 7. This will provide additional funding per pupil with a minimum impact and cost, so moving to optimising the current physical capacity of the school. Subject to consultation we may continue this PAN increase over future years so bringing in additional revenue to improve school performance.
- ✚ As standard we are provided with very little capital to improve the physical condition of our building but can apply for capital funding for specific projects where we can evidence a need and business case. We were delighted to be awarded with close to £1 million to improve our science facilities, work on which started over the summer break. We now have state of the art science facilities in which to create a stimulating learning environment for our pupils. Special thanks go to Mr Wells, our Business Manager, for his commitment in obtaining this funding and managing the resultant implementation project.

These measures together put us on a firm financial footing and in a solid position to face any financial challenges going forward.

The Future

OFSTED

First and foremost I can inform you that the school was recently inspected by OFSTED as part of the normal cycle of assessment. This was a one day inspection where the school received positive feedback and maintained its grading of GOOD. This was achieved in a much tougher assessment regime and gives the school, with our new headteacher, the perfect platform to progress and meet our aspiration of becoming an outstanding school going forward.

Progress

We believe we are in an excellent position to make rapid progress and Mr McGuinness has been active over the summer in ensuring we are fully staffed and that the recruitments made would improve the teaching and learning in the school. More investment has been made to support the core subjects of Maths, English and Science and pupils will see more curriculum time dedicated to these important disciplines.

Standards

Changes are being made to emphasise the standards we expect of teachers and pupils and Mr McGuinness has commenced this process by introducing measures to improve behaviour, discipline and homework as well as rewarding attainment and effort. We look forward to your support with these initiatives.

Building Works

The science faculty improvements will be completed this year delivering the enhanced learning experience for our pupils. We will continue to apply for more capital investment to further improve the school environment.

Multi Academy Trust

Further to our consultation with stakeholders, work with the Brentwood Academy Trust will continue so that we can deliver on the benefits this will bring. We will keep you informed of progress.

PAN

We are also in discussions with the Local Authority re further increases to our PAN. No decision will be made on this without consultation and major capital investment to improve the facilities and physical capacity of the school for the benefit of all our pupils.

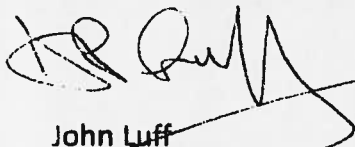
Conclusion

You can see from the above that the governing board of Emerson Park Academy are committed to the culture and ethos of this school; are committed to improve outcomes for all pupils and ensuring they leave school as well rounded individuals; and are committed to move this school to an OFSTED grading of outstanding.

Mr McGuinness will keep you informed of our progress through regular newsletters and we would encourage you to use parent view to share your opinions and help us to improve. A link to parent view is provided below:

http://emersonparkacademy.org/Parent_View

Yours sincerely,



John Luff
Chair of Governors