



MESSAGE FROM CHAIR OF GOVERNORS JANE BURNETT

Last week the Ofsted team finally arrived. I would like to thank the many parents that completed the parent questionnaire; it was extremely positive and commented upon by the inspectors with many questions achieving positive percentages way above the national average. One such question was about recommending the school to others. As parents you should be proud of the way the students presented to inspectors. The Lead Inspector referred to the students as positive ambassadors for the school. We now have a bit of a wait before the report is published, Christmas and New Year will not help this process. Once drafted, it has to go through various checks at Ofsted before publication.

The Governors have spent the past two terms working closely with the school as a critical friend. The Education, Personnel and Finance Committees meet regularly, and the School Development Plan (SDP) drives our work. Staff prepare papers for us to read prior to the meetings so that we can ask detailed questions about the work that is ongoing across the school. This enables us to monitor if the school is on target to achieve the plans it set for itself. An example of one target we are monitoring via meetings, discussions with staff and students, presentations and data is the curriculum.

The stated targets in the SDP about the curriculum are:

- Caters for all students. Ensuring that all, including disadvantaged students or students with SEND, access the full curriculum and acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life;
- Is broad and ambitious;
- Has rigour so that students learn the knowledge that they need;
- Curriculum is sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and students can work towards clearly defined end points;
- Maintains breadth of choice at both GCSE and A Level;
- Ensures progression at the end of each key stage;
- Ensures that all students read to at least age-appropriate level and fluency;
- Exhibits curriculum diversity and promotes equality;
- Students' progress, engagement and achievements are recognised and celebrated through the academic year.

The recent Governor Day is an example of such monitoring which you can read about in this newsletter, but a highlight was statement by one Sixth Form student:

***'Teachers are the best you can get – the support is amazing.
You always feel you are being pushed the right amount to achieve what you want'.***

We welcomed Carol Parsons, a Community Governor, who brings with her many years' experience of the education sector. Sadly, we are losing one of our younger governors term as a work promotion takes her abroad. Daisy Butler-Gallie has been outstanding, and we thank her for all her contributions. Indeed, we are pleased that Daisy has agreed to sit on the Academy Trust as a Member.



The school have completed the review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum and are now looking at the Key Stage 4 offer. We hope that there will be a few more subjects available for students to consider as options for the academic year 2024/5.

The upgrade of the Science and Music rooms and the revamp of the school loos during the summer has made everything much more comfortable and safer for the students. We now have an array of solar panels and air source heat pumps, as we move the school towards a greener future. In the middle of August, I really wondered if we would manage to get it all done on time. I have been pleasantly surprised how efficiently it all happened. We are extremely grateful to the site team for all the hard work to ensure that the extremely complicated alterations all happened on time and within budget.

We have continued the Friday lunches meeting students once a term. My governor colleagues have really enjoyed talking with students about life in school and have gained more detailed insight into NKS from students' perspectives.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas. The governors look forward to 2024 and continuing to work hard to achieve the very best for NKS in partnership with the staff.

GOVERNOR DAY REFLECTIONS

By **Charlotte Burke,**

Link Governor for Teaching & Learning

As governors, we have the immense privilege of supporting and challenging the school community to fulfil its potential. This bold ambition is embedded in the School Development Plan, covering the curriculum, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, as well as leadership and management. Regular visits to the school through the year allow us to talk with students and staff, prompt for improvements and celebrate success. To bring all this together, as has become tradition, an intense day in November allowed a full contingent of 14 Governors to visit the school in action. It may be known as 'Governor Day', but the focus is squarely on what we see across the school – engaged students, committed staff, refreshed facilities and equipment.

This year we explored how school policies are working in practice through lesson walkabouts and discussions with students from KS3 to Sixth Form on aligning SEND provision across the school, A Level preparation and on behaviour and attitudes. Talking with specific groups gave us the chance to focus on inclusion and to understand their sense of belonging in the school community. Exciting plans are afoot for our Creative Arts faculty and so we toured the new music facilities. We explored our enrichment, personal development and careers offers, both what we are offering and to what extent they are reaching all parts of the school community. It was also a chance to focus on staff wellbeing, student recruitment, curriculum planning and parent view survey results. Drier but just as vital, we looked at records and processes which monitor safeguarding, health and safety and GDPR compliance. And that's just before lunch.



The afternoon focused on a round table reflection on what we had observed that day, providing evidence and food for thought to drive the school development plan to its next phase. The day concluded with Governor training with an in-depth safeguarding review to ensure we are all able to fulfil our responsibilities to keep our whole community safe.

Thank you to all the staff and students as ever for making us all so welcome. It was an inspiring day and thought provoking for us all.

THE WIDER COMMUNITY

By **Philip Sibbald,**

Link Governor for Creative Arts & Careers and Trustee of the Old Ashfordians Association

I have had the pleasure of serving on the Governing Body as the Old Ashfordians Association (The School Alumni) representative for just over 18 months now and I could not be happier in this role.

I was a student at the school from 1993-1998. When I left in 1998, I joined the alumni, then eventually the committee where I served as Alumni Secretary for 8 years.

Because I am the representative of the Alumni on the governing body, I am in school on a regular basis, at the Alumni AGM this December I was elected as Engagement Secretary. This will involve working on the membership of the alumni and working very closely with Mr Greene and Mrs Vernon to increase the membership of the alumni. I have already had several meetings with Mr Greene and Mrs Vernon and the Alumni committee on how we do this, and you can expect to hear more news in Term 3. This will also include discussions with students on what they would expect from an alumni.

On behalf of the Old Ashfordians Association, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2024.

Merry Christmas!