

Special Feature OK 'Gov'!

If anyone had suggested a few years ago that I should become a school governor I would have thought they were joking, but, after reading an article in this very magazine about the Wychwood CE Primary School I was inspired to find out more. To cut a long story short I was appointed five years ago as the LEA Governor, one of a number of positions open to members of the local community who do not have children at the school.

Really Challenging

I have to admit that the first year was really challenging as the world of education is a complex, baffling bureaucracy, full of its own special jargon, especially for those of us whose only experience was as a pupil many years ago! However, the staff and other governors at the school were extremely supportive and I was encouraged to attend an induction day run by OCC which was brilliant. I met new governors from other Oxfordshire schools and realised I was not alone in feeling I had been plunged into this alien environment! There is always so much going on at school it wasn't very long until I was asked to join a committee and these smaller groups are the way to get involved in one specific area. At Wychwood we have committees for curriculum, finance, personnel and buildings/health and safety amongst others. I have served on a number of these over the years and it is where the governors can use their own work experience or background skills to help the school develop. I have been especially involved with personnel issues and have enjoyed participating in

recruiting new staff members, including teachers and administrative staff, as well as supporting the Head Teacher as he strengthened his management team. Some governors take a particular interest in a curriculum subject e.g. IT or a specific year group, and I have had particular involvement with the Foundation Stage (nursery). A few years ago we worked on a project to enlarge and upgrade the FSU building and play area. More recently we have helped to implement a new admissions policy, as required by OCC, for the nursery age children.

And Constantly Rewarding

When I look back over the last few years I realise the breadth of issues the governors have faced such as new government legislation, buildings maintenance and upkeep, combating (occasional) vandalism, technological changes, the introduction of foreign language teaching and traffic issues, to name but a few! However, the rewards are also many and it is wonderful to be shown round a freshly decorated classroom, equipped with the latest technology and bursting with art work and all the projects the children have been working on with such enthusiasm. There are also opportunities to attend special 'achievement' assemblies, open days and the ever-popular Christmas lunch.

A school is a constantly evolving and challenging place, so if you would like to be involved with such a thriving and busy community I can highly recommend becoming a school governor.

Jane McWilliam