

“Hello” from your governors



Welcome to the first edition of our new governor newsletter. One of the roles of a governor is listening to and reporting to the school’s stakeholders, including pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community. Our aim is to help you understand more about the key strategic opportunities and challenges our school faces and the work our dedicated staff and governors do behind the scenes to help the school and our pupils to thrive.

Finance, Staffing and Building Committee Update



Finances

Most of you will be aware that school budgets have come under tremendous pressure in recent years. Funding has been significantly reduced and this has forced schools across the country to make uncomfortable decisions about staffing levels and expertise, class sizes and many other running expenses such as building maintenance.

Dobcroft Junior School is no different and, unfortunately, we no longer have prior year reserve funds to tide us over. The Funding Per Pupil which DJS receives is one of the lowest rates in the Sheffield area - and this is set to reduce even further over the next two years.

Actions we have taken over the past three years have enabled DJS to move to a position where we are closer to a balanced in-year budget.

We would also like to bring your attention to recent articles in The Star (10 & 11 May 2018) which have highlighted the wider city issue of Sheffield schools being the worst funded out of all the major cities in England.

(English) Core City	Additional Funding Per Pupil (2018/19)	Additional funding for Sheffield if funded as this per pupil rate (2018/19)
Manchester	+£743	+£52.8m
Nottingham	+£589	+£41.8m
Birmingham	+£552	+£39.2m
Liverpool	+£478	+£34m
Bristol	+£175	+£12.5m
Newcastle	+£154	+£11m
Leeds	+£80	+£5.7m

Source:
Stephen Betts
Chief Executive
Learn Sheffield

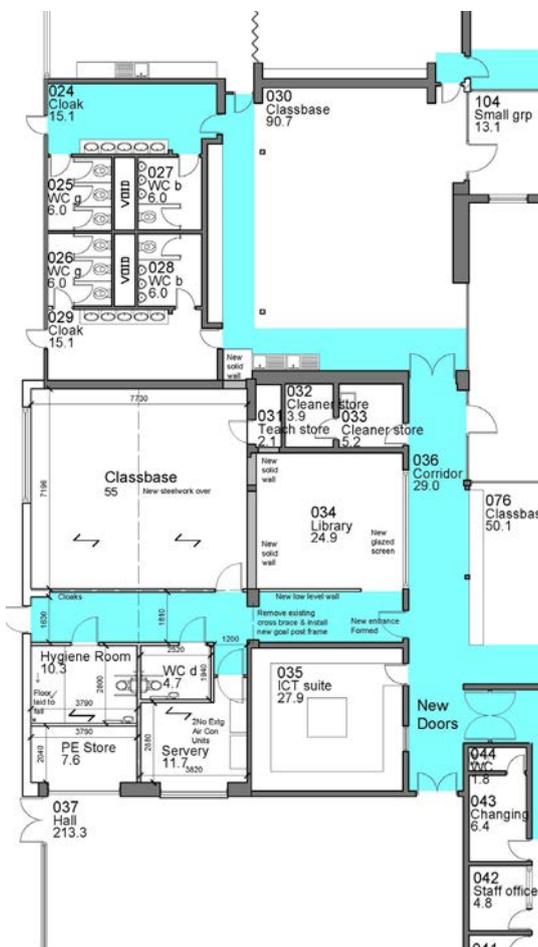
Finance, Staffing and Building Committee Update continued...

The DJS team are working incredibly hard to ensure that, despite current and planned future cuts, our pupils experience of school life remains rich and engaging. Nicola and her wonderful staff are stretching the budget in every way they can to make it cover as much as possible.

The tireless efforts by FODS (Friends of Dobcroft School – formerly PSA) have gained vital importance in this climate. It is your generosity and continued support through these fundraising events that has allowed us to provide resources such as iPads, new books and playground equipment. Thank you so much for your contributions - continuing to work together as a DJS Community will make a difference for our children.

If you have any fabulous ideas for future fundraising events, or if you can offer some time and enthusiasm to help support and run any FODS activities, please contact the team on fods.info.mail@gmail.com.

Buildings



From September we will be welcoming a fourth class into Y3 and work to build a new classroom is now under way. In addition, we have worked with the council to incorporate other essential building works into the scheme including a new servery and additional dining furniture to allow all meals to be served in the hall, and new and upgraded walls and doors within the main building to reduce noise in some classrooms and address fire safety issues.

As with most building work there will be some inevitable disruption until the end of summer but the builders will be working with the school to minimise this as much as they can. In particular, work will cease during Y6 SATS. The most significant change is the access route to DASH which is necessary to allow the builders to access the school safely and separately from parents, staff and pupils. We are also looking forward to the building team talking to the pupils about what they are doing, especially as the new extension starts to take shape.

Securing a permanent extension is great news for the school and means that we will gain a long term benefit in flexibility and space. Thank you to Nicola and the council team for their hard work in getting us this far!

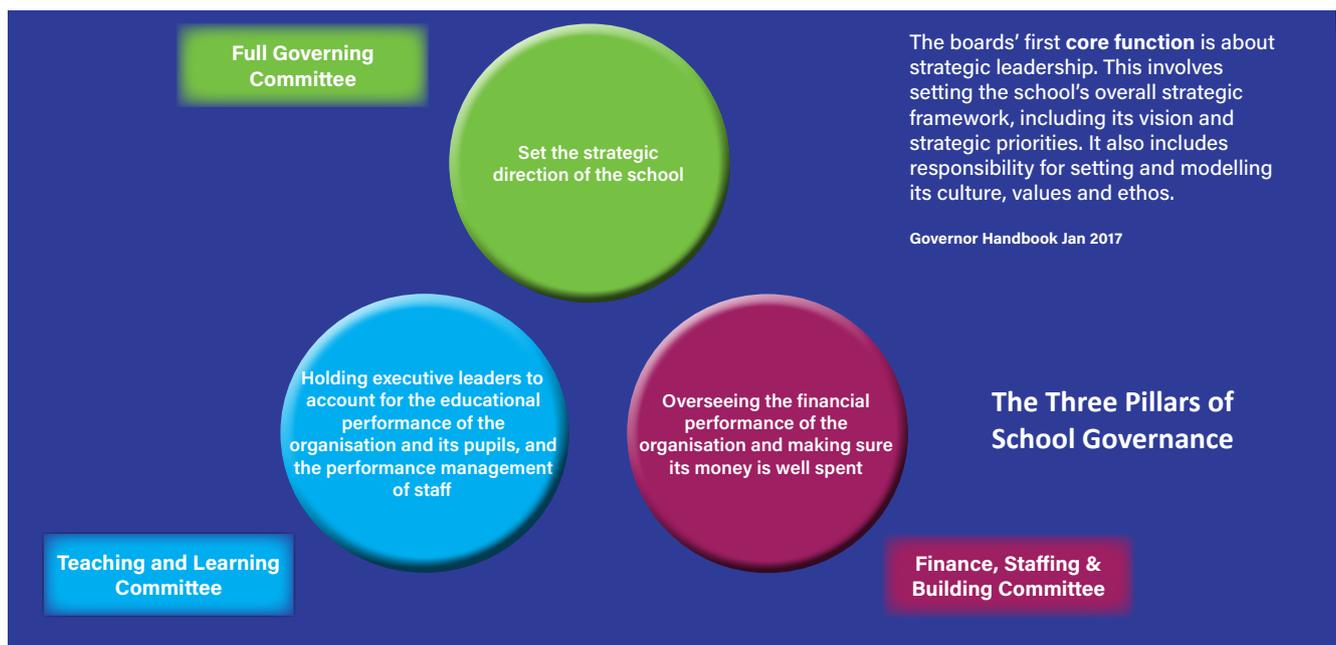
The Fascinating World of School Governance

The Governing Body is made up a variety of volunteers and staff with a broad skillset and a wealth of experience. Our governors fall into 3 categories:

- Some of the governors are elected (voted for by you) as parent representatives,
- others are asked to join (co-opted) because they have a particular strategic skill and
- the headteacher and the staff elected staff governors bring insight and knowledge about the day to day running and performance of the school

What it is not: School governance is not about the day to day operational running of the school – that is the responsibility of Mrs Sexton and her hugely capable team of staff.

What it is: School governance is about setting the strategic direction of the school and ensuring that our activities and effort are all in service of achieving strategic outcomes. To illustrate the scope of our accountability:



Academisation

One current hot topic which certainly falls into the strategic category is academisation. Academies are independent, state-funded schools, which receive their funding directly from central government, rather than through a local authority. The day-to-day running of the school is with the head teacher or principal, but they are overseen by individual charitable bodies called academy trusts and may be part of an academy chain.

These trusts and chains provide advice, support, expertise and a strategic overview. They control their own admissions process and have more freedom than other schools to innovate.

Academisation continued...

Whilst the government has relaxed its position on compulsory academisation by a set date, there is a definite shift across Sheffield schools towards this model of operating. As a Governing Body we are continually reviewing developments in this area, liaising with other local schools (including the Infants) to understand their thoughts and opinions, and considering the pro's and con's of academisation for our school.

We will have already got feedback from staff and next we want parents input to help us understand the whole school communities perspective on academisation. Watch out for the invite.

Meet the Governors – Sue Prestwood



On the Governing Body I have particular responsibility for the areas of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) and Safeguarding.

As such one main part of my role is, along with the headteacher, to keep the Governing Body informed on these matters. The other is to work with and support the headteacher and staff in ensuring that the school offers the best possible provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and that it follows best safeguarding practice in aiming to ensure the safety of all pupils. Some of the practical ways in which I have sought to do this are to meet regularly with the SENDCo Mrs Glenday (and previously Mrs Shaw), by taking part in an audit of SEN provision

and setting up an action plan, a learning walk and so on. In my safeguarding role I meet regularly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher Mrs Sexton and have played my part in completing the Annual Safeguarding Audit, verifying that the school is complying with all the required procedures, record keeping etc.

Your Governors: Contact Us

One of the key roles of the Governing Body is to listen to parents and stakeholders. If there is anything of a strategic nature you want to feed back to the Governing Body, you can let us know at email address:

governors@dobcroft-jun.sheffield.sch.uk

Regular operational correspondence should be directed to the school as normal.

Together we make a difference