

Being a School Governor – eighteen months in

By Sunil Sehgal



A couple of years ago, finding myself in my early 40s, and having spent much of my working life in the corporate world, I started to wonder whether there was something beyond the daily grind of office life. (Sound familiar anyone?) Surely there was more purpose to my life? So I went in search of opportunities to use my skills to help others rather than just focusing on finance and growth targets!

After looking into various charities and feeling a little uninspired, I asked myself, what really motivates me? I realised what I enjoy most is seeing people grow and develop, and watching my kids go through this every day, I started to look into school governance. One thing led to another and I was lucky enough to be selected as a governor at Marshgate, which I started about 18 months ago.

So did it live up to my expectations? It was certainly an eye opening experience at the beginning. I found myself working with a highly effective group of experienced individuals, all motivated by the desire to develop and help the children of Marshgate Primary School to be the best they possibly can be. Being a part of this group, with our common goal and meaningful purpose has certainly been a rewarding and humbling experience.

So what do I do as a school governor? Well, I'm a member of the Curriculum Committee, and together with my fellow governors, we review the school development plan and monitor how the school puts it into practice. I've been given the responsibility of monitoring the Maths and Assessment areas of the curriculum, and have spent time with the teacher coordinators to look at how we tackle these areas and have observed how they are practiced in the classroom.

The requirements of the national curriculum continue to increase, and what has impressed me the most is how the school has taken these challenges on, positively and proactively, and incorporated them into the everyday teaching at school. Watching the children soak it all up and developing each day is a wonderful experience.

Monitoring of progress and attainment across the school is also something I've worked on, and it's encouraging to see the rigour and discipline the school applies to ensure we consistently maintain our high standards. The proof is in the pudding of course, and the latest set of results shows we're certainly succeeding, being one of the higher performers both on a national level and within the borough.

Finally, what is the best thing about being a school governor? There are of course many, but what stands out for me are two things. Firstly, the collective focus and desire from all involved to live by the school's values: *"...an inclusive multi-cultural, multi-faith school...continually raising standards and the achievement of full potential for every child...self-respect and respect for others and their views"*. Secondly, being part of a highly engaged and effective team ranging from governors, senior leadership team and all other staff at the school. It's been a humbling experience and I'm learning more and more on this exciting journey. Being able to contribute along the way is the icing on the cake.

Whenever there are vacancies on the Marshgate Governing Board Mrs Cox notifies parents and carers via Parent Mail. I'd encourage everyone to think about whether a school governance experience is something you're interested in, and feel free to get in touch if you would like a chat.