



inspiring excellence

# Governors' Newsletter

## Vandyke Upper School

DECEMBER 2016



Mr Tim Carroll  
Headteacher



Mr David Packer  
Chair of Governors



Mrs Annabel  
Ashwell



Mrs Margaret  
Brown



Mrs Susan  
Daly



Mr Martin  
Feinhols



Mrs Ann  
Gomersall MBE



Mrs Catrin  
Green



Mr John  
Hassall



Mr Doug  
Hook



Mrs Sue  
Howley MBE



Mrs Alison  
Packer



Ms Sam  
Peplow



Mrs Ruth  
Samet



Mr Wayne  
Stiller



Mr Ron  
Turner



Ms Denise  
Yates



Mrs Barbara  
Britton

## A word from the Chair

This term is always, for governors, a 'looking back, looking forward' term. We spend time looking at the school's analysis of the 2016 exam results. They are vitally important to our students so, as you would expect, governors are very interested in them too. During the course of the school year, governors get regular updates from the school on the results that are expected. We then check that the school's students get the anticipated results. We also look carefully at how Vandyke's results compare with national performance figures. We aim for a school performance that is in the top quartile nationally; and I'm pleased to say that, once again, Vandyke students consistently delivered excellent exam outcomes.

We are looking forward with confidence to the rest of this school year. We are almost at the end of the first term

## Personnel Committee

Following the start of the new school year we have had the first of the Personnel Committee meetings for the year which consists of electing the Chair of the committee, setting out the rules under which the committee will operate and deciding the work schedule for the year including the policies we will need to review during the year.

At the end of last term, we saw the departure of several long-serving members of staff due to

and students are working well and purposefully. It's the investment of time and effort that students put in now that will bring good results later. That's equally true of the work of the Governing Body. I'm delighted that we had an excellent response to our request for people who would be interested in becoming governors. Three people replied and we will be welcoming them all to our next meeting on 12th December. I'm confident that they will enjoy their new role and will soon make a valuable contribution to our work.

Also looking forward, the multi-academy trust application is making good progress. Vandyke, Gilbert Inglefield and Brooklands are working together to make steady improvements. I'm using the word 'steady' quite deliberately, because

retirement; their contribution to the school was certainly valued and will be missed. We wish them well.

However we have been successful in recruiting personnel who are very capable and will bring a new enthusiasm to the development of the students at Vandyke. We welcome them and look forward to their contribution to the success of the school.

Last year was a difficult year because of the need to examine the staffing

that's what to expect. The trust is not a 'magic wand' that will overnight make everything better. It's about the patient accumulation of success, leading to long-term improvement. That's what we all want for the town's young people and that is the trust's aim. The trust now has a name – the **Ouzel Learning Trust**. Local consultation has started and the first submission of the necessary paperwork has been made to the Regional Schools Commissioner. We expect that the submission will go back and forth a number of times, clarifying the details, until everyone is satisfied. We are still on target for creation of the trust in 2017. I expect to have more detailed news in the next governors' newsletter, but am confident of a good result for Vandyke and its partner schools.

**David Packer**  
Chair of Governors

structure for the school due to the shortfall in our funding and the school's need to work in a financially prudent manner. The restructuring was completed with the minimum disruption, thanks to the understanding of the staff, but has placed an additional burden on senior staff. The new staffing structure will be reviewed during the year, to ensure it is operating as intended.

**Ronald Turner**  
Chair, Personnel  
Committee

## GOVERNORS

### Headteacher

Mr Tim Carroll

### Co-opted Governors

Mr David Packer  
*(Chair of Full Governing Body and Chair of Finance and Resources Committee)*  
Mrs Margaret Brown  
Mrs Ann Gomersall MBE  
*(Chair of Admissions Committee)*  
Mr John Hassall  
Mrs Sue Howley MBE  
Mrs Alison Packer  
Mrs Nikki Tooman  
Mr Ronald Turner  
*(Chair of Personnel Committee & Responsible Governor - Finance)*  
Ms Denise Yates

### Parent Governors

Mrs Annabel Ashwell  
*(Chair of Learning & Achievement Committee)*  
Mrs Susan Daly  
Mr Martin Feinhols  
Mr Iain Holloway-McLean  
Mr Doug Hook  
Mr Ian Sandiford  
Mr Wayne Stiller

### Staff Governors

Mrs Catrin Green  
Mrs Ruth Samet  
Ms Sam Peplow

### Clerk to the Governing Body

Mrs Barbara Britton

All Governors can be contacted through the Clerk at the school on 01525 636700 or email [brittonb@vandyke.cbeds.co.uk](mailto:brittonb@vandyke.cbeds.co.uk)

## Governor Visits

One of the most enjoyable aspects of being a school governor is the opportunity to visit the school during the working day – to see the school in action and to talk to students and staff about the school's work. All governors try to come into school at least once each term and always with a particular aspect to explore.

This term I've had two fascinating meetings with members of staff. As governor link for Achievement and Inclusion, I was keen to catch up with **Mrs Beckwith** who has, this term, taken on the role of SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator). Mrs Beckwith is very excited about this new role, for which she has been preparing over the past year by taking a Master's degree module for SENCos. She talked me through her plans for developing the work of the Achievement & Inclusion (A&I) Department and for ensuring that everybody gets the very best opportunities, no matter what their ability, background or circumstances. She is delighted to be working with her team and, in particular, her new Assistant SENCo, **Mrs Yeoman**, who joined the school in September and is already making a positive impact.

Having been intrigued by conversations in school around 'Growth Mindset', over the Summer break I read the book by Professor

Carol Dweck. I was keen to learn more about how the school plans to embed this inspiring approach in its ethos and practice, so a meeting with **Mrs Quinn**, who is leading this initiative, was arranged.

Briefly: a person with a Fixed Mindset believes that intelligence or talent is fixed and failure confirms the person's limitations. He/she believes that the need to work hard to learn something is confirmation that intelligence is lacking. He/she believes that it's too risky to take on challenges, as they may lead to failure. A person with a Growth Mindset believes that intelligence or capability can be developed through hard work and learning from mistakes – challenges and risk taking are relished as part of this process. Mrs Quinn explained to me the work the school is doing to take this forward with students, staff and parents/carers, to help students develop a growth mindset and the resilience needed to overcome setbacks and to see challenges as opportunities to learn and improve.

A further intriguing opportunity to spend time in school came just before half-term. Together with three of my fellow governors, I was delighted to be invited to sit in on one of the Student Voice Forum meetings. Some 40 or more student representatives of Years 9, 10 and 11 tutor groups



gathered in the Theatre to raise and discuss with **Mr Carroll** concerns which had been put to them. Issues raised ranged from practical situations around the school buildings, to processes for recognising hard work. I was most impressed by the articulate and confident way in which the young people spoke – some of whom had only been in the school for a few weeks. Mr Carroll very much values these opportunities to hear the views of the students, to explain practicalities and to explore solutions with them.

**Alison Packer**  
Governor

