



GOVERNOR NEWSLETTER January 2024



Miss Louise Mcleod
Executive Head Teacher



Mr Holden Cooke
Chair of Governors



Drake Primary

Nestled in the leafy fringes of Thetford Forest, Drake School is the academic hub for over 420 eager minds. This school is a real trailblazer, with the prestigious Platinum Artsmark - a glistening feather in its cap. Notably, it's the only school in all of Norfolk to wear this shiny crown.



Wicklewood Primary and Nursery

Set in rolling farmland near the busy market town of Wymondham and the site of an ancient Roman temple, Wicklewood retains its rural, close-knit farming traditions as well as hosting a community employed at the forefront of health and scientific research and small business.



Little Pirates Childcare

This nursery has been serving the community at Drake Primary for 20 years. They are a hero for families, offering top-notch childcare services for little ones aged two to four years old.

FEDERATION NEWS

Welcome from the Chair

I would like to welcome you to our first Halcyon Federation Governor's newsletter.

I think that it is very important that parents get to hear from the school governors in addition to the ongoing communications you already receive from the school.

As school governors, we are here to support the Senior Leadership teams at both schools and hold the Federation to account at all times. Hopefully, you will be heartened by what you read but I can assure you that there is no complacency at either school. Although progress at both schools has been demonstrably impressive, everybody is fully aware that the hard work needs to continue daily.

Since 19th October there have been three Full Governor Board meetings, a Head Teacher's Performance Review, a school improvement board meeting and two Local Authority School Improvement Reviews commissioned by Children's Services. This is in addition to regular meetings with the Executive Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership teams at both schools.

I was able to attend the Wicklewood Primary School carol concert held at the extraordinary Wymondham Abbey. What an incredible and enriching experience for the pupils and it was obvious that they loved being there. Given the limited time that staff and pupils had to prepare for the performance, the result was nothing short of spectacular. It was also great to see so many family members supporting their children and it was literally standing room only.

We have recently received formal feedback from Local Authority School Improvement Reviews commissioned by Children's Services, and I wanted to share some of the key findings at both schools, this can be found below.

On behalf of myself and the Governing Board may I wish you and your family a very happy and prosperous new year.

FEDERATION NEWS

Wicklewood Primary School

- *Rapid improvement has been secured by the very strong new leadership team and through the supportive federation with Drake Primary. Leaders have been well supported by the local authority which, through the lead officer, has been a key player in recent school improvement.*
- *The new leadership team is having a very positive effect on the work of the school and works together extremely well. They have been relentless in their drive for school improvement. They have very high aspirations for the school and its community. They have worked hard to improve provision for pupils quickly. From greatly improving the school environment/accommodation, to the support and challenge offered to teachers, the impact of the new leadership team has been immense.*
- *There is no complacency. Leaders are pleased with what they have already achieved and know what they still need to focus on. This commitment to improvement is shared by staff who have bought into what the leadership team is striving to achieve.*
- *The atmosphere in school and the quality of teaching is transformed. Staff have been working very hard to make the right improvements.*
- *The inspirational executive headteacher does not willingly accept second best. She is supported extremely well by the head of school and the deputy headteacher. Their high expectations have been communicated successfully to staff.*
- *There is a good sense of teamwork across the school and staff are willingly embracing change and challenge.*
- *Teaching is greatly improved since the last local authority review. Staff have excellent relationships with their pupils and manage behaviour well.*
- *Consequently, pupils' progress is accelerating across the school.*
- *Subject leaders are keen and enthusiastic. Since the last review, they have been enabled to play a much greater part in driving school improvement. They are knowledgeable about their subjects and know where improvement is still needed.*
- *Pupils are good ambassadors for the school. They are keen to learn and behave well. They keenly take responsibility and do their best to look after each other. They are especially positive about the thoughtful way that staff are now using visits to enrich the curriculum. Outdoor learning in the Forest School is also greatly enjoyed.*

FEDERATION NEWS

Drake Primary School

- *This is a school that has successfully placed itself at the heart of the community. There is a strong determination from all staff to ensure that all pupils flourish both socially and academically.*
- *School improvement has been very well led by the executive headteacher and her leadership team. Together, they are determined to make a difference for the pupils and their families.*
- *There is a good sense of teamwork across the school. Staff willingly embrace change and challenge. This means that there is a good capacity for further improvement.*
- *Leaders, including subject leaders, have a very good understanding of the next steps because they monitor provision very effectively. They communicate their high expectations to staff and have established a culture where second-best is not good enough.*
- *The pupils are brilliant ambassadors for the school. They are extremely well behaved and thoroughly enjoy school. They say that work is fun, and they are keen to do well. They take good care of each other and support their classmates, including those from the SRB, sensitively in lessons.*
- *The curriculum is enriched extraordinarily well by a good number of 'beyond the classroom' activities that are closely linked to pupils' learning in class. These are greatly enjoyed by pupils and provide them with many memorable experiences.*
- *The school has a very strong pastoral support team. Staff are watchful for pupils who may be struggling at home or at school and quickly give the right kind of support when it is needed.*
- *Staff model core values in their interactions with each other and pupils. Consequently, pupils learn to be kind, tolerant and respectful. The school is a happy place to work or learn in.*
- *Leaders have established clear school values and make sure that these are reflected in all the school's work. Staff willingly go the extra mile to make school fun and learning is supported well by numerous out-of-class activities. Of particular value are links with outside schools, businesses, or agencies. These support very effectively the school's work to raise the aspirations of pupils and to help them to understand that the sky is the limit if they work hard.*
- *The school provides pupils with many unusual experiences that go far beyond what is typically seen in primary schools. For example, there is a broadcasted school radio.*

FEDERATION GOVERNING BOARD



Mr Holden Cooke
Chair of Governors

I was very humbled to be selected as Chair of the Halcyon Federation governing board. These are exciting times and I am keen to work collaboratively with each school to ensure that we provide the best learning opportunities for children to achieve their potential. The role of Chair is varied and includes ensuring that the senior leadership teams at each school receive sufficient support as well as constructively challenging them to ensure that they remain fully accountable at all times.

I currently run a sustainability business and have previously managed several Suffolk based organisations and charities as well as working as an Independent Member for Suffolk Police Authority for 8 years.

In addition to being chair of Governors I also oversee finance and staff wellbeing for the Federation



Tamsin Robertson
Vice-Chair of Governors

I have lived in Wymondham since 2014 and am one of the elected parent Governors for the Halcyon Federation. I am a complex needs teacher, working in education since 2008, and have two children at Wicklewood Primary School and Nursery. When out of school, I love camping and being outdoors.

I am thrilled to support Wicklewood and Drake on their next steps as a Federation.

In addition to being the vice-chair of Governors, I also oversee SEND including SRB and the mathematics curriculum for the Federation



Jade Gooch
Parent Governor

I am a parent governor for The Halcyon Federation. I have a child in Reception at Drake Primary School, with two more children joining the school in September 2024. I have worked in Primary Education for the last 12 years. In this time, I have gained a wealth of experience that I bring to my role as a Governor.

As a Governor I oversee Safeguarding, Attendance, Children In Care, the English curriculum and Pupil Premium for the Federation.

FEDERATION GOVERNING BOARD



Jammarr Prince
Co-Opted Governor

I am a co-opted governor for The Halcyon Federation and I was the previous Co-Chair of Governors at Drake Primary School. I have worked within procurement for the past 30 years and look to support the Federation via the governing board. As a governor I oversee cyber security, GDPR, net-zero and website compliance for the Federation.



Jonathan Holdcroft
Co-Opted Governor

I'm pleased to be a co-opted governor of Halcyon Federation. Having previously served as a parent governor, I want to continue working to support both schools and the families and children they serve. As a governor I oversee EYFS and the Nurseries for the Federation



Samantha Chapman
Staff Governor

I am a staff governor for the Federation. I have worked at Drake for 11 years and have been the Staff Governor for 5 years. As a Governor I oversee Health and Safety, CPD and Training for the Federation

Ricky O'Connor
Co-Opted Governor

As a co-opted governor I oversee curriculum, performing arts, science and Sports Premium for the Federation.