

**Moorlands Schools Federation**



**Moorlands Schools Federation  
Governing Body**

**Annual Report  
2014-15**

This school year has felt like one of the busiest in a long time! The Governors are really pleased to have this opportunity to stop and reflect on everything that has been achieved in the last 12 months.

Once again, the Governors of the Federation have been privileged to work alongside the team who deliver learning to your children. It is very hard to express in words how lucky we feel to be able to work with these children and see their learning develop. The ever-increasingly creative array of homework throughout the school is just one cause of many governor smiles when we move around the Federation on our business.



We know that behind the children are a large community of very supportive and dedicated parents and we are grateful for this opportunity to thank you for everything you do. We hugely value the contribution you make and look forward to moving this on further next year.

## **2014 – 15 Achievements**

### **1. School Improvement**

It is probably no surprise to any of you that the Governors of the Federation consider this year to have been a significant success in terms of Ofsted Inspections! Achieving very solid “Good” ratings from Ofsted for both the infant and junior schools, in the context of the increasingly challenging inspection framework, the financial position we have been facing and the timescales involved is a massive achievement for everyone that has been involved. The inspection processes not only confirmed the vast improvement in the learning now taking place at Moorlands, but also validated the School Leaders processes for monitoring quality of education and demonstrating how well they know the strengths and weaknesses at the time of the inspection.

Ofsted inspectors are required to focus on ensuring that all pupils achieve their full potential, regardless of background, as schools are required to “Narrow the Gap” between children from less advantaged backgrounds and their peers. Governors and Leaders are thrilled that this was noted by Ofsted as a success and thank all the staff for their work on this area and congratulate our Inclusion leader, Mrs Grafton, for her continual recognition in the wider community for delivering provision of an exceptional quality in the areas of inclusion and special educational needs. Federation staff have also been moderated on a number of their processes this year: SATs administration, SATs assessment and Early Years Provision. The external review reports have been shared with Governors and it is clear that Moorlands is becoming a leading force in the learning provision available to children across B&NES.

### **2. Write 4 Moorlands**

The decision to invest in developing our own teaching curriculum for writing has been one of the greatest successes of Moorlands Schools Federation. The commitment shown by Miss Ennew, Mrs Bamber and Mrs Amato to the children in doing this has been truly inspirational and we are thankful to them for that. Truly understanding how our children

learn, it became clear to these skilled professionals that the teaching curriculums for writing that were available “off the shelf” weren’t good enough and they knew they could do it better. The impact on the learning behaviours in writing and literacy was immediate.

The interactive, visual and team approach to addressing each learning journey has truly lifted the children’s motivation and they are now all so engaged with their writing, it is a joy to see. Write 4 Moorlands has been designed to fit in with the new National Curriculum ensuring the children are consistently applying their learning in new styles and taking more responsibility for their development and were pleased this has been validated by the Local Authority and Ofsted.



### 3. Learning

One of the key roles of governance is to ‘Hold the School Leaders to account for the Educational Performance of the school’ and, in doing this, we have been able to oversee processes for recruiting staff, monitoring performance of teaching for learning, pupil progress meetings, teachers planning, SATs procedures, phase leader meetings, reports from external advisors ... the list seems endless sometimes! One thing that has become increasingly apparent in all of our monitoring activity is the standard of professionalism of our teaching staff – they are all dedicated to learning from each other, hearing feedback and growing to ensure that the best learning is delivered to all of your children.

SATs results have, once again, shown improved successes for Moorlands children who have inspired us with their commitment to learning and determination to succeed. Children who have not been sitting the formal tests have also risen to the challenges of the new national curriculum with energy and interest. To move from a curriculum that teaches skills in a very linear, progressive manner to one in which a number of skills are learned, then applied in many different ways to demonstrate they have been mastered is a big step for children and they have embraced it.

### 4. Building Our Team

Inducting 8 new teachers across the Federation in one year was a huge task, but everyone has taken our new staff to the heart of the Moorlands family and the impact that is having on the learning being delivered to our children.



Sports Day in April was a real example of how the new members of staff have integrated seamlessly into the existing team and the sense of fun now felt by all at the Federation. We have significant strength and depth of skills and experience across our team that really enriches the learning offer available to the children at Moorlands. We would also like to congratulate Miss Godfrey and Mrs Woolley on their appointment to the leadership team and very much look forward to working with them.

In addition to new staff, this year has seen a number of changes in governor membership. Four new governors have joined us during this year and they have already made their mark on our work – we are very pleased that Jon, Sam, Simon and Lou have brought their skills and energies to our table as we continue our work in moving the Federation forward.

Of course, it is great to feel these successes internally but to have them recognised publicly is always something very special. In June, the Local Authority awarded the Whole Staff Team at the Federation for going “Above and Beyond” over the last few years as the schools have been brought together along this journey of school improvement. This acknowledges what the Governors and Leaders at Moorlands already know – it takes everyone pulling together, no matter what their contribution, to achieve the recent successes felt at the Federation. We are so proud of everyone at the Federation in their continual commitment to providing continually improving outcomes for the children.

## **2014-15 Challenges**

### **1. Curriculum & Policy Changes**

Schools have dealt with an unprecedented level of change this year with the introduction of the new curriculum, abolition of the old ways of assessing (the levels you will have been used to) and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reform. Central Government gave schools 2 years from September 2014 to embed the new curriculum and we are delighted with how far Moorlands has come in that process by this halfway point.

For next academic year, we need to further develop our staff’s knowledge and understanding of how best to use the new curriculum to the benefit of all children at all times. A key component of this will be taking forward our Assessment for Learning (AfL) procedures, which Miss Ennew is leading on, in consultation with our South Bath school colleagues. Teaching staff monitor the learning of every child whilst they are at school, so that they can identify the next steps and monitor their progress; AfL ensures the teaching is always responding to the needs of the children.



We have invested in a pupil tracker system which we will be using from September which will assist the teachers in recording this information in a format that will not only provide them with immediately useful information, but will also translate this data into reports for leaders, governors and parents; we look forward to sharing more details of this with you throughout next year.

Mrs Grafton has had a significant challenge this year ensuring the Federation adapts to the changes required by the SEND reforms; Statements will be phased out and replaced by Education Health Care Plans to ensure better multi-agency support for our most vulnerable children. Mrs Grafton is very committed to multi-agency working and so has risen admirably to the challenge, we are assured continually by outside agencies that our SEND children are given best practice support, both in their classroom provision and the surrounding paperwork and multi-agency meetings. This year has also seen a marked rise of children with English as an additional language in our skills and our staff are doing a great job of developing the necessary expertise to ensure their needs are met, again with no additional financial resource from the government.

## 2. Financial Challenges

The Governors of the Federation feel it is important to be very open with the community over the financial pressure that we face as a LA Maintained school in 2015. Even if the schools were fully subscribed, the money received from central government via the Local Authority is continuing to reduce year on year, whilst we still have to deliver the same quality of learning, maintain our site and buildings and provide for our staff's professional development. We continue to be inspired by the creativity of our staff in providing improving learning with reduced funds and are grateful to them, and you as parents, for your continuing support in this area.



We would also like to recognise the significant commitment of our maintenance team in keeping the buildings and grounds safe and fit for use. Our caretaking team respond to increasing demands of our old buildings and large grounds swiftly and with enthusiasm for their work – we honestly do not know what we would do without them. Thank you Messrs Moore, Pope and Taylor for everything you do to keep our staff, children and families safe and comfortable.

Of course, this funding situation means we become increasingly grateful for the contribution of the PTA in raising the funds that can be used to enrich our children's learning along the way. Without them this year, we wouldn't have experienced our first ever Moorlands Literature Festival! We hope you agree that this was a phenomenal success and that each child treasures their copy of the "The Chronicles of Moorlands". The Governors are looking at how we can make sure this is shared more widely into the community as we feel it is a fantastic example of the "Great Learning, Great Teaching, Great Fun" we strive for across the Federation.

## 3. Changing landscape of education

Recent political changes will, of course, impact on education provision across England and Wales. The Local Authority has made it clear that their role will continue to reduce as they focus on school improvement in those schools that need the support, and their involvement in school management and organisation decreases. Schools are expected to work together to provide support and development as they become increasingly autonomous.



The changes in funding to Local Authority Education departments and the increase of the roles of Regional School Commissioners are starting to impact on maintained schools, particularly those who have been judged by Ofsted to be "Good" or "Outstanding". It is expected that the schools in a stronger position will provide support to schools who need to improve and we are already seeing requests from other schools to share our practice

and learn from our recent experience of rapid school improvement. We very much enjoy these opportunities to work more closely with other schools in B&NES but it does impact on our already stretched resources. Governors and School Leaders are looking at the best ways of securing the future of our Federation in this climate and will keep you informed as this work progresses next year.

## **2015-16 Opportunities and Looking Ahead**

### **1. Embedding further our successes**

For the Leaders of the Federation, the shift in Ofsted rating from Requires Improvement to Good and responding to the next steps set out by the Inspectors gives us the opportunity to decrease the pace of school improvement to a degree, and take some time to really embed the changes and reflect on their successes or areas for change. You will appreciate however that the Government has no interest in allowing schools to stand still, as recent announcements make it clear that schools considered to be “coasting” will be put under significant scrutiny and pressure to consider alternative structures. However, with a view to building on successes and enable deeper focus on areas such as parent partnership, the Leaders and Governors have agreed to a 2-year school development plan, rather than a 1-year plan, from September 2015 to give staff more time to reflect and grow, and respond to the learning needs of the children.



One key element for the Governors will be strengthening the messages about Moorlands that are available in the wider community. We are very, very grateful for all the support that we know you parents and carers give to the Federation – we are feeling the impact of that as we interact with staff and governors from other schools, as well as in our personal experience as parents.

We have once again been absolutely delighted with the impact of events such as the Female and Fathers’ Fridays and the Summer Celebration and Camp Out – we hope you have also experienced the same lift in spirits we are all now feeling.

### **2. Finalising new National Curriculum and Assessment for Learning**

September sees the start of the second half of our timeframe to get the new National Curriculum embedded and establish our Assessment for Learning processes across the Federation. Whilst the teaching staff are getting to grips with this, our Leaders are working closely with them to identify the areas that are not working as well as others and finding the right resolution for those.



The introduction of the School Pupil Tracker across the Federation in September is going to be a significant task for Miss Ennew and the Phase Leaders as teachers are trained in its use to ensure we get the best out of the system for the children. We are really looking forward to sharing the reports from this system with you as the year goes on.

Responding to the recently carried out parent questionnaire, the Governors will arrange for more information evenings on the new National Curriculum and changes in assessment so that we can be confident we have given you all as much information as possible to help you understand the changes and how you can best support your children. The Leaders also have some very exciting plans ahead for improving parent partnerships across the Federation, which will be shared with you early next year.

### 3. Our Vision

The Governors of the Federation remain strong in our ambition for the future of the Federation as we look at how we can build on the strong foundations that have been put in place over the last few years. We continue to seek a strategic resolution to the challenges we face with our buildings and our variable intake numbers, so that we can ensure a more stable financial future from which to deliver improved learning for our children.

This year, we have looked again at the vision statements for the Federation to ensure our focus remains on the children and to embrace the partnership working that schools are required to adopt. We are proud of the following vision and mission statements.

*“Learning to be the best we can be”  
through  
“Great Learning, Great Teaching, Great Fun”  
while  
“Making People Feel Good”  
so that we provide  
“Always improving outcomes, high quality education that ensures every child matters”*

### 4. Our Children

The children are the lifeblood of any school and the Governors strive to keep them at the centre of all the work we carry out at the Federation. The Governors are keen to really engage with the children at the school next year – we haven’t achieved this to the degree we had hoped this year and we have heard from parent questionnaire feedback that this is not considered to be one of our strongest areas. Governors and Leaders at the school continually receive amazing feedback from other organisations on our pupils – they are the ultimate ambassadors for everything that happens here at Moorlands and we are very, very proud of them.



Governors have recently experienced life at both ends of the Federation – the awesome Y6 production of “Oliver!” and celebrating with these children at their Leaving Assembly, and our Stay and Play sessions and Teddy’s Bear Picnic with the youngest children joining us in September. To see the excitement and joy on their faces as they experience Moorlands for the first or last time is a true reminder of why we govern at the Federation – having the honour of being involved, to whatever degree, in the lives of these wonderful children.

As we draw to an end, we have to say goodbye to some valued members of the Moorlands Team: Mr Griffiths, Miss Simawi, Miss Swallow, Miss Reason – your contribution has been significant, thank you and we wish you the best for the next stages of your life. We also thank Mrs Bamber for her long-standing association with the Federation and look forward to the future generations of teachers who have been guided by her in her new role.

And while we are saying thank there are a few others: governors, school leaders, teachers, learning support assistants, playleaders, SMSAs, caretakers, the office team, cleaners, cooks, music teachers, club leaders, volunteers, external advisors, consultants - you truly have gone “Above and Beyond” this year and we cannot wait to get back in September and work with you again.

We have to thank our PTA Chair, Roisin Davison, and her amazing team – you have truly made a difference this year. As have the huge amount of parents who have willingly given up their time to come in and help out – hearing children read, manning cake sale stalls or helping out on school trips, without you the children’s experiences would not be so rich and varied, thank you.

The Governors would like to pay tribute to the passion and commitment of the Leaders at the school (Mrs Lowe, Mrs Amato, Mrs Bamber, Mrs Bedding) – they have, once again, faced every challenge with good humour and kept the children at the forefront of everything they do. And holding it all together have been Mrs Griffin-Felton, Miss Ennew and Mrs Grafton as they continue to drive these schools forward – your energies continue to inspire us all.

But most importantly, thank you to all of you parents and carers and your families for the support and trust to give to us as we educate your wonderful children. We are really excited about starting the next academic year without the imminent arrival of the inspection team and this giving us the time to grow more organically as a Federation. Have a wonderful summer break and we look forward to welcoming you all back in September.

The Governing Body of Moorlands Schools Federation  
July 2015