




12th September 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back to the new school year at Maltby Redwood Academy. Let's all hope that this coming year can be a little more settled and whilst constantly alert to the risk of infection, that we can keep the impact of Covid on our children's education to a minimum. There are a number of new faces who have joined *#Team Redwood* at the start of this school year and I am sure you will get a chance to meet them soon. I am sure they will be receiving the same warm welcome that I have received.

So, firstly, I need to introduce myself to you as your new Chair of Governors. Paul Martin, who stepped down as Chair at the end of last term, had made a huge contribution to Redwood and to Maltby Learning Trust and I know he will be very much missed by many people associated with Redwood and Maltby community. When I was asked by the Trust to become Chair I was delighted to accept. Around 2010, I had worked very closely with the then governors and staff at Redwood to support its improvement journey and was very pleased to be able to reacquaint myself with the school, although there are of course, many new faces and people to get to know! Although I have been retired for a little while now, I am just as passionate about ensuring that learners of all ages have the very best educational provision and to support this, I have been a National Leader of Governance and chaired the governing bodies of three schools. I have three grown up children and am a proud grandma too! Previously, I have been a Headteacher, Ofsted inspector and Senior School Improvement Adviser, so hope you feel I can bring a range of useful experiences to this important role.

Arriving as a new chair of governors and at the start of a new school year, it seems like a good time for us all to remind ourselves of the three core functions of every Local Governance Committee (LGC) which are:

-  *To ensure the clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school*
-  *To hold leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff*
-  *To oversee the financial performance of the school, making sure its money is well spent*

These sound very 'grand' but essentially, governance is about being *Strategic* rather than *Operational* and does include some duties placed on all schools by law. So, whilst we will all be very interested in what happens at Redwood, getting involved in the way the school operates day to day is not our role as governors. To fulfil this strategic role, the LGC for example, approves the priorities for improvement each year; receives reports from senior leaders and from external partners to check on progress; oversees how the budget is allocated and above all, focuses on the *impact* that the school is having on the performance of all our children. Governors will offer support and encouragement, but importantly, they will also ask many challenging and searching questions of staff to ensure that Redwood can be the best it can be and ensure that 'Every Child an Achiever' is not just Redwood's mission but is a reality!



The LGC operates as a *team* because governance is a *corporate* task, so this means that no governor acts alone in any aspect of our work. Because some governors are elected by different stakeholder groups, for example parents/carers and staff, it is really easy to confuse this with 'elected representatives' in local and national government. Governance of a school like Redwood is shared between the Trust and the LGC but its members are *not* representatives of any group. Governors are elected or appointed by the Trust, to see their school '*through the eyes*' of different stakeholders, not to represent their views or act on behalf of an individual parent or member of staff.

I strongly believe it is important that the LGC communicates directly with you to hear your views, to tell you about our meetings and the kinds of issues we have been discussing, so I'll be writing to you again from time to time. However, it is important to say that no correspondence between LGC and yourselves, ever replaces the regular communication you will have with Redwood staff. This will be through newsletters, parent/teacher discussion evenings, DoJo and speaking with Mrs O'Connor, who I ask you to contact directly if you have something you would like to discuss.

I am sure that you will have been made aware before of the LGC's key roles - *what governance is*, and importantly, *what it isn't*, but hope you find it helpful to revisit this as we begin what I hope will be a very successful year ahead at Redwood.

I do hope you, your families and friends keep safe and well as sadly, despite everyone's best efforts, we all have to face up to the fact that Covid is pretty much here to stay and isn't going to go away any time soon. Maltby Learning Trust and its schools including Redwood, will continue to closely follow the national and local public health guidance over the coming year. Whilst none of us would wish schools to have to adhere to continued restrictions, I for one, sincerely hope that all schools will be able to enjoy increasingly 'normal' provision in the year ahead. I will certainly look forward to meeting some of you over the course of the year and sincerely hope that we can all work together to provide the very best for our children at Redwood.

With best wishes

Liz Buxton

Mrs E M Buxton
Chair of the Local Governance Committee

