



## Local Governance Committee NEWSLETTER for Parents and Carers February 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

Governors are delighted to inform you that we have recently welcomed some new members to our Local Governance Committee (LGC). **Lauren Blackett** joins as a new Parent Governor for Maltby Redwood. **Kirsty Pearson** joins us as a Community Governor and **Joanne Munday** as an Additional Governor. A further Community Governor vacancy is currently being filled. It is so pleasing that these new members have volunteered for the important public service role of governance. All our new governors are bringing a wealth of varied experiences to our work. Parent and staff governors do not represent other parents or staff, but contribute to discussions '*through the eyes of a parent or member of staff*'. We all hope new governors enjoy being a part of Maltby Redwood and Ravenfield Local Governance Committee.

### WHAT DO GOVERNORS DO?

Governors have continued to meet regularly throughout the year and receive regular and very detailed reports from the Principal Mrs Berry. We always look forward to hearing about the many exceptional experiences that are being provided for Maltby Redwood learners and the progress the children are making. We do not discuss individual children but receive data and other reports on many aspects of school life enabling us to judge the progress being made towards targets. Seeing for ourselves through visits and through hearing from the staff, we consider the impact of work to address the areas identified for continued improvement.

Governors usually meet eight times a year and also attend training events which bring together governors across Maltby Learning Trust (MLT). Termly LGC meetings focus particularly on statutorily required items across both Redwood and Ravenfield academies. Other Raising Attainment and Curriculum (RAC) meetings focus on one or the other school. The programme of work for meetings is guided by MLT, to ensure there is a consistent approach all MLT academies but also to ensure we remain focused on the **core functions** which are determined nationally. For many years, all Trusts and local governors have been focused on:

- ❖ **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction**
- ❖ **Holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the effective and efficient performance management of staff**
- ❖ **Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent**

An additional core function since September 2023 is:

- ❖ **Promoting Engagement with Stakeholders which includes Parents/Carers**

Redwood and Ravenfield governors really welcome this new responsibility as it recognises an aspect of our work to which we have always been committed as shown through our annual survey of parents/carers of the children attending our academies. Now that governors have had a chance to discuss the findings of the survey in the Autumn, we are delighted to be able to give you some 'headlines'. **Please be aware though, that if you would like to see the detailed analysis of the survey, this can now be seen on our website.**

### PARENT/CARER SURVEY OUTCOMES - AUTUMN 2023

A huge *thank you* to all those Redwood parents/carers who completed the survey for us. We had a wonderful response with 149 out of a possible 201 children represented, which was a huge increase on the number of parents who answered the same questions for Ofsted at the time of the last inspection. Here are some headlines from this autumn's survey . . .

- Overall, and most importantly, parents of 145 children would recommend Maltby Redwood Academy to another parent and just 4 were unsure. All parents rightly make up their own mind about the school, but governors hope that parents of the newer children or recent arrivals at Redwood feel really reassured that their experience leads so many parents to say they would recommend the school to others

- Responses were overwhelmingly positive with the percentage of *agree* or *strongly agree* responses totalling above 90% for every question asked and some nearing 100%
- Almost every child was reported to be happy and feel safe at Redwood
- Similar positive responses illustrated that parents feel well informed about their child's learning and their progress across the curriculum
- Every parent who responded felt that there was a good range of subjects available to their child at this school. Governors were especially pleased that communication between school and home, for example about what the children will be learning, has improved following changes made as a direct result of last year's survey
- Only one area dipped below 90% with 89% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the school ensures its pupils are well behaved. As 10% of parents felt they didn't know, the Principal will look at ways to ensure that the school's approaches are more widely communicated to ensure everyone is absolutely clear about this area

Three survey questions only asked for a response if it was felt that parents had *experience* of particular issues:

- Although a number of parents said that they had felt it necessary to discuss a concern with school, it was really encouraging to see that the vast majority, 94%, were positive about the school's response. It was clear that parents/carers felt comfortable to raise an issue and discuss this with staff which is really important and illustrates that the staff are rightly approachable
- Regarding giving children with special educational needs or disabilities the support they need to succeed, 95% of parents/carers answered positively
- Of those parents who felt their children had been bullied 92% were positive about the response of the school. Whilst no unacceptable behaviour towards other children, or staff, will be tolerated, governors wondered if 'bullying' may mean different things to different people? We discussed whether the government's definition of bullying which is used across MLT might be better communicated to ensure everyone was talking about the same level of seriousness with regard to children's behaviour

Governors are entirely satisfied that leaders at Redwood take seriously all the issues the survey covers and are not in any way complacent, even giving the overwhelmingly positive responses to the survey again this year. Leaders will continue to work with parents/carers to ensure that the quality of education provided continues to improve. One ambition which has already been partially met this year, is to increase the proportion of parents who feel able to 'strongly agree' to the questions asked rather than 'agree'. Governors will be seeking reports from leaders over the year and look forward to hearing about how the Maltby Redwood 'offer' improves still further over time.


## WHAT ELSE HAVE GOVERNORS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING?

- ❖ **ATTENDANCE** – across the whole country, schools are really concerned about the amount of learning time that some children are missing. So concerning is this, that the government have asked all governing bodies to urge parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school unless they are genuinely too ill to be there and remind parents that '**moments matter, attendance counts**'. Governors look at attendance data each term and this is showing an increase in absence, with a particular concern where other children in the family are not attending when a brother or sister is poorly. Our children were so badly affected by the lockdowns during the pandemic, and there is such a lot of learning to be caught up on, so *please* do your very best to ensure that children attend school regularly, otherwise they will miss out on vital learning. Gaps as a result of absence can continue to impact for many years as children move through the education system.
- ❖ **EXTERNAL MONITORING REPORT** - from time to time, governors receive external reports on progress with some key aspects of school and hear from leaders about the steps to address any issues identified. The latest report focussed on **Reading** and on **Early Years provision**, and the progress made since these were identified for further development when the school was last inspected. Governors were delighted to hear about the really positive progress made in both areas which had benefitted from lots of staff development resulting in consistency and clarity of approach to teaching and learning.

- ❖ **FINANCIAL MATTERS** – the LGC receive budget reports each term and are always mindful that the monies available to a school have to be managed really carefully, especially when inflation hits schools just as it hits family budgets. Schools do always have to ‘watch every penny’ and ensure funding is targeted at the most important priorities. There is sadly little room for flexibility, given that staffing costs amount to around 85% of the total budget. All schools receive an amount per pupil based on their age but from time to time, the larger schools in the Trust help some smaller schools by providing additional funding. Governors were especially grateful that additional funding has been provided to Redwood this year to support the tutoring programme to help children to catch-up with lost learning. We have heard about the very real impact this is having but of course, we cannot rely on this extra funding carrying on indefinitely. Another reason why it is so important that children attend school regularly.
- ❖ **ACADEMY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING** – each year the school undertakes a self-evaluation and review of progress against the areas for continued improvement identified at the start of the previous year. The Academy Development Plan then identifies areas to focus on in the coming year and is approved by governors. Importantly, the plan identifies what any development hopes to achieve in order that staff and governors can measure progress made. Governors receive progress reports from leaders throughout the year and sometimes staff who lead on particular aspects of school life are asked to attend our LGC meetings to report on the impact of their work.
- ❖ **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS** – throughout the year, the Principal keeps governors updated on every aspects of school life by updating a KPI document. This enables the school to report against indicators informed by the scaled judgements that Ofsted inspectors make. Redwood was judged to be a good school when last inspected, so that is always the starting point and governors have been delighted to see the number of areas where Redwood, informed by Trust and external monitoring visits, is now judged to be ‘good +’ and taking steps towards being outstanding. Further staff development is key to improvements and governors are always pleased to hear about the activities taking place to further develop the whole staff both internally at Redwood and involving those across the Trust. Lovely that Redwood staff are sharing some of their practice to help other schools too, including support for teachers joining the profession which was praised during an external review.

That is just a few of the areas that governors have been focussed on in recent meetings. We hope that this gives you an insight into the role of governors and what our work looks like in practice.

*With best wishes to you all  
from members of the Local Governance Committee*

<b>MEMBERS OF YOUR LOCAL GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE AT MALTBY REDWOOD</b>		
Community governors, the Chair & Vice-Chair are all appointed by the Maltby Learning Trust Board in consultation with the LGC.		
<b>Elected Parent governors</b> Lauren Blackett Daniel Tunnard	<b>Community governors</b> Liz Buxton (Chair) Ian Henderson Ben Hayes Kirsty Pearson + 1 vacancy	<b>Elected Staff governors</b> Gemma Barker Sophie Nelis <b>Academy Principal</b> Ruth Berry
<b>Redwood Partnership governors from Ravenfield</b> Scott Brighton (elected parent governor and Vice Chair) Gemma Haigh (elected parent governor) Katie Martin (elected staff governor) Anita Prescott (elected associate professional staff governor) Leanne Jepson (Principal)		<b>Additional governors</b> (MLT leaders joining LGCs) Laura Critchley Joanne Munday
	Maltby Redwood Academy is a Maltby Learning Trust School. <b>Maltby Learning Trust</b> is an exempt charity regulated by the Secretary of State for Education. It is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (Company number 7033915). The Trust’s registered office is c/o Maltby Academy, Braithwell Road, Maltby, Rotherham S66 8AB.	