Bishop Monkton CE Primary School

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Chair of Governors' Newsletter

A Warm Welcome to All Our Families

As Chair of Governors, I am delighted to share this update with our families. The Governing Board sees parents and carers as valued partners in school life, and I hope this newsletter provides an insight into our work, some of the key developments taking place across the school, and the opportunities ahead. We are committed to working openly and collaboratively with families to ensure the very best outcomes for every child.

As we begin a new academic year, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all our families, particularly those who have joined our school community this year. Starting at a new school is an exciting milestone for children and parents alike, and we hope you have already experienced the warmth, care and sense of belonging that make Bishop Monkton such a special place.

We are also delighted to welcome Mrs Kelly Reppold as our new Headteacher. Throughout the recruitment process, Kelly impressed governors with her clear vision, extensive leadership experience and dedication to ensuring every child has the opportunity to flourish. With more than twenty years' experience in education, she brings a wealth of knowledge alongside a genuine passion for creating inclusive, nurturing environments where children feel valued, supported and inspired to achieve their best.

We are particularly pleased that Kelly and her family are becoming part of the local community. Her commitment to building strong relationships with families and ensuring the school remains at the heart of village life reflects the values that define both our school and the wider Bishop Monkton community.

At the same time, we say farewell to Mrs Sally Cowling. On behalf of the Governing Board, I would like to express our heartfelt thanks for her outstanding leadership over the last 17 years.

Through her kindness, care and steadfast belief in every child, she helped create a school that truly feels like a family, where everyone is welcomed, valued and supported. The strong sense of community that exists within our school today is a testament to her leadership and will remain a lasting part of her legacy. We wish her every happiness, good health and many exciting new adventures in retirement. She will be greatly missed, and we hope she looks back with enormous pride on the difference she has made to so many lives.

We recognise that periods of change can sometimes bring uncertainty, particularly when new initiatives and developments are introduced. It is entirely understandable that parents and carers may have questions as these changes take shape. Please be assured that all decisions are made

thoughtfully, with the best interests of children at the forefront. The Governing Board is confident that Kelly will lead the school with ambition and dedication, building upon the strong foundations already in place while helping to shape an exciting future for our children, staff and wider community.

As always, we are committed to maintaining open and honest communication with our families. We would encourage any parent or carer with questions, concerns or feedback to get in touch. Mrs Reppold has an open-door policy and is always keen to listen to and work alongside families. Both Kelly and I value the importance of strong home-school relationships and welcome constructive conversations as we continue to build on the strengths of our school together.

How Governors Support Our School

Parents and carers may hear governors mentioned regularly but may be less familiar with the role we play within the school. As a Governing Board, our role is primarily strategic rather than operational. We work alongside school leaders to help set the school's vision and long-term direction, hold leaders to account for educational performance, and ensure that statutory responsibilities are met. The day-to-day leadership and management of the school remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and staff team.

Governors come from a range of backgrounds and bring a variety of skills, experiences and perspectives to the school. We share a common commitment to ensuring that every child at Bishop Monkton receives the best possible education and opportunities to flourish.

Throughout the year, governors regularly visit school, meet with leaders, spend time with pupils, review performance and finances, and gain first-hand insight into school life. These visits help us celebrate successes, understand areas for development and ensure our strategic decisions are informed by the experiences of children, staff and families.

Meet Our Governors

Chair of Governors
Ashlea Costelloe (Co-opted)
Vice Chair of Governors
Helen Giles (Foundation)

Mike Taylor (Foundation)
Anna Kirby (Parent)
Alex Hawkes (Parent)
Carolyn Small (Parent)
Jen Douglas (Co-opted)
Phil Alcock (Local Authority)
Mandy Coupland (Staff)

Changes to the Governing Board

This year we say farewell to Jude Smith, who has stepped down after completing her four-year term as a governor. On behalf of the Governing Board I would like to thank Jude for her time, commitment and valuable contribution to the Standards and Curriculum Committee, as well as the wider strategic development of the school.

Jude's departure leaves a vacancy on the Governing Board, and we will be looking to recruit a new governor in the coming months. Further information about the role and recruitment process will be shared in due course.

Managing School Resources

Like many schools across the country, we continue to face significant financial pressures. Rising costs across staffing, energy, resources and services mean that managing school finances remains increasingly challenging.

One of the Governing Board's key responsibilities is overseeing the school's finances and ensuring that available resources are used in a way that has the greatest possible impact for children. This means working closely with school leaders to make careful decisions about spending, investing in our priorities and safeguarding the long-term sustainability of the school.

At times this requires difficult decisions and careful prioritisation. However, our commitment remains unchanged: to make the best possible use of the resources available and ensure that every decision is made with the interests of our pupils at its heart.

Staffing and Classes

We are fortunate to have a dedicated and talented team of staff who work incredibly hard every day to provide high-quality teaching and pastoral care for our pupils.

This year, we welcome new colleagues to our staff team whilst also benefiting from the experience and expertise of many familiar faces. Together, they bring a wealth of knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment to ensuring every child can thrive.

Class Structure 2026-27

Robins (R/Y1) - Mrs West
Puffins (Y2) – Mrs Filippi and Mrs Russell
Kestrels (Y3/Y4) – Mrs Watson
Ospreys (Y5/Y6) – Mrs McMahon

We know that positive relationships between children and adults are central to successful learning, and it has been wonderful to see pupils settling so well into their new classes.

Our school website is currently being updated and migrated to provide parents with an improved source of information about school life. Once complete, it will become an increasingly valuable resource for families. Each class will have a dedicated page containing curriculum information, key dates, photographs of learning and regular updates throughout the year, helping parents stay connected with school life and their child's learning journey.

Swimming Provision

Many parents will be aware that our swimming provision is currently under review. Swimming and water safety are an important part of the National Curriculum and, as governors, we fully recognise the value of ensuring children have access to high-quality swimming instruction, not only as a statutory entitlement but also as an essential life skill.

At the same time, transporting pupils to swimming facilities and delivering lessons comes at a significant cost to the school. Like many schools, we must carefully balance our resources and ensure that any provision we offer is both educationally effective and financially sustainable.

For this reason, governors are supporting a review of the current swimming programme, considering cost, staffing implications and overall impact. I would like to reassure parents that the intention is not to remove swimming permanently from the curriculum. Rather, the review is focused on identifying how swimming and water safety can be delivered in a way that is meaningful, provides the greatest benefit for pupils, represents good value for money and remains sustainable for the school in the long term.

We know that many families value swimming provision, and we will continue to keep parents informed as discussions progress.

Friends of Bishop Monkton School (FOBMS)

A huge thank you must go to the Friends of Bishop Monkton School (FOBMS) and the many parents, carers and volunteers who give up their time to support fundraising activities throughout the year.

This year has already seen tremendous success with the BeckBusters 10K and Fun Run, which raised a staggering £6,100 for the school. This is an incredible achievement and a testament to the generosity, dedication and community spirit of everyone involved, from the organisers and volunteers to the runners, sponsors and supporters. On behalf of the Governing Board, I would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to everyone who played a part in making the event such a success.

As with all funds raised by FOBMS, careful consideration is being given to how this money can be used to have the greatest impact for our pupils. One proposal currently being explored is investment in our school library and the enhancement of reading resources across the school. Many families will be aware that the library has recently moved from the reception area into The Zone, creating a dedicated space where children can immerse themselves in books and develop a lifelong love of reading. We are excited by the opportunity to further develop this area and strengthen our reading provision for all pupils.

In an environment where school budgets continue to be under pressure, fundraising has become increasingly important. The support of FOBMS enables the school to invest in opportunities and resources that may otherwise be beyond our reach, helping us to enrich pupils' experiences and enhance their learning environment. Every contribution, whether through attending events, volunteering time or making donations, has a genuine and lasting impact on our children.

Once decisions have been made regarding the use of the BeckBusters funds, we look forward to sharing further updates with families and celebrating the impact these investments will have on our pupils.

Upcoming FOBMS Events

- **29th November 2026**– Christmas Fair
- **3rd October 2027** – Beckbusters 10K and Fun Run

Contact

enquiriesfobms@gmail.com

We Value Your Views

A successful school listens to its community, and we genuinely value the views, experiences and ideas of our families. Parents and carers play a vital role in school life, and your feedback helps us to understand what is working well and where we can continue to improve.

Whether you have a question, concern, suggestion or simply wish to share something positive, we would encourage you to get in touch. Mrs Reppold and I can both be contacted via email and would be pleased to hear from you should you wish to discuss any aspect of school life.

For general comments, suggestions or feedback, parents are also encouraged to make use of our online suggestion box (via the school website). This provides a direct way to share your views and helps ensure that parent voice continues to inform the work of school leaders and governors.

By continuing to work together in partnership, with openness, trust and mutual respect, we can ensure that Bishop Monkton remains a place where every child feels happy, valued, supported and inspired to achieve their very best.

Contact details

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Ashlea Costelloe, Chair of Governors
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A Final Thank You

As governors, we are incredibly proud of our school and the wonderful community that surrounds it. Schools thrive when staff, governors, parents and children work together, and we are grateful for the support, encouragement and trust that families show every day.

The year ahead will undoubtedly bring new opportunities, challenges and achievements, but by continuing to work together with openness, kindness and a shared commitment to our children, I am confident that Bishop Monkton will continue to flourish.

On behalf of the Governing Board, thank you for your continued support. We look forward to working alongside you and celebrating another successful year for our school community.

With best wishes,

Ashlea Costelloe
Chair of Governors
On behalf of the Governing Board

Act justly, love kindness and walk humbly with God. Micah 6:8