

A Message to our Families from the Governing Body

Dear All,

The Governing Body of Priestley Smith School is made up of 12 Governors - staff from school, parents/carers and volunteers from the wider community.

Our role is to both support and challenge the school. Governors work closely with the Senior Leadership team to:

- ❖ Improve teaching & learning
- ❖ Make sure that your children & young people are safe
- ❖ Ensure that the school budget is wisely and fairly spent
- ❖ Keep a check on progress & attainment
- ❖ Make sure that the school buildings are fit for purpose
- ❖ Help with recruitment of staff & the staff pay policy
- ❖ Appraise the Head Teacher every year, holding her to account on behalf of the children & families

We meet three times a year as a Full Governing Body and in between we meet up in small groups on our committees – Teaching & Learning; Finance; Personnel and Health & Safety.

We also make Governor visits to the school to meet with staff & children and to observe the school first hand.

We have a vacancy for a new Parent Governor, please do get in touch with Jo Garvey, Head Teacher, or Annie Bearfield, Chair of Governors, via the school.

We'd love to hear from you – no qualification or experience is needed, just your time, interest and passion for helping to make our school the best it can be!

Here are our current line-up of Governors

Annie Bearfield – Chair of Governors

I am qualified teacher of Visually Impaired children (QTVI) and before retiring, I worked for nearly 40 years in both the Walsall & Sandwell Sensory Services and for 3 years for the charity RNIB. As well as my Advisory Teacher role, I worked for Birmingham University guiding and overseeing teachers through their VI teaching practice, supporting many of the Priestley teachers, over the years.

It is my honour now, to be the Chair of Governors

Rob Cash – Co-opted Governor

I am a retired Operation Director of 20 years, having worked in Food Manufacturing and distribution for 37 years. I am currently a Trustee of a Youth Group, a life member and coach at Boldmere Swimming and Water polo Club, and a director of Boldmere St Michael Football Club. I am a Co-opted Governor at Priestley and Chair the Finance Committee.

Saiqa Bibi – Parent Governor

I have been a parent Governor for 3 years. I am a qualified primary school teacher and passionate about children having access to a good quality education and empowering them with the necessary life skills to maximise their potential. Hence, I took on this role so I could actively contribute to achieving these outcomes at Priestley Smith. I am a member of the Teaching and Learning Committee and enjoy discussing curriculum updates and new assessment initiatives.

Liz Clabon – Staff Governor

I joined Priestley Smith in 2021 and became Deputy Head and Head of Secondary in September 2023. I am the staff governor and have worked in Special Needs Education for over twenty years. I have experience in working with children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental health difficulties as well as working in specialist autism settings. I have worked as a SENCO and Safeguarding Lead. Before joining Priestley Smith, I was Deputy Head of a school for children with autism; and then I was seconded to an advisory safeguarding role for Birmingham LA.

Narinda Kaur – Parent Governor

I am a parent governor whose child attends Priestley Smith school. Ayah is now in Y3 and is thriving. I have a Bachelor's degree in the field of Social Sciences. Alongside a variety of work experiences including housing, homelessness, recruitment for an armed forces charity and holistic health. I am the founder of a holistic wellness centre providing wellness and relaxation services for women in and around Birmingham.

Yusuf Hurraira – Co-opted Governor

I am super thrilled to be joining the governing body at Priestley Smith. I was a pupil at Priestley but left the school some time ago. I am blind with no useful vision so I feel I know first-hand how important both the teaching and learning components are for successful learning. I am currently working for HMRC in Birmingham.

I will ensure that all the correct questions are asked of the management of the school to ensure effective learning and progression of all students. Having a degree in human resource management, I will also be part of the personnel committee.

Sharon Blair-Burke – Co-opted Governor

I have been a Science teacher for 33 years, later moving into school leadership roles. My favourite and last role was as Deputy Headteacher at Priestley. Here I became a Qualified Teacher of the Visually impaired; I came to understand how wonderful the children are and to be very impressed by the dedication of all the staff. I retired but could not stay away for long. I now lead many of the EHCP reviews and was delighted to be invited to be a Governor.

Jenny Collery - Co-opted Governor

Hello, I am a new member of the Governing body and I feel very privileged and excited to be part of Priestley Smith School. I have a background in education. I have just retired from a role working with international students on foundation programmes at Aston University and prior to that I was an Assistant Headteacher at a large secondary school. I am passionate about learning, teaching, and inclusivity.

Julie Bleasedale – Co-opted Governor

I am the Safeguarding Link Governor and I sit on the Personnel and Health & Safety and the Finance committees. My first job was in the Commercial Insurance Industry. After a career break, I joined an Early Years setting, initially working with the children and then as the Office Manager. I have also worked in the healthcare and retail industries. For the last 20 years, I have been a trustee of a local charity, holding the post of treasurer for a time. I was also Secretary and a Trustee of the Sutton Coldfield Adventure Unit for 7 years. Having retired, I welcomed the opportunity to join the Governing Board when the opportunity arose 2 years ago

Talia Treen – LA Governor

I am the Eye Care Liaison Officer (ECLO) for Birmingham Children's Hospital (since 2023) and previously the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham from 2015 - 2022. In my ECLO role, I provide non-medical, practical and emotional support for the children and their parents/carers. I bring understanding and knowledge to the sight sector, on a personal level, come from a family background of my mom, teenage daughter and myself, having a genetic condition, and are visually impaired, with my daughter having additional complex needs. I am excited to join the Governing Board!

Jo Garvey – Head Teacher

It is an absolute privilege to have been Headteacher at Priestley for the past 3 years and I look forward to many more.

It is by far the most rewarding school I have ever worked in and I am inspired everyday by the teachers and staffs commitment to the children, and the children's unwavering resilience.

I originally trained as a general and paediatric nurse and over my 15-year career worked in variety of settings, including paediatric oncology.

I began teaching in 2002, working in large inner-city comps, grammar schools, as Head of Science, Head of House, Head of Sixth Form and then Deputy Head in a comprehensive for 2000 children aged 11-19. It was there I first had the privilege of working with students from Priestley who came on supported placements to study A levels and Level 3 qualifications. Therefore, naturally, when I saw the Headteacher post advertised at Priestley I jumped at the opportunity to be part of this wonderful community school.