



Meet the Governors of The Weald and Downlands Schools Federation

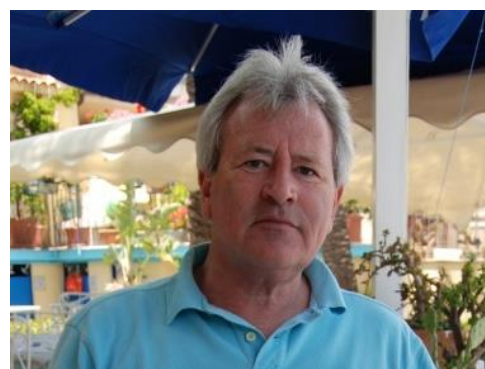
The Governors of The Weald and Downlands Schools Federation would like to introduce themselves; giving some insight into who they are, why they are involved in the management and strategic direction of the Federation.

Chair of Governors and Co-opted Governor – Jeff Ace

I have lived in the Harting and the Petersfield area since 1994 and had been the Local Authority Governor for just over 2 years before becoming Chair of Harting in the 2012/13 academic year. Now as Chair of the Federation I am looking forward to all the benefits that can be brought to both schools.

My background is international business and on retiring trained and qualified as a secondary school mathematics teacher, GCSE and A Level, (PGCE).

Throughout my business career I encouraged learning at all levels, for self-improvement and the good of the business. This desire for continual education, learning and development I hope I bring to Governorship and to the benefit of all the pupils of the Federation Schools.



Head Teacher (Harting) and Governor (ex Officio) – Nick Tidey

As Headteacher of Harting I am proud to work alongside a fabulous team of children, staff, governors and families who ensure that children are at the heart of all that we do.

I began my career in education after graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Jazz, with a specialism in Saxophone. This initially led me to begin working with children in Year R and 1 with special educational needs, using music as a way to express their thoughts and emotions. Following this, I began working as a peripatetic music teacher across all age groups in a number of schools in London and also led a youth big band for a number of years. It was through these experiences that I identified my passion for education and decided to become a qualified teacher. Since this time, I have worked in schools in both London and Surrey where I have held numerous leadership roles improving standards across school.



From my background, I value the role of the arts in education and its importance in developing children's confidence across all areas of their development. This belief aligns with my vision for education where every child must be supported and challenged to reach their full potential.



I am incredibly excited at the opportunity to lead the school onto and through the next phase of its journey and am looking forward to what the future holds.

Head Teacher (Stedham) and Governor (ex Officio) – Malcolm Meaby

My role within the Governing Body is one which I both value and enjoy. The opportunity to share my thoughts, ideas, vision and values, with other governors, who also hold our school close to their hearts, is incredibly exciting. Being able to develop and share long term strategies together, will ensure that Stedham Primary School grows and evolves into the small school of choice in the Rother Valley.

As headteacher, I regularly report on the progress that the school is making and, as critical friends, my fellow governors, support and challenge in all strategic areas. Being a parent of two energetic boys, time away from work is often spent outdoors and sport related. I run, cycle and play squash regularly and, like my sons, am an avid LFC fan despite my West Sussex roots! The infamous motto: 'You'll Never Walk Alone', fits in well with my position as headteacher and governor.



Foundation Governor (Ex-Officio) Harriet Neale-Stevens – Rector of Harting with Elsted and Treyford cum Didling

I have recently moved to Harting to take up the post of Rector of Harting Parish Church. Prior to this I was the curate in Henfield in mid-Sussex where I worked extensively with the local primary school building links between the church and school, and getting involved in school life. In the past I have been involved in education work in the charity and arts sector and have degrees in Music and History of Art (as well as Theology!)

I am also a school parent so have an added interest in the school from a different perspective.

I am very much looking forward to being a governor of this wonderful school.





Foundation Governor – Jane Thwaites

I moved to Elsted with my husband in 2012, after over 20 years living up the road, in Surrey. We love living here and are delighted to be part of the community.

I trained as a nurse back in the 1970s, then qualified as a Midwife and stayed working in that profession for over 20 years, finishing up as a supervisor and manager.

In 2000 I moved into community health, managing a variety of services across West Surrey such as district nursing, Health Visiting, school nursing and prison health care, among others. From 2006 until I retired in March 2015 I worked exclusively in Children's Community Health services across Surrey, which included management responsibility for the Community Paediatricians, children's Audiology, children's community nurses, special school nurses and the children's therapists (occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy).

All this has given me a keen interest in education and a desire to contribute to the development of our local school, particularly in terms of Christian values.

I appreciate I have a great deal to learn but I hope some of my management skills and knowledge of special needs will assist the Governing body.

We have two daughters both in their 30s and our first grandson was born in May 2015.



Co-Opted – Vida Stewart

With an entire career revolving around education in one form or another, I initially qualified as a speech and language therapist and specialised in working with children with moderate learning difficulties in schools in the Chichester area. I subsequently ran an international consultancy and training business with my husband Neil, which took us to western Africa for a year or so where I worked as principal of a new business college. Since we returned to the UK, my roles have included international manager for an awarding body, and I am now CEO of an awarding body with a mission of transforming learners' lives by the recognition of their learning and achievement, and an ethos of being an awarding organisation with a social conscience, promoting widening participation in education and training, social inclusion, and lifetime learning for all.

I believe very strongly that children should be safe and happy at primary school, which should be a wholly positive experience to start them off on a road of, and give them a love and hunger for, lifelong learning.

Our son Fraser transferred to Harting School in 2015 from another local school, and we were overwhelmed by the school's happy, positive atmosphere and the staffs' supportive approach. I was privileged to be given the opportunity to use my knowledge and skills to support the school and the whole school family initially as a parent governor from 2016, and now in the role of co-opted governor since Fraser has moved on to secondary school.





Staff Governor – Claudine Clarke

I am one of the reception teachers at Harting school and have taught at the school since 2016. I feel very lucky to be a teacher at such a wonderful school and now very happy to be a governor for the Weald and Downland Schools Federation. I am a big believer that small village schools are a wonderful start to any child's education and look forward to seeing both schools go from strength to strength.

I have taught throughout the primary age range in Norfolk, Cambridge, Japan, Oman and Dubai. I have held a variety of positions within primary schools and a prep school including Head of Key Stage 1 and Head of Curriculum. I bring many years of experience and expertise in different types of schools to the governing body and I am very willing to support both schools in any way I can.



Parent Governor – Tamsin Cormack

I volunteered to be a parent governor as I am passionate about the importance of excellent primary education. We were warmly welcomed into the Harting community when we moved here last summer and I wanted to support the school in continuing to provide an inspiring and nurturing environment, enabling all children to succeed.

I moved to East Harting from South London, where I worked as a teacher for almost 12 years - most recently as the Deputy Headteacher of a large primary school in Lambeth. I was also a teacher governor for 8 years. I believe my experience and background in education provide me with a broad range of skills and knowledge to support and champion the school.



My son Niall is currently in year 2 at Harting and I have two younger children, Orla and Rory, who will be joining the school in the next couple of years. We are delighted to have such a fantastic school with great teachers and welcoming families, right on our doorstep. I am looking forward to working with the school in any way I can to help them to continue to be the school of choice in this area.



Co-Opted Governor – Iain Gibbons

Ruth and I moved to Treyford 10 years ago, so we are still relative newcomers! As the dad of Findlay and Euan, I am passionate about the amazing work that the school does. I never fail to be impressed with the professionalism and enthusiasm by all the staff.

With a professional background of owning a large national company and more recently managing large Government projects on behalf of a major IT company, I hope this will help me add value as a governor.

I'm passionate about lifelong learning having mentored and coached many apprentices at the beginning of their careers and am now really excited to be involved at the start of the learning journey.

With baby Isla now here, I'm looking forward to being part of the school community for many years to come!



Co-Opted Governor – Alun Kimber

I moved to Minsted with my wife in 2019 after starting my career in Scotland and then having lived in Brunei, The Netherlands and Dubai with short stays in Kazakhstan, Abu Dhabi, Nigeria and other locations whilst working in the energy industry. We have two grown-up children.

I started as an engineer in various roles in the North Sea and Shetland and then when I moved abroad, I moved into project development, engineering management and business consultancy roles. Most recently I have been working on a number of renewable energy projects. People development and mentoring has always been a key part of my various roles, as was my own personal development. I led a team of Campus Ambassadors representing my company at my alma mater, Imperial College, for close to 20 years, where we gave careers presentations, ran CV clinics and played business games with the students. I am a Fellow of the Institution of Chemical Engineers.

For 4.5 years I worked at the corporate learning centre in The Netherlands, initially as a Course Director and then leading a team of Course Directors and administrative staff delivering technical courses, interwoven with interpersonal skills development. I re-designed the main introductory course, added methodologies to test student learnings and improved the teaching skills of the technical presenters. Most of the courses were held "in-house" although we did travel to Malaysia, Nigeria and Iran to deliver courses also.

Good schools are vital to the health of society. I think that small primary schools are more comfortable for children to start in, and are also a size that they and their parents can quickly feel part of. The school, the parents and the community all find it easier and benefit from connecting with each other. My primary school education helped me get off to a good start and I would like to help to make sure that today's children from Stedham and Harting also get a good start.





Co-Opted Governor – Jackie Wilkinson

Jackie started her career as a day centre organiser for social services before stepping into the charity sector supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our society. She has a Psychology degree as well as an MBA and now has nearly thirty years experience gained across the fields of mental health, adult education, mindfulness and wellbeing, Jackie's work is driven by her passion for continual education, learning and development. She has always had a deep interest in spirituality and was ordained in 2004 as a OneSpirit Interfaith Minister.

Jackie was Director of Services for The Samaritans for 11 years (1995 - 2006) and sat on various government and non-governmental agencies steering committees such as NHS Direct and Childline.



She is passionate about village schools and feels her children were privileged to start their education in one. She moved to Stedham in November 2021 and retired from her role as Director of Education for The OneSpirit Interfaith Foundation in March 2022.

She has two grown-up children and three grandchildren. In between various pieces of consultancy work, relaxation takes the form of long walks with her dog Noodles, enjoying her family, reading, gardening and meditation.

Co-Opted Governor – John Ashley

After a lengthy career in the private sector, I spent a number of years working for and supporting public and voluntary sector organisations. More recently I have worked extensively with schools in West Sussex and Hampshire developing e-learning materials to help children at primary level get a better understanding of the world of work.

Now living in Stedham, I am keen to contribute to our community by helping to enhance the educational experience for children at our excellent local schools in Stedham and Harting.