

St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation

16-Sep-24

Governor Biographies



Beth Morris

Foundation Governor



I have lived in East Sussex my whole life and trained as a Nurse at the University of Brighton, in 2002. I am mum to 3 girls, Emily and Erin who both attend Framfield and my eldest daughter who attends Bennetts Memorial Diocesan School in Tunbridge Wells. I have worked for our local NHS Foundation Trust for the past 22 years in both clinical and leadership roles.

I am an active member of the church community at the neighbouring parish of Holy Cross and currently sit on the PCC as well as support our children's work through Junior Church, our holiday clubs and Junior Choirs.

Church of England Primary Schools have been an enormous part of my life, through my own education and through my mother's 30 year teaching career at a neighbouring school, a role in which she has now retired.

I am thrilled to undertake the role as a Foundation Governor across the schools and hope that I will bring forward my own Christian values and ethos to the role.

November 2023

Claire Roberts

Headteacher (Framfield CEP School)



Since qualifying as primary school teacher in 1996 I have pursued my passion in supporting children, staff and schools develop. I work for East Sussex Local Authority and am an interim headteacher. I am deployed to schools where there is a need for leadership whilst governors secure future leadership. My time in schools is usually brief so it is a priority for me to get to know the children, staff, families and community as I support the school onwards to its future leadership structure. Whilst in a school I support the development of provision, policy and practice. I am an experienced governor and have recently stepped down as a chair of governors in a school near where I live.

Graham Sullivan

Headteacher at Blackboys



I am proud to be Headteacher of Blackboys School, beginning the role from September 2018.

I was educated at Hampton School in Middlesex, before spending 4 happy years earning a BA Primary Education with History (QTS) at King Alfred's College, Winchester (now the University of Winchester).

Following 3 formative years teaching Year 6 at Ticehurst Primary School, I began teaching at Blackboys in 2001, moving from Class teacher, to Key Stage Coordinator, to Deputy Headteacher, to Head of School before realising my ambition to become Headteacher.

The school has seen many exciting changes over this period and I continue to work hard in preparing the pupils to "Be the best they can be; Living Life in all its fullness (John 10:10)".

I am married to the lovely Hannah and have 2 daughters, Rosie and Rebecca who both attended Blackboys School. Away from the excitement of school I enjoy spending time with my family and have a near obsessive love of football, the beautiful game.

26 June 2023

James Vine (Rev.)

Foundation Governor (Vicar)



I was born 25 May 1967 and brought up in the Village of Westham, and attended Pevensey & Westham Primary School, Willingdon Secondary school and Eastbourne Sixth form College

I began a nursing career in Hastings in 1985, qualifying as a Registered General Nurse in the May of 1988, working initially in paediatrics, then moving on to Adult Cardiac Care.
During my nursing Career I completed a BSc. (Hons) degree course with Brighton University.

I responded to a call to Ordained ministry towards the end of the 1990's, attended theological college at St. Stephen's House Oxford, obtained a Post Graduate Diploma in Ministry and was ordained in the summer of 2000.

Having served my Curacy at Eastbourne Parish Church, I have been Vicar of Saint Luke's Stone Cross with North Langney since 2003 and Priest in Charge of Pevensey Parish since September 2021. I graduated with honours with an MA in Christian Spirituality from Winchester University in the autumn of 2017. I will be licenced as Priest in Charge of Chiddingly, East Hoathly and Framfield on Thursday the 8th of June

I am married to Clare and we have two grown up children; Chloe who is a Piano Teacher and lives with her husband in Rye, and Sebastian who lives with his Fiancé in Bournemouth and manages a large Wetherspoons in the town centre.

I'm really looking forward to playing my part in the governance of the schools.

The Reverend James Vine MA

June 2023

Katherine Hall **Foundation Governor**



I am currently a full-time mum to Edwin and Gregory. Gregory attends Framfield school.

I moved to Uckfield in 2007 with my now husband having grown up in West Sussex attending both a C of E primary school and secondary school. As a family we worship at Framfield church where both Edwin and Gregory were christened.

I studied Environmental Geochemistry at Reading University and then started work for a design consultancy based in Lewes in 2002. I then undertook a Masters in Soil Mechanics and Environmental Geotechnics at Imperial College London, part time, whilst working.

I progressed through the company to become a senior Geotechnical Engineer working on many large and small highways infrastructure projects considering foundation design. I left the company in 2018 to be a full-time mum after 13.5 years of service.

November 2023

Ken Howell **Parent Governor**



I am 64 years old born in East London and moved to the Uckfield area in 1980 when Maria (voluntary netball coach) and I were married.

We have four children and twelve grandchildren, eight of which are current pupils at Blackboys school with two more attendees heading your way over the next few years.

I am semi-retired having spent my working life in the international Logistics industry culminating in the sale of my privately owned business in 2010. I have since spent time consulting air charter brokerage and was lured out of full retirement in 2017 to launch a U.K. branch of a global logistics plc.

I am a keen sportsman, sports fan and poor golfer. I am very family orientated and fortunate to be able to spend considerable quality time with my many grandchildren.

I have experience in school governance, having served as a governor at St Philips School Uckfield from 2001-04.

I have also been involved in local sport for many years providing voluntary coaching for football at St Philips and have been a long standing player committee member and president for a local senior football club. More recently I served as chairman for CD Phoenix Netball Club a highly successful club providing netball for members from under8's to adults competing at a regional level.

I am witnessing first-hand the quality education provided by Mr Sullivan and the team at Blackboys School and appreciate the opportunity to be able to give something back and contribute to the schools continued success.

November 2023

Lydia Cottingham **Foundation Governor**



I moved to East Sussex from Hertfordshire in 2007 when I married my husband.

I gave up my career as a midwife shortly afterwards in order to focus on our family. Since then I have been a housewife and stay at home mother to our six children.

Two children have been all the way through Blackboys school, three currently attend and the youngest is starting Framfield Preschool. Our connection to Blackboys school is of much longer duration however- my husband, his siblings and many cousins have all attended the school.

I have been a member of the Blackboys Preschool Committee for a short while. I enjoyed my time working with others to support the Preschool and gaining a little insight into how early years educational settings operate.

As a lifelong Christian, I appreciate the Christian values and ethos underpinning the school which help make it the special place it is.

Blackboys School has given so much to my family, I look forward to giving something back.

June 2023

Michael Davies (Dr.)
Foundation Governor



After finishing my career as a primary school teacher, I have appeared as a professional on the television Church of England School. I retired from this position in April 2019 after twenty-five very happy years at the school. I have always believed that our children should enjoy their years at school in a thriving, inspiring and stimulating learning environment. I have been involved in the teaching profession for over forty years and am delighted that I will now be able to utilise my experience within the governing body of the St Thomas a Becket Primary Federation.

I have a range of interests and skills which may be helpful to the governing body. These include school finance knowledge, resource and buildings development experience, curriculum knowledge across the primary age range and an understanding of safeguarding and health and safety issues and management within the school environment. I have experience of the recruitment and retention of staffing in the teaching profession, alongside other personnel issues such as appraisal and the importance of continuing professional development for colleagues.

I have many interests outside education, which include sailing, walking, gardening and reading. I am a member of a sailing club (Mariners of Bewl) at Bewl Water that enables people of all abilities/ disabilities to experience the joys of sailing. I particularly enjoy walking new routes using the traditional tools of a map and a compass to find my way. I love gardening and have re-designed and re-planted our garden in recent years.

Since retiring I have become a trustee of two local organisations, St Saviours and The Thomas Scanlan Trust. Both these organisations provide assisted accommodation for elderly residents within our local community.

June 2023

Milena Plummer
Parent Governor



I am a qualified Chartered Management Accountant (CIMA) with extensive experience in Finance and Project Management, and currently work locally for a global finance sector industry leader.

My son Thomas is in Year 1 and greatly enjoys the education experience offered by Blackboys CE Primary School (and that is what makes me supportive of the work and vision of the school).

I am a strong believer in the value and importance of a well-balanced education.

I welcome the opportunity to give back in a volunteering role as a Parent Governor, and to help to drive the continued improvement needed to provide our children with the best chance of success, especially as we all deal with the aftermath of Covid19 and with economic constraints the world is facing today.

June 2023

Russell Boorman
Staff Governor



I have been working at Blackboys school since 2014 after beginning my teaching career in Brede, near Rye, working in Key Stage 2 and as Maths subject leader across the Federation.

I studied History and German at the University of Leeds, spending a year working at a school in the Monchengladbach area, which led me to pursuing a teaching career.

I then spent a summer at the University of Portsmouth in order to revise my French speaking skills, before I completed my PGCE in 7-14 Education with a specialism in Modern Foreign Languages at Canterbury Christchurch University in 2010.

Having also spent time in my youth as a member of various sporting teams and musical groups, I try to ensure that all subjects are given their chance in school, giving children the chance to experience many different and exciting opportunities.

Originally from Bexhill-on-Sea, I live in Uckfield with my wife and two daughters.

I take an active role in the PTA football club at Blackboys, and try to get back over to Germany w27 June 2023

Samantha Butler
Foundation Governor



I grew up in East Sussex and attended a local primary school and then St. Leonards Mayfield.

I studied English Literature at Durham University then after a CPE conversion course at the College of Law, Guildford and Legal Practice Course at the College of Law, London, qualified as a lawyer.

I have worked at law firms in London, Norfolk and Kent but most recently in the City where I practised in the area of Commercial Litigation specialising in Construction industry disputes.

Currently I look after my three small children, the eldest of whom is in year 1 at Blackboys CEP, and manage a number of properties which we rent to tenants in London.

I am on the PCC in Buxted but we will shortly be moving to Framfield where I am looking forward to being a part of our new parish.

June 2023

Sarah Cottingham
Foundation Governor



I am a full time Mum of 7 children whose ages range from 8 to 23 years and have been a foundation governor of the federation since 2016.

I have been the Safeguarding governor and Chair of the Ethos group for the past 6 years and have counted it a privilege to work with the staff, pupils, governors and diocese in maintaining the Christian distinctiveness of our two CEP schools

I have links with Blackboys School dating back to 1980, as my husband and all his siblings attended the school.

I grew up in Wiltshire and moved to Sussex in 1994 to work in a residential care home for the elderly. I then moved on to Brighton University to study Nursing.

After I graduated as a staff nurse I worked at EDGH on the ophthalmic surgical ward until our eldest children (twins) were born, when I gave up nursing to become a full time mum. My nursing experience has proved invaluable in many different situations over the past 25 years.

When my eldest three children were young I was treasurer of the Blackboys Pre School for some time.

At present I work part time for my husband in our Family Business in Halland.

I am also an organist at the chapel where we as a family worship.

Six of our children have now passed through Blackboys CEP School (receiving an excellent education on the way!) and on to Secondary School, College and beyond. I still have one child attending Blackboys School.

I have been a witness to the changes and developments at Blackboys and Framfield schools during the time of the three previous Headteachers/Executive Headteacher and have a keen interest in promoting the continual progress of the federation.

June 2023

Tim Murray
Foundation Governor



21 different first languages spoken by the children.

We moved to East Sussex over 25 years ago with our children (now young adults), and I became a school governor for a large primary school in Uckfield serving for 12 years.

During this time, I also represented local primary school governing bodies through the East Sussex County Forum and Schools forum.

After a ten-year gap from governing I was very pleased to have the opportunity to work with Framfield and Blackboys schools.

I am a management consultant specialising in procurement and supply chain. The company I work for is headquartered in Munich, Germany; and I work with the UK team, mostly from home in Uckfield.

July 2023

Zoe Holland
Authority Governor



I am a parent to a child at Framfield. I also have an older daughter who has now left Framfield and now attends Uckfield College.

I gained a PGCE in 7-14 Geography several years ago at Canterbury Christ Church University. I taught in both Primary and Secondary schools in my placements. During my secondary placement I had the opportunity to teach a group of SEN students which has led me to a career in teaching young people with a range of barriers to learning.

I have taught in Special Schools for 15 years which has allowed me to build an understanding of the range of needs our youngsters present. I am currently Key Stage Lead at Grove Park School in Crowborough.

I am also currently working on gaining my National Professional Qualification in Behaviour and Culture which has allowed me to develop knowledge, skills, and confidence in leading within education.

I became an Associate Member of the Governing Body in January 2023 (with special portfolio for SEND and Vulnerable Children).

June 2023

Phil Wilmowski TD
Clerk to the Governors



The Clerk holds an historic appointment going back to the Education Act of 1870.

I work closely with the Chair of Governors, the Headteachers, all the other Governors (and School Office Staff) to support the Governing Body.

I advise the Governing Body on constitutional and procedural matters, duties, and powers. I am accountable to the Governing Body, maintain its Information Management System, prepare Agendas, record Minutes of meetings, assist in arranging Training, and undertake the role of Historian.

I have been a Clerk to the Governors in East Sussex since 2005, and obtained a nationally recognised accreditation (for Clerks to Governors) in September 2008. I currently provide Clerking services to St Thomas a Becket Church of England Federation (Blackboys CEP School and Framfield CEP School).

Before taking early retirement, I worked as a BT Manager (planning, customer service, staff management, and Project Management) for 36 years, and spent 42 years in the Territorial Army rising in rank from Private in the Queens Regiment, which became part of the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment (PWRR,) to Major in the Royal Logistic Corps (RLC).

In addition to Clerking the St Thomas a Becket Church of England Federation's Governing Body, I work for Morrisons Pharmacy (Crowborough) delivering medication to people who are housebound or isolating during/following the Covid19 pandemic.

November 2023