



Governor Biographies

Andrew Boakes RIBA

Chair of Governors

I have lived and worked locally for over 30 years joining the Governing Board of The Barclay School in 1987 and serving for 30 years. In 2017 I was delighted to become Chair of Governors at Almond Hill School. In 2013 I completed the “Chair of Governors Leadership Development Programme” from the National Collage of Teaching and Leadership and have continued to keep myself up to to-date with various “Herts for Learning” training, including Safeguarding, Safer Recruitment, and Effective Governance. As a Chartered Architect, I have worked in both in the UK and The Middle East and lead my own local Architects practice and Development Company. I have an interest in international affairs joining The United Nations Association UK as a schoolboy. I have been a member for over 40 years and am currently a National Board Trustee and Chair of Members National Conference. My hobbies include theatre, music, and art and of course architecture and I am enthusiastic amateur gardener. I am passionate about finding ways for our school to introduce all pupils to a multitude of opportunities. Children who are exposed to different cultures, traditions, and activities help to shape their viewpoint of the wider world around them. All of these experiences help to develop a child's interests, build self-esteem and shape the course of their academic, professional, and personal life and to give them the fullest opportunities to grow and develop.

Judith Lovelock

School Governor

I am the Head teacher of Almond Hill and in this role I believe it is important to serve as a governor of the school. I joined the school 25 years ago and have been head teacher for 15 years. Throughout this time, I have worked closely with governors of the school to provide the best possible education and pastoral care of our children. I believe that continuity of educational learning and pastoral care is vital for our children and to support this belief I am also a governor at Letchmore Infants’ and Nursery School – our main feeder school. As a governor I serve on the finance and resource committee and attend all working party meetings and believe strong links with parents supports the best possible outcomes for our children.

Emma Fordham

Staff Governor

I am the Deputy Headteacher at Almond and have worked at the school for nearly fourteen years. I am responsible for assessment and the progress of groups such as Pupil Premium. I have worked in several other schools both in Hertfordshire and beyond and was also a governor in my last post. I am committed to education as the vehicle through which all children can make positive choices about their own lives. Being on the governing body enables me to share this passion with others who are committed to providing the best education to meet the needs of all our children.

Richard Kelly

LEA Governor

Originally from Newcastle, I moved to Stevenage, from London, with my wife and our first son back in 2010. We chose the area as she is originally from Hertfordshire and the commute into Kings Cross is a simple one for me, as I still work in London. I work at a media planning and buying agency, my job involves making decisions around investment, based on data interpretation and ultimately working towards changing behaviours and measuring success. I was delighted to see a letter in my son’s school bag one day asking for parent governors – I was keen to feel better connected to my sons’ education experiences and to the local community. I believed that through my work I have some transferable skills which were relevant to contributing to the governance and the development of the school. I’ve learned quickly that there is a huge amount of non-teaching work required to ensure the smooth running of the modern schooling environment, and I will support it the best I can. I now have two sons, one currently at Almond Hill, and one at Letchmore.

Diane Cawthorn

School Business Manager

I have worked at Almond Hill for 14 years working both in the classroom as a teaching assistant and in the office. I have been the school business manager for the past 6 years. My background prior to working in school was as a legal secretary. I have a long standing knowledge of the school having been a pupil here myself and both of my daughters attended the school. I am responsible for day to day management of the school office, and the financial management of the school. I was the clerk to the governing body for 10 years and have been a governor for the past six years.

Debbie Bradwell

Co-Opt Governor

I have worked in education for 13 years, mainly in Secondary School Finance but more recently with HR and Administration. I have 2 sons, Charlie (16) and Harry (11). Both boys have attended Almond Hill Junior School. I am thoroughly enjoying learning more about Primary education. It is lovely to see the students happy in their environment and discovering how hard the school works towards making every student's experience unique and positive.

Michelle Finch

Staff Governor

I became a staff governor in 2017 whilst working as a TA within the school. I am now employed as a cover supervisor who works across the whole school. I have had 2 children go through Almond Hill whilst my youngest daughter is about to move into year 5.

Helen Smith

Co-Opt

I am a Parent Governor with a business background in Banking and Media Project Management. I have three children, one having already been through the school, one currently in year 5 and one due to start Letchmore Infants and Nursery in September. I became a Governor for the School to give something back and build a closer working relationship. I hope to help develop the school by challenging and understanding issues that impact all of our children and staff. I always welcome parent/staff feedback and feel this is an important factor in bridging the gap between parents and school management.

Sarah Dobbs

Vice Chair

My name is Sarah Dobbs. I am a mum of two at Almond Hill and am currently the Associate Governor. I work as a Personal Assistant to three Directors at Herts for Learning, the largest school company in the UK and leading provider of school improvement, business support products and services for schools nationally. I have a degree in Television Production from Middlesex University and have worked across the Television, Corporate, and Education Industries.

Heidi Nash

Co Opt Governor

I have been a primary school governor for the past 4 years in a local Stevenage school. Both of my children were in primary school at the time. I felt that I wanted to contribute to the community and get a better understanding of the education sector. I have since become a School Business Manager in a pupil referral unit where I also sit on the governing board. I believe that the knowledge and experience gained both within my professional and governing roles will help me to support Almond Hill and their community. I very much look forward to the challenges ahead.