



# Wentworth Primary School Governors

## Pen Portraits

### **Sophie Ainscough**

*Staff Governor*

I have been a teacher at Wentworth Primary School for over 10 years. During that time, I have led RE, Collective Worship, PE and, most recently, PSHE. Part of my role involves working with the School Council to suggest improvements and plan whole school events. I am also the senior lead for our Young Carers group.

I have a passion for reading and writing especially. For the past 10 years, I have been a teacher judge for the radio 2,500 words story writing competition. I have also completed an internship shadowing a leading literacy consultant. I am an avid reader and, as a teacher, I aim to inspire a love of reading for pleasure within my classes.

### **Pete Brand**

*Parent Governor*

Wentworth Primary is a terrific school and I intend to help it continue to improve and develop.

My daughters are in Y2 & Y4. My day job is engineering management and I believe these skills transfer well to the work of school governance, as a logical thinker and problem solver.

I have responsibility for budgets and make tough decisions about which projects to fund, how money could be best spent and which ones don't add value. I also have sound resource management and health & safety knowledge.

I am keen to ensure that all children can fulfil their potential whatever their background, special educational needs or disabilities. I believe the impact from having great teachers stays with the children far longer than just the time they are at school.

I aim to support the school and all of its dedicated staff who work hard to maintain the great reputation it has earnt. My wife, Emma, also chairs the PTA currently and we are both committed to investing our time volunteering towards the success of the school.

### **Dawn Dack**

*Headteacher*

I have been a Headteacher for 20 years in a variety of Essex and Southend Primary Schools and taught for many more years across all ages. I am in my fifth year of headship at Wentworth Primary School. My children attended the school, and I was a parent governor for 4 years: A post I found very rewarding in helping Wentworth to become the excellent school it is.

I have also worked for Essex Local Authority supporting failing schools and preparing for inspection. In the past, I was a trained Ofsted Inspector and school adviser. These skills I can use within Wentworth to ensure the education that pupils receive is the very best it can be.

## **Russell Dawes**

### *Local Authority Governor*

I have been a governor for over twelve years, and I thoroughly enjoy supporting the school with my fellow governors and providing a link between the School and Maldon District Council.

I am a communications professional and have worked in this field within Local Government for 39 years. My current role I have held for 27 years after joining on a two-year fixed-term contract!

I am a Freeman of the City of London and a member of the Worshipful Company of Needlemakers where I am a trustee and a member of the Court of Assistants and their charity committee. I am also a passionate supporter of Farleigh Hospice, Macmillan Cancer Support, and several local charities.

I am committed to seeing the school maintain its reputation for providing excellence in all areas. I am a member of the Finance and Premises Committee, and I am delighted to be the Young Carers Governor.

## **Sarah Dodsley**

### *Parent Governor*

I am passionate about education and committed to supporting schools to create environments in which every child can thrive. Having had a career as a teacher, I understand first-hand the opportunities and challenges faced by schools. This experience gives me insight into the importance of effective governance in helping leaders make informed, ethical, and sustainable decisions.

Alongside my educational background, I serve as a local district councillor. This role has strengthened my understanding of local priorities, community needs, and how public services can work together to support young people and their families. It has also enhanced my ability to balance diverse viewpoints, scrutinise decisions constructively, and ensure that resources are used effectively – all of which are key aspects of good school governance.

Over the past decade, I have served the education sector as an executive coach and leadership trainer. I work closely with senior leaders across sectors to build capacity, navigate complexity, and foster inclusive, values-led cultures. These skills align strongly with the governor's role: bringing constructive challenge, strategic thinking, and a focus on long-term impact.

I believe education should equip children not just with knowledge but also with confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging. My approach as a governor would be collaborative and grounded in listening to diverse voices – including staff, pupils, and families – to ensure that decisions reflect the needs of the whole school community.

## **Stuart Emerson – Vice Chair of the Wentworth Governing Body**

### *Co-opted Governor*

I have been a governor at Wentworth since 2010 and currently serve as the vice chair and safeguarding governor. I am a former pupil of Wentworth myself and have had both of my children attend the school.

For the previous 15 years, I have held senior leadership roles within the independent healthcare sector and bring a number of skills that come from leading and managing a private hospital to the school. As well as supporting the school governing body, I also volunteer at two local football clubs with coaching and as a senior part of their committees.

**Neil Hoskins – Chair of Finance and Premises Committee***Co-opted Governor*

I have been a governor for the last ten years, initially as a parent governor and then as a co-opted governor and as Chair of the Finance and Premises Committee for the last five years.

I am a chartered civil engineer with over thirty years' experience in delivering major infrastructure projects in the south and south east. My current role is as the head of service for a nearby local authority.

My role in the school centres on ensuring the children and staff have the highest quality facilities that are possible within the budgetary constraints.

**Wendy Johnson – Chair of Pupils, Performance and Personnel Committee***Co-opted Governor*

Having attended Wentworth myself, a very long time ago, I became a parent governor when my son joined the school and am now a community governor.

I have been a teacher for over thirty years and currently work at Chelmsford College. I have a wide range of knowledge and experience in education and training and am committed to ensuring that all children have access to a wide and enriching curriculum.

**Geoff Skewes – Chair of the Wentworth Governing Body***Co-opted Governor*

I have been a governor at Wentworth for over 20 years.

I have worked in the education sector since 1973, initially as a teacher of economics and latterly running my own educational consultancy specialising in Performance Management, Funding, Strategic Planning and Policy. I bring a range of skills and have experience in working with a wide range of schools, from Primary through to Higher Education. I have trained as an Ofsted Inspector and have been a National Leader for Governance.

**Catherine Smith***Co-opted Governor*

After a career in teaching, I retired from my post as a secondary school Head of Mathematics in 2007. In 2008, I became a volunteer at Wentworth Primary School, helping small groups of children with their mathematics, for a few hours a week.

I was asked to become a Community Governor at Wentworth in 2008 and have been a governor ever since.

**Julie Sollars***Co-opted Governor*

I am married with one child, who attended Wentworth school. Before becoming a governor, I was an active member of the school PTA, raising funds to support, enhance and develop the education of children.

I have worked for Essex County Council for 30 years. During this time, I have worked in a residential home for children and young people with severe learning disabilities as well as challenging behaviour.

I qualified as a Social Worker in 2003. I currently work within the fostering service and have both practise and working knowledge of safeguarding, data protection policies and procedures, which are fundamental to the welfare of all children. These skills are readily transferable to the school setting. I am motivated to use my knowledge, both professional and experience of the school, to support and advise within my role on the governing body.

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**Chris Thurston***Parent Governor*

As a parent of three children in the school, I feel a strong connection to the school and take great pleasure from seeing how the school looks to support my children emotionally, physically and mentally.

I believe that education, especially at a primary level, is critical for a successful outlook in life and that school, assisted by parents, can set the course for children to follow far into adult life.

I am a chartered accountant and chartered tax advisor with many years working in finance roles including assisting with budgeting, forecasting and reporting financial performance. So, I bring a great deal of financial expertise to my role as a governor on the Finance and Premises Committee, and to the Governing Body as a whole, with its aim to assist the school in managing financial performance.

**Sarah Weller***Co-opted Governor*

I have been a parent governor at Wentworth for over 4 years. I am a past pupil of the school and my son attended Wentworth before going to secondary school.

I have worked in accountancy and finance for over 18 years, and I am a member of the Association Chartered Certified Accountants. I have a range of skills, in auditing, accounts preparation, management accounting, taxation, budgeting, payroll and HR.

I am also a Director for The Maldon Mud Race, and through this role, I have developed knowledge of the planning and running of large-scale charity fund raising events.