

Birch Copse School Governors – Pen Portraits December 2025

John Micklewhite

Headteacher – Ex-officio



I have been Headteacher of Birch Copse since April 2007. Birch Copse is my second headship and I am extremely proud of our school and the community approach we have in working together for the best of the children. The school is extremely lucky to have such caring children, excellent and capable staff, active governors and really supportive parents. Hence the school's mission statement; Together we plant the seeds for success.

I am also a School Improvement Advisor for the Local Authority and a National Leader of Education. This entails working with other schools to assist them on their journey. The school is a National Support School that means that staff will support teachers in other schools or we will have people visiting our school to see our practice.

As a Governing Board, our goal is always for our school to continually improve. Being a school that is graded as outstanding by Ofsted does not mean that there are not things we want to improve. We follow the growth mindset theme that we share with children, be the best you can be.

Jane Hardie

Co-opted Governor and Chair of Governors



I first became a governor in 1991 when I had three children at the school and have seen huge changes during this time. I have been lucky enough accompany various school visits and in particular the Year 6 visit to Cornwall many times. and every year I am proud of our children and the lovely comments we receive.




My work has almost always been connected with schools; I worked in a secondary school office, trained and supported Admin staff, worked for the DfE helping schools make the most of their budgets. Currently I am a bursar at a local Nursery School for children aged 0-5 years old. I have special responsibility for Finance and serve on the Pay and Performance panel.



Daniela Vought




Co-opted Governor and Vice Chair of Governors





I first became a Parent Governor at Birch Copse School in 2015 when my son was in Reception. I am now a Co-opted Governor and the Vice Chair of Governors. I have been a teacher of mathematics for the past 23 years and I have been at my current independent secondary school for 15 years with various positions- teaching maths, Head of House, Assistant Head Pastoral and Director of Lower School. I am passionate about providing children with the best possible opportunities so they can achieve their potential and feel ready for the next stage of their education. I am very comfortable with data analysis, finance and auditing matters as well as being part of recruitment panels. I believe that an active and genuine team ethos is vital to the success of the students and hence the school, and I look forward to continuing to work with the rest of the board of governors in order to support the school and make it the best it can be.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Eleri Jones</p> | <p>Co-opted Governor</p> |
|  | <p>Having worked in HR leadership roles for diverse organisations including a sugar manufacturer, medical regulator and lobbying organisation, I decided to set up my own HR Business Consultancy. This is such a fulfilling experience where I work with amazing organisations supporting and advising them in a range of challenging people and operational issues.</p> <p>I am very interested and passionate about learning and in particular the education of children. I volunteer as an Education Enterprise Adviser where business leaders work with the school leadership teams and governors to identify practical ways that business colleagues and I can support and develop learning opportunities for children. Having been part of the Birch Copse school community when my daughter was a pupil here, my passion and experience enables me to contribute and make a difference to the outcomes for children at Birch Copse.</p> |
| <p>Michael Smith</p> | <p>Co-opted Governor</p> |
|  | <p>I current work as a commercial director for Capita in its Local Public Services practice group supporting local authorities in London, South and Districts. I have a law degree, an international business degree, and a graduate diploma in Korean language.</p> <p>I have been a member of the Governing Board since March 2019. I am originally from Australia and have lived, studied and worked in Asia and Europe. I live in the area and am really thrilled to have the opportunity to be a governor at the school.</p> |
| <p>Marta Karolina Pawlak-Uramowska</p> | <p>Co-opted Governor</p> |
|  | <p>I am a Corporate Finance Manager in a government agency based in London. My work has focused on public sector transactions, corporate governance of large government entities and government support for business and industry. Before I joined the public sector, I had worked for Big4 in grant funding and transaction services. I have Master Degrees in Finance and International Relations gained at Warsaw School of Economics; I am a part-qualified accountant (ACCA).</p> <p>I joined the Governing Board in March 2020. I hope that with my financial background and public sector experience, I can contribute to the Governing Board and support the staff and pupils.</p> <p>As a parent of a small child currently attending pre-school, I am interested in the early years and primary education. My family moved to Reading two years ago, and being a governor in Birch Copse enables me to be involved in the local community.</p> |

| Peter Rimmer | Co-opted Governor Safeguarding Governor |
|---|--|
|  | <p>After graduating, I first worked in the nuclear sector, gaining insight into the importance of science and engineering to industry and the modern economy. The main focus of my work was human resource (HR) management. I'm a Chartered Member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. As Director of Employment Affairs and Skills at a business advocacy organisation in the construction and facilities management sectors, I was responsible for formulating strategy for, and leading wage negotiations with trade unions. Latterly, an important part of my job focussed on understanding Government vocational training policy and associated funding methodology, encouraging young people to train in engineering and fostering work experience links between schools and employers.</p> <p>Until stepping down on expiry of my term of office in December 2021, I was a member of the Governing Board of a West Berkshire school in Newbury, where I live. In my retirement, I'm a member-nominated trustee of my former employer's pension scheme. I do gardening, look after an allotment, and enjoy reading and travelling abroad.</p> |
| Sam Morris | Parent Governor |
|  | <p>I work as a Product Manager for Barclays Bank in its People Analytics & Culture team based in HR. I have worked for Barclays for the past 12 years in a broad number of roles, including managing Corporate operational teams, as well as HR organisational effectiveness.</p> <p>Having children at Birch Copse, I am excited to be part of the Governing Board as a Parent Governor as I have sat on another school's Governing Board for the past 6 years as a Co-opted Governor. The experiences from my work role and my previous Governing Board provides a large amount of experience that I hope will enable Birch Copse to continue to be a school excelling at what it does and providing all students the ability to learn and enjoy education.</p> |
| Jess Willis | Parent Governor |
| | <p>Having worked within the finance industry for the last 20 years and with 16 of that within NatWest Corporate Banking teams I have a good understanding of financial accounts and budgeting, that is as well as having two boys that eat me out of house & home!!</p> <p>My work role is very much relationship lead which means I have a keen ear to listen but also to problem solve, both these are strong attributes that I will bring to the governing board of Birch Copse.</p> <p>Having two children within in the school, now is Year 6 & Year 2, I am excited to broaden my knowledge of the overall school strategy. I have a keen interest in the SENCO provision as one of my children is diagnosed with ADHD & Dyslexia and so I'm passionate in ensuring that all children are educated and developed to the best of their ability.</p> |

| Charuti Gupta | Co-opted Governor |
|---|---|
|  | <p>I have served as a member of the Governing Board since January 2021, bringing with me a diverse background that spans continents. Originally from India, I have made UK my home for the past decade.</p> <p>My professional journey encompasses over 14 years of invaluable experience in various Finance-related roles within both large corporations and smaller enterprises. I am a CIMA-certified accountant and have a master's degree in business administration. Currently, I work as a Finance Controller for a private limited company, where I work closely with small entrepreneurs to help them scale their businesses and collaborate with senior management on financial strategies.</p> <p>As a parent of a primary school student, I place great importance on early years and primary education and believe that every child deserves an opportunity to learn and enjoy their educational journey. Being a school governor at Birch Copse has been personally fulfilling, as it provides me an opportunity to contribute and serve our local community. I am fully committed to working collaboratively with the Governing Board and providing support to both the staff and students at Birch Copse.</p> |
| Claire Knights | Co-opted Governor |
|  | <p>I joined the Birch Copse board of Governors at the beginning of 2023 with my daughter in Year 2. I work as an Advanced Physiotherapy Practitioner specialising in musculoskeletal and women's health in the Private and NHS sector and with Team GB.</p> <p>I am extremely passionate about sport and health and play Championship rugby for Abbey RFC with Premiership caps for Wasps and I have represented the county at Twickenham.</p> <p>Due to my working and sporting background I am enthusiastic about pupils' health, wellbeing, safeguarding and safety. Having overcome dyslexia, I understand the need for diversity and ensuring high expectations for every child. I want to guarantee Birch Copse creates an environment for pupils to have equal opportunities to fulfil their potential whatever their needs or background.</p> |
| Eve Hubert | Parent Governor |
|  | <p>I joined the Board of Governors at Birch Copse in 2022 at which time my twins were in Year 2. I currently work as a School Business Manager at a Primary School in West Berkshire. With a background in Corporate Finance and IT I have particular interest in helping schools make the most of their funding to effect the greatest outcomes for their children.</p> <p>Like all of us, my husband and I want the best for our children and we know that their education and school experience is – and will forever be – fundamental to that. I want our children to be safe, happy and <i>excited</i> by their education. In my role as Parent Governor at Birch Copse I will strive to help the school, and all its children, achieve their ambitions.</p> |

| Chris King | Local Authority Governor |
|--|--|
|  | <p>I'm a Chartered Accountant currently working for Virgin Media O2 in a senior leadership position in Finance.</p> <p>I grew up and went to Birch Copse Primary as part of my education. Instead of going a university route, I left school after A-levels and went through an apprentice-scheme working in practice in the Big Four alongside some of the bigger businesses in the Thames Valley before moving into practice with a focus in Telecoms firstly at Vodafone and then finally at Virgin Media O2.</p> <p>Birch Copse gave me my initial start in life and first steps in education, and having grown-up and remained in the area, alongside my deep Finance knowledge & work background I hope to be able to add to Birch Copse's success and am looking forward to giving back to the place that helped me!</p> |
| Paul Massey | Staff Governor |
|  | <p>I am a staff Governor having worked at Birch Copse for over 15 years. I completed my student teaching practice in Year 6 back in Autumn 2002 and fell in love with the school. I was employed as a newly qualified teacher the following year and became Deputy Headteacher in April 2008 when I also became a school Governor. I have taught every year group during this time and currently teach maths in Year 6. Assessment, teaching and learning and extra-curricular activities are fields of particular interest for me with regards to my work as a school Governor.</p> <p>I truly believe Birch Copse to be an excellent school which is based on a thriving and supportive school community. I am passionate about children having the very best start in life and believe that Primary Schools are key to this. Our ethos and high expectations have meant that Birch Copse has always been a setting where children have the best opportunities to achieve their maximum potential in all areas of the curriculum and are fully prepared for the next stage in their educational journey. Our School Values underpin this along with a focus on ensuring children from Birch Copse are great citizens – something which is regularly commented on by visitors to the school and whilst we are on school trips. I am very proud to be associated with Birch Copse.</p> |