Governors Pen Portraits – Cornerstone Schools

Helen Audritt
Chair of Governors

We moved from Essex to North Yorkshire in September 2017, following retirement. Two of our four children and families live in the region. Volunteering at Great Smeaton Primary School to hear readers and to support writing and tables seemed an obvious way of using my teaching experience. Two of our granddaughters were currently pupils at the school. In January 2018 I was invited to become a Governor of the school, becoming Chair in May 2022. Whilst continuing to do so I was co-opted as Chair of Governors for Cornerstones in October 2025 My teaching experience spans all five key stages, with most of my primary work in Years 5 and 6. I also took two years out of the classroom to lead a successful reading catch-up project for Birmingham City Council, focused on Year 8 boys, which included training volunteers. For the final fifteen years of my career, I taught in two special schools. The first was in Spalding, where I joined the Senior Management Team and was responsible for Assessment, English and Drama. In my final post, I taught Key Stages 4 and 5 in an all-age special school, with responsibility for English and PSHE. I also organised supported work experience placements for Key Stage 5 students, a role I greatly enjoyed.

Susannah Bateman
Foundation Governor

We moved to Ravensworth from London in 2007, and I began listening to children read at Ravensworth Primary School soon afterwards. I really enjoy helping children with their reading and this gives me the opportunity to meet with pupils and staff on a regular basis. I was appointed a Foundation Governor in 2014 and joined the SMSC committee, which I have chaired since 2016. I have undertaken Governor training for Safeguarding, Effective Monitoring and Understanding Christianity. My background and training is in Mathematics and Computing, and I was appointed the Link Governor for Science. I look forward to being the Link Governor for Mathematics for our newly formed group of four schools. I have retired from working part time as a systems analyst developing a Health Information System, so I will have more time to help with achieving the best outcomes for all pupils. We have four married sons, and seven grandchildren so far, the youngest family lives in the USA. I enjoy swimming and playing tennis, walking the dog, playing the piano and escaping to the West Coast of Scotland for family holidays.

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Corinne Bell
Governor

My name is Corinne Bell and I have lived in Ravensworth for 23 years. I grew up in a small rural village in the North East of Scotland and wanted our daughter to have the same educational experience and freedom that I did attending a village school hence our move Ravensworth. I first got involved with Ravensworth primary school when our daughter Ailsa started back in 2000. I joined the School Friends and subsequently became a Governor spending a period as Chair of Governors. I took a break from the role of Governor for a few years whilst Ailsa was at secondary school but re-joined around 7yrs ago. I have enjoyed watching our school grow and develop. The partnership we now have with Barton, East Cowton and Kirby Fleetham is an exciting new phase. Rural schools face so many challenges, and I have been so privileged to have been part of the great team of Governors that we have. I particularly enjoy the role of SEND Governor which I have done for several years. I came down to the North East to work for Northern Gas as a Home Economist and after a few years moved into post 16 Education and Training. I worked for several years in training and management with County Durham TEC as a Training Manager. I now spend my time in the garden, walking, cycling, reading, charity fundraising and enjoy travelling when we can!

Jacqueline Brinicombe
Governor

Jackie is Assistant Business Director at St Helen's School in Northwood, London. Having started her career as a nurse, she chose to pursue a career in the non-clinical side of healthcare, gaining over 25 years' experience at senior management level across marketing, business development and operations within the private hospital and NHS sectors, before moving into the education sector. She is passionate about ensuring the delivery of the best possible education that is inclusive and accessible to all children.

She holds a DipM qualification and is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing and her primary areas of expertise include:

- Executive leadership of organisational teams to deliver integrated marketing and business development strategies at local, regional and corporate level and improving user experience through redesign of infrastructure, facilities and service delivery.
- Devising and implementing international strategies to secure new business from key overseas organisations.
- Devising and leading corporate re-brand strategies to ensure coherence in voice and reputation across multi-faceted organisations.

Jackie moved with her husband to Ravensworth in 2022 to be closer to their son. She now enjoys exploring all that this lovely county has to offer and playing an active role in the local community.

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Holly Coxon
Staff Governor

Currently I am base lead and KS2 classroom teacher at East Cowton CE School and have been for the past two years. I am a member of the Senior leadership team and in my own time, I am studying to complete my NPQH qualification. Having been a teacher for many years, I am experienced and passionate about educating children. I have taught in a range of settings to include large schools with three form entry in the North East, but at present, I am finding the challenge of working with whole key stages in small rural settings rewarding.

Here at Cornerstone schools, I am subject lead for Religious Education and Music. My enthusiasm and interest in these subjects have allowed me to work across the schools to ensure high standards of teaching and learning are evident. As a trained 'designated safeguarding lead,' I ensure that our school vision is at the heart of everything we do here at Cornerstones, and that keeping children safe is the number one priority.

Outside of work, I have played in championship and first section brass bands; I also support and help out at a local junior brass band. I enjoy being outdoors and can often be found out walking, gardening or supporting my children with their own personal interests to include an apiarist and all things agricultural!

Claire Goodchild
Parent Governor

We have lived in East Cowton for 6 years, after moving here from elsewhere in Yorkshire. I currently have one, soon to be two, daughters attending East Cowton school. I try to be active in the local community with the school at its heart. I value the importance of developing strong links between the cornerstone schools and our local communities. I am also the treasurer for the Friends of East Cowton School. Professionally, I work as an electrical engineer and have previously delivered electrical training within a further education setting, so have an interest in the STEM curriculum at the schools. I joined the governing body with the hope to support the Cornerstone schools to thrive and provide the best possible outcomes and experiences for the children.

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Anthony McGeeney
Parent Governor

Anthony McGeeney is an experienced Headteacher with over a decade of school leadership experience, including ten years as a SENDCo. He has worked across the country supporting schools, focusing on inclusion, capacity building, and school development at all levels.

Anthony has led initiatives integrating technology into Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), driving innovation and enhancing learning outcomes through strategic edtech implementation. He has also collaborated on AI-focused leadership groups, exploring cutting-edge solutions to empower system leaders in the ever-evolving educational landscape. Passionate about removing barriers to learning, Anthony is committed to ensuring all learners, including those with unidentified needs, receive the support they need to reach their full potential.

Kirstie Petch
Headteacher

I graduated from Nottingham Trent University in 1997 with a Bed (hons). After a brief spell working in both Nottingham and then South Gloucestershire we re-located to North Yorkshire, and I secured a position at Colburn Community Primary School. I worked there for 18 years, the difference you can make to a child's life working in an area of social deprivation is incredibly fulfilling. I joined Ravensworth School in 2017 as a Class teacher – it was a very different experience to what I had had before but it made me see what I was capable of. I was appointed interim Deputy Headteacher in 2019 and have loved working across the four school and getting to know the staff and children. As a part of my role, I am currently working on my NPQSL qualification with a focus on metacognition. I am also the deputy safeguarding lead across the four schools and have my paediatric first aid certificate which we completed in September 2020. In addition to this I am a moderator for KS2 writing for North Yorkshire which has been not only fantastic professionally for myself but a real benefit to our group of schools too. I live in Middleton Tyas with my husband, Simon, and three children. I enjoy reading, gardening, and shopping (for shoes!) when I have any spare time.

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Amy Whiteley
Staff Governor

I have been a teacher for 17 years and have worked at Barton CE School for the past four years. I currently serve as Base Lead and EY/KS1 classroom teacher, as well as being part of the Senior Leadership Team. I am also studying towards my NPQSEN qualification, reflecting my commitment to supporting children with special educational needs.

Throughout my career, I have taught in a range of settings, including one- and two-form entry schools, and previously worked as Deputy Manager in a private nursery. I am passionate about education and have developed strong expertise in behaviour management and SEND support. My role at Barton allows me to showcase my strengths as an organised and dedicated professional who strives to create a positive and inclusive learning environment. Within Cornerstone Schools, I lead on Phonics, Early Reading, and English, working across schools to maintain high standards of teaching and learning.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time outdoors with my family, walking and camping which allows me to visit and explore different parts of the country. I also love reading and catching up with friends.