

Pen Portrait-Alison Bennett

I was co-opted on to the Local Governing Board for Balsall Common Primary School (BCPS) at the end of February 2022. I decided to volunteer for this role because of my close links to the school; I live in the village, used to work at BCPS, and my children also attended the school.

I am an experienced teacher who has worked across the Primary age range, including Nursery, in both mainstream schools and specialist provision. My long career has included a variety of roles and responsibilities including Phase Leader, Assistant Headteacher and Area SENCo. I am currently working as a Specialist Teacher for children with Speech, Language and Communication Disorders.

During my career I have been fortunate to have been involved in a variety of further training opportunities including, but not limited to, Therapeutic Play, Mindsets in the Classroom, and Values Based Education which all added new dimensions to my pedagogy.

I am blessed to have 3 adult children who received a good education in Balsall Common and have moved on to enjoy fulfilling careers.

I have a keen interest in musical theatre and the arts and enjoy membership of an Amateur Dramatics group.

Andrea Chapman

I was voted into the position of parent governor in January 2021 and now have joint responsibility as link governor for SEND and Pupil Premium.

I was interested in joining the governing body of my children's school so I could play an active role in school life and the wider community within Balsall Common.

My background is extensive in education, namely Special Educational Needs. I am currently employed as a SENCO in a local Solihull school and play an active role in championing SEND support at a wider local and national level. I have taught in all key stages and have a wide breadth of experience at school leadership across a variety of settings. This experience has allowed me to develop a secure understanding of school improvement and a thorough insight into school based matters such as safeguarding, curriculum development and pastoral care.

I am a qualified Mental Health First Aider and this is a role I seek to develop as part of my continuous professional development.

Outside of work I enjoy swimming and spending time with my family.

Ben Adams

I joined the LGB in September 2021 as co-opted link governor for H&S and Wellbeing, due to my experience of working in utilities construction and of managing safety performance within construction and operational contracts

I have spent the majority of my career working in the utility sector in a variety of commercial and procurement roles, as well as playing a key role in a number of strategic change projects, including the design and implementation of revised governance, risk and control frameworks. The skills and knowledge I have developed working within the regulatory environment translate naturally to my governor's role

In addition to my day job, I am co-lead of Cadent Gas' Employability Programme, working in partnership with local specialist schools to provide supported internships to post-16 SEND students to enable them to develop the skills and experiences needed for them to become "workplace ready" and move on to paid employment, apprenticeships or further education.

Outside work, I live in Balsall Common with my wife and two kids, both of whom attend BCPS. I enjoy taking walks with my dog while listening to podcasts and audiobooks; I am enjoying cricket and cycling (increasingly from my armchair) and have recently taken up playing chess.

Emily Coles

I volunteered to become a parent governor in January 2021 after working at BCPS for 4 years as a Nursery teacher and still feeling very much invested in the school. I have been an Early Years Teacher for many years and previously served as a staff governor in a previous school, which gave me the experience of sitting on a budgeting board and curriculum board. I have two children still at BCPS. I took on joint responsibility for link governor for SEND and Pupil Premium, as well as Curriculum and Assessment.

I have spent my entire career working with children and education. As an experienced Class Teacher, I have led and managed new initiatives and subjects, such as Forest School and outdoor learning. I have worked closely with the Local Authority and other council organisations. I currently work in a fully outdoor setting that focuses on the wellbeing of children and have experience of working with SEND children and the complexity of ensuring their needs are met. I understand school life and their needs and the pressures that can come with working in education and the need to be flexible in a changing world.

I have lived in Balsall Common for over 15 years and love this community. I can often be seen at St Peters Church, running around the village or performing in our local am dram performances.

Katie Hellewell

I joined the BCPS LGB in 2021. With my mother being a headteacher, I has always had a passion for education and wanted to use my professional experience to give something back to the local community.

I am a chartered accountant and employed as a financial advisor at KPMG, based in Birmingham. At work, I advise investors on their merger and acquisition (M&A) strategies, including working on the disposals and acquisitions of businesses. I have advised on more than 20 transactions in my 10+ year career. This has enabled me to develop expertise in critical assessment of information and how to maximise use of financial investment – skills that are helpful for supporting the objectives of the LGB.

I live in Berkswell. Outside of work I enjoy exploring walks and restaurants in the local area with my husband, as well as travelling and cooking.

Mark Fitch

I was elected in 2016 at the formation of the Local Governing Body and then co-opted by the Trust onto the LGB at the end of my first four-year term in 2020. I have been elected by the LGB as Chair since 2018/19.

I have spent all of my career working in heavily regulated organisations in the energy sector and for public sector clients. My time as a management consultant brings skills to support the school leadership to evaluate the strategic challenges we face and how to change in response to them. I have been link governor for Science, Maths, Curriculum assessment and monitoring finance

I have developed further roles in education outside of the CST Trust, becoming a Member (role is to oversee Trustees) at the Prince Albert Community Trust, a Multi-Academy Trust based in Birmingham in 2019, giving me a broader set of perspectives from a range of different schools and contexts.

Outside of work you'll often see me running around Balsall Common, I enjoy Formula 1 and the occasional round of golf with my Dad.

Holly Oag

I joined the LGB in December 2022. My Governor role will focus on leadership and management and a link for wellbeing. I previously held the position of secretary for BCPS PTA from 2016 until 2022.

I have 25 years' experience in Human Resources. My current role is as a Human Resources Manager for a ceramics distributor in the Midlands. Prior to this I have worked in HR Management positions within automotive manufacturing, retail, hospitality, and furniture manufacturing. I have varied and generalist background in HR.

I have consulted Board of Directors on re-structuring, training and development, policy implementation and employee relations. Recently I have navigated through turbulent COVID times, including furlough and redundancies. Thankfully, now I am concentrating on positive and pro-active projects such as recruitment and brand development through our Investors in People accreditation.

I have lived in Balsall Common for 13 years with my Husband and two children, both educated at BCPS. Outside of work I am part of the coaching team for the Kenilworth Junior Triathlon Group and a volunteer for junior park runs. At a weekend you can often find me at a local park run in a high vis. I also have a keen interest in reading and musical theatre.