



St. Stephen's Church of England Junior School
South Gloucestershire Council



...a positive, supportive learning community.

Annual Governance Statement for Parents and Carers

for

School Year

2016 - 2017

A Message from the Chair

The 2016-17 school year was not without its challenges:

- Because of reduced national funding, we had to review and agree budget reductions for the 2017-18 school year which would minimize any possible effect on the outcomes for our pupils as a consequence of a reduction in teaching resources
- We had to investigate and manage the impact of the decision by the Standards and Testing Agency to annul the results of the year 6 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) in mathematics
- We had to review the possible impact, and manage any risk to outcomes for our pupils, of the Local Authority requirement to divert our headteacher to spend some considerable time helping to save a failing school.

I believe the governing body was very effective in meeting these challenges, in addition to its core and statutory responsibilities, and in doing so has continued to help provide the very best outcomes for the children and make the school a positive, supportive learning community.

Sadly, at the end of the school year we said goodbye to some of the long serving members of the governing body, who did not wish to continue in the role.

- Abby Warren has been a Vice Chair of the governing body and Chair of the Community Committee. She also specialized in the Safeguarding aspects of our responsibilities and was very supportive and effective during the OFSTED inspection
- Mandy Wooley has been on the governing body for four years as the Staff governor and in addition was Vice Chair of the Community Committee
- Carina Sime has been Clerk to the Governing Body for six years during which she has kept us organized, taken the minutes of meetings and managed both internal and external communications.

I wish to take this opportunity, on behalf of the governing body, to express our thanks to Abby, Mandy and Carina for the considerable contribution they made in helping us achieve our objectives and the friendly and co-operative way in which they dealt with their responsibilities. They will be missed.

On a brighter note, in October we were joined by Rev Lisa Wigmore the Priest-in-Charge at St Stephens Church Soundwell.

In going forward, I feel we are very fortunate to have a governing body consisting of individuals with a wide range of applicable skills and experience who are committed to our school community and to achieving the best outcomes for our pupils.

The rest of this document gives more detail on the governing body's responsibilities, organization, achievements and plans. I hope that you find it informative and useful. If you have any comments, or you feel you would like to be involved as a governor, you can contact me through the school office.

Philip Webb

Our Responsibilities

The Department for Education (DfE) has defined a number of responsibilities which apply to all governing bodies. The three core ones are:

- Ensuring the school's clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

In addition, there are some duties defined in law which are the responsibility of the governing body including:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Catering for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Catering for children with disability
- Promoting equality and removing prejudice or discrimination
- Content of the curriculum

In carrying out its duties the governing body operates at a strategic planning, monitoring and oversight level while being a "critical friend" to the headteacher and the school leadership team, who are responsible for the day to day operational running of the school.

Our Governance Structure, Membership and Attendance

The governing body of St Stephens (C of E) Junior School (SSJS) is made up of volunteers who were elected, or appointed, by organisations that all have a stake in ensuring the success of the school.

Parent governors are selected from, and elected by, the parents / carers of our pupils; the Local Authority governor is appointed/approved by South Gloucestershire Council; the Staff governor is chosen from, and elected by, the school staff and Foundation governors are appointed by the Church of England Diocese of Bristol.

In addition, Co-opted governors are appointed by the governing body, where a specific skill set or specialised knowledge is required. The governing body also recruits Associate members to serve on one or more committees and provide specific skills or experience, on an ad hoc basis.

The headteacher, by virtue of her position, is a permanent member of the governing body but is not a governor.

Governors all have the same responsibilities; they do not represent their appointers, but are intended to be representative of them.

A Clerk to the Governing Body is appointed to provide it with services including, procedural guidance; minute taking; record keeping and information distribution.

Governors are not educational specialists but bring experience and skills from other professions that help to form an effective governing body. Attendance at meetings is only part of the role, reading and preparation are also required for each meeting and the various actions require following up, often via regular email correspondence.

From September of 2016 until July of 2017 the membership of the governing body was as shown below. Attendance figures include full governing body and committee meetings. Target figures vary as governors do not serve on all committees.

Name	Type of Governor/Member	Meeting Attendance Record
Mr. Philip Webb (Chair)	Co-opted	11 out of 12
Mrs. Nicola Read (Vice Chair)	Foundation	7 out of 7
Mr. Matthew Gait (Vice Chair)	Co-opted	9 out of 9
Mrs. Abby Warren (Vice Chair)	Foundation	❖ 0 out of 8
Ms. Louisa Wilson	Head Teacher	10 out of 14
Rev Lisa Wigmore	Foundation	6 out of 6
Mr. David Hanks	Local Authority	8 out of 9
Mrs. K Parfrey	Parent	7 out of 8
Mrs. Sara Dyte	Parent	6 out of 7
Mrs. Lynsey Sheppard	Parent	6 out of 11
Mrs. Amanda Woolley	Staff	7 out of 8
Mr. Alan Walters	Co-opted	12 out of 14
Mrs. Lynsey Lowrie	Co-opted	7 out of 7
Mrs. Hannah Baker	Associate	No requests to attend
Mrs. Carina Sime	Clerk	14 out of 14

❖ Absence due to ill health and subsequent resignation

Further details about the governors and their roles can be found on the school website.

Effectiveness and Impact of the Governing Body

Supporting the vision of the school

The school's vision is to enable each child:

- to reach their academic potential and be equipped with the skills to be lifelong learners
- to develop into a resilient, well rounded, respectful individual
- to be a positive member of their local and global community
- to have a knowledge of Christian faith and have respect for the beliefs of others
- to come to know themselves, learning to reflect on experiences, exploring important questions of how to live and treat others, and to reach a set of beliefs and values by which to guide their lives
- to be equipped with life skills in order to achieve ambitions and overcome challenges
- to understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle.

These aims will be achieved within a Christian ethos which promotes the values of:

- Friendship
- Honesty
- Perseverance
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Trust

The governing body keeps this vision at the forefront of all of the work they do. Any aims and objectives set and activities completed will contribute in some way to achieving this vision for all our children and their families.

Promoting school improvement

Challenge provided by governors, input from pupils (via Pupil Voice) and contributions from parents and staff (through questionnaires and meetings) means that the whole school community is part the process to identify opportunities to improve learning and to raise standards. The headteacher also works with the Local Authority and Church advisors to identify improvements and assign priorities. These are documented in the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

The governing body monitors achievement of the SIP through regular committee meetings which have clear agendas that include headteacher reports on the completion and impact of SIP actions.

Governors also visit the school take part in learning walks, talking to staff and pupils on different aspects of the SIP, curriculum and school life as well as watching the children at work, to see first-hand the impact of the school's improvement initiatives.

Meeting our responsibilities

In the past school year responsibilities for effective governance were shared between the governing body and its four sub-committees; the Achievement and Provision Committee, the Finance and Resources Committee, the Community Committee and the Foundation Committee

The main achievements were as follows:

- Full Governing Body
 - Reviewed and confirmed the membership and organization of the governing body, the special responsibilities of individual governors [Special Educational Needs, Health and Safety, Safeguarding, e-Safety, Pupil Premium, Equality], and the terms of reference under which the governing body and the committees operate
 - Through recruitment and training ensured that the governing body had the required skills to perform its role
 - Arranged the head teacher's performance review and agreed the recommendations
 - Reviewed and endorsed the School Improvement Plan
 - Put in place a formal protocol covering governor visits to the school and reporting of findings
 - Put in place and executed a schedule of governor visits to the school covering the following topics:
 - Equality
 - Writing
 - Health & Safety
 - e-Safety
 - Management of Lunchtimes & Playtimes
 - Healthy Eating
 - Identification and provision for the need for emotional development (Thrive)
 - Morning Assembly
 - Documented a set of improvement objectives for governance and monitored their achievement
 - Formalized the terms of reference and remuneration for the Clerk to the governing body

- Formalized a new more rigorous procedure for storage and control of policy documentation
- Outlined a procedure for the induction of new governors
- Introduced updated agenda planning documentation for the governing body and committee meetings
- Put in place an improved set of Standing Orders governing the conduct of all meetings including provision for virtual attendance
- Adopted more secure e-mail facilities through the standardized use of Google Mail
- Established shared data storage for governor information using Google Cloud
- Met Department of Education requirements to provide details of governors for inclusion on a national database
- Reviewed the work of the sub-committees and, where required, formally endorsed their actions and decisions especially those related to staffing structure and budget
- Reviewed as the basis of challenge:
 - Head Teacher Reports - which are statements of the academic performance and other aspects of the school operation produced by the head teacher
 - Reports from the Local Authority School Improvement Advisor who visits the school and reports on status of various aspects of its operation
 - Head teacher's reports on Equality Incidents, Bullying and Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Attending training - It is important that governors develop, or refresh, the skills required to perform their role. Last year a number of governors attended formal courses provided by the Governor Services section of the Local Authority. They covered:
 - New Governor Induction
- Conducted Policy reviews

The governing body has in place a set of some 42 policy documents which define the statutory / LA recommended processes that need to be conducted by the school and the rules to be applied when carrying out the process.

As statutory requirements and working practices change over time it is necessary, periodically, to review policies to ensure that they still comply with statute and are still effective and relevant.

This year the governing body (or its Committees) reviewed / updated several policies:

 - Behaviour and Discipline
 - Presentation
 - Handwriting
 - Marking and Feedback
 - Concerns and Complaints
 - Collective Worship
 - Governors Allowance
 - Charging
 - Health and Safety
 - Staff Pay
 - Finance Management

- Achievement and Provision Committee
 - Analysed academic performance data, from both internal and external sources, and questioned /challenged the headteacher on areas where the need improvement was indicated
 - Received and analysed regular reports on the provisions in place for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), and the impact of these provisions
 - Received and analysed regular reports on the provisions in place for children who qualify for Pupil Premium, and the impact of these provisions
 - Monitored the implementation of the elements of the School Improvement Plan relevant to the committee's scope of responsibility
 - Received additional training to better understand performance data available from the RAISE system
 - Discussed changes to curriculum approach to writing

- Community Committee
 - Analysed pupil attendance, behavior and exclusion data and questioned / challenged the headteacher on areas where the need improvement was indicated
 - Requested and analysed information on any equality related incidents
 - Reviewed the criteria for issuing fines to parents for the unauthorized absence of their children
 - Ensured that the school policies and procedures continued to meet the DfE requirements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as defined in their publication 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.
 - Completed the Local Authority audit of provision for Safeguarding
 - Monitored the implementation of the elements of the School Improvement Plan relevant to the committee's scope of responsibility
 - Received briefings on the curriculum activities relating to sporting and other activities where our pupils have been involved with the wider community
 - Reviewed the presentation, accuracy and continued relevance of the information on the school website
 - Reviewed status and methods of improving communication with parents and the wider community

- Finance and Resources Committee
 - Reviewed, discussed and endorsed required staffing numbers and experience levels
 - Reviewed, discussed and approved the school budget proposals
 - Monitored ongoing spend against budget plan and reviewed the impact of any potential underspend / overspend
 - Monitored the management and quality of delivery of the canteen facilities provided by Aspens
 - Reviewed progress against and maintained an ongoing (3 year) plan for maintenance and refurbishment of grounds, buildings and equipment

- Agreed additional / unplanned spend including resurfacing of playground, refurbishment of offices / entrance and the stripping and re-polishing of the hall floor
- Put in place a Continuity Plan to ensure school can continue to operate following significant events (e.g. loss of computer systems, fire, flood)
- Ensured value for money was obtained for any expenditure
- Conducted an audit to ensure compliance to the Local Authority Schools Financial Value Standard
- Ensured an audit of the School Fund took place
- Reviewed and endorsed proposed and actual use of the Pupil Premium Grant and monitored the impact of the spend
- Monitored the implementation of the elements of the School Improvement Plan relevant to the committee's scope of responsibility
- Reviewed and endorsed staff performance management targets
- Endorsed Pay Committee recommendations for staff pay increases
- Conducted Health and Safety inspections
- Reviewed Accident Reports and measures to prevent re-occurrence

- Foundation Governors Committee

The role of the committee is to:

- Monitor of the school's position as a Church of England school and the promotion of the school's Christian foundation and links within the community
- Offer pastoral support to the school
- Promote the importance of the Church of England School ethos
- Ensuring that the school operates correctly particularly in respect to the provision for collective worship, provision for Religious Education and preservation of the assets of the school.

The Priest-in-charge of St Stephens Church is a key member of this committee and the absence of an appointment to this role until the latter part of the school year severely limited its activities.

The Achievement of our Pupils

In the 2016-17 school year our pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 (year 6) recorded a good level of achievement. Key features are as follows:

- For all pupils the percentage working at the expected standard in all subjects is above the national average
- For all pupils the percentage working at the higher standard is in line with the national average for mathematics and above the national average for reading, writing and Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (GPS)
- In all subjects there is an increase in the percentage of pupils working at the expected standard when compared to last year
- The percentage of disadvantaged (Pupil Premium Eligible) pupils working at the expected standard is above the national average in all subjects
- The percentage of pupils working at the expected standard, based on their prior attainment, is in line with or above the national average for all subjects

More information about pupil achievements and progress can be found on the school website.

Our support for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The governing body have a legal requirement to ensure the needs of children with SEN are met. The school SEN Coordinator (SENCO) provided regular reports to the Achievement and Provision Committee which enabled the governing body to monitor the provision for SEN and the results achieved.

Attendance

There is a proven link between good attendance and making good progress. Therefore, governors take this very seriously and monitor it closely. At every Community Committee meeting we discussed lateness and attendance and the school's approach to tackling resulting issues.

In the last school year, the governors supported the school in implementing measures to reduce the level of unauthorized absence, in particular the imposition of fines.

The school attendance figure for the 2016-17 school year was 96.2%. This exceeded our target of 96.1% and was an increase of 0.1% on the previous year.

We will continue to apply the provisions of the Attendance Policy to improve our attendance figure.

Engagement with pupils, parents and the community

The governors value the work of parents and carers and are keen to seek their views.

Surveys and other feedback however indicates that there is a lack of awareness among staff and parents as to who the governors are and what they do. We will continue to take steps to rectify this and encourage engagement.

However, through the Pupil Voice and results of parent and staff questionnaires governors become aware of the issues affecting the school community and can become involved in the decision making process

The Headteacher also works with the whole school community to respond to concerns, plan improvements and identify priorities.

Our current priorities

Our initial planning activity has identified the following as the main priorities for the 2017-18 school year:

- Improve Effectiveness – Based on an analysis of the results of a survey of governors we will plan and implement further improvements to the effectiveness of the governing body
- Address SAT Issues - We will address the issues arising from the decision by the Standards and Testing Agency to annul the results of the year 6 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) in mathematics, to reduce the risk that the situation could re-occur
- Becoming an Academy – We will examine the opportunities to become an academy, the pros and cons of doing so and initiate discussions with all stakeholders on the best future for the school
- Governor Recruitment - To keep the required level of skills and experience available to us for now and in the future we will continue to seek volunteers to serve as governors.
- Governor Induction – Having agreed a framework for our new governor induction process we will complete the implementation by putting in place the required organization and supporting data.

Contacting the Governors

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents – please contact the Chair of Governors via the school office.

A list of Governors is available on the school website and photographs of them can be found in the vestibule of the school.

Minutes of the governing body and committee meetings are public documents and are available to view at the school office on request.