

Governors' Annual Statement to Parents 2020

As we approach the summer holidays, I am pleased to be able to report on the work of the governors this unusual school year.

Our core functions as a Governing Body are to:

- ensure the clarity of **vision, ethos and strategic direction** of the school
- hold the headteacher to account for the **educational performance** of the school and the pupils
- oversee **financial performance** and make sure money is well spent

The team

There are 12 governors: Mrs Jackson (Mr Buttery until Christmas), Rev Liz Hassall, Ann Chappell (Church Foundation), Felicity Stasiak (Local Authority), Catherine Brookes, Pete Wilson (Parents), Mrs Walsh (Mrs Sheppard until Easter) (Staff), Elly Dawson, Laura Saeedi, Norman Jackson, Barbara Lunn, Hugh Porter (Co-opted). Hugh Porter was elected Chair and Rev Liz Vice Chair.

At the beginning of the school year we added an additional co-opted governor because of the level of interest in the local community. In the course of the year both Mr Buttery and Mrs Sheppard left the school. We thank them for their invaluable work as governors.

The full Governing Body met four times in the course of the school year. The last 2 meetings were held virtually using email and video conferencing. There are two committees - Personnel Premises and Finance, and School Improvement - which met once each term except the latter which deferred its summer term meeting. Attendance at meetings was 95%. Details of individual governor's roles and minutes of meetings can be found on the school website. We have a governor linked to each class and they visited in the autumn term. No governor visits were made after February for biosecurity reasons though we have been kept fully informed of developments in the school. There are also governors responsible for safeguarding, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and Looked After Children. Governors do like to hear from the children and their parents and I would like to thank you for completing the annual questionnaire in January this year.

Our vision

Governors are responsible for setting the vision and strategic direction of the school. These are well established and our role is to ensure they are central to the life of the school. Our monitoring visits and comments from the staff, pupils and parents indicate that this is the case. We have also ensured they are reflected in our annual School Development Plan which we have reviewed on 2 occasions this year. We also reviewed many school policies to ensure they reflect the ethos and values that underpin school life. We had intended to revisit and update our school vision and values in the summer term. This will now take place when it is possible to have face to face meetings once again.

Headteacher Appointment

One of the most important tasks for a Governing Body is to appoint a Headteacher. With Mr Buttery leaving in December we advertised his post nationally. Following a rigorous selection process, supported by the York Diocese and the Local Authority, Mrs Jackson was appointed Headteacher and joined us in January. It is fair to say that as a new Headteacher she has had a baptism of fire. Governors have given her their full support in leading the school in very demanding circumstances. She has risen to the challenges wonderfully and shown a level of expertise and sound judgement we could not have expected so early in post. Governors have appreciated how hard she has worked and her care and dedication to all aspects of school life.

Educational performance

The decision to cancel all National Curriculum tests and assessments meant that governors did not have the full data set normally available to judge the educational performance of the school. The School improvement Committee did receive reports on pupil performance up to the point of school closure. This indicated that the

children were making the progress we would normally expect at that stage. Governors were pleased by the progress of looked after and pupil premium children. We have no way of quantifying the impact of the closure and partial reopening at this stage but the committee will begin assessing this when it meets in September.

The committee received reports on the development of the new curriculum, relationships and health education, reporting to parents, and the targeted use of pupil premium and sports funding. Governors also approved the curriculum intent statement which guides our approach to learning.

Financial performance

Our Personnel Premises and Finance (PP&F) Committee set and monitored the school budget to ensure sound financial management and best value. We benchmarked our expenditures against similar schools nationally and found that we are generally in line with them. The school remains in a healthy financial position and is projected to do so over the next 3 years. Governors approved a large capital spend to update our IT hardware and software for use by pupils and staff. We received regular reports on the premises, Health and Safety, GDPR and staffing matters. We approved the staffing structure for 2020-21 and participated in appointments. Biosecurity requirements prevented governors carrying out our annual premises inspection which has been postponed until the autumn.

Safeguarding and child protection

Governors have particular responsibilities to assist the headteacher in ensuring the children are safe in school. We follow the procedures and guidance of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Partnership. Governors have reviewed the appropriate policies and received reports from the Headteacher when specific concerns have arisen. We ensure staff and governors have undertaken the training necessary to keep our children safe in school.

In conclusion

The governors are very grateful to Mrs Jackson and the staff for their hard work throughout the year but especially during the pandemic. The school remained open for vulnerable children and those of keyworkers. From early June staff welcomed back additional children from 3 year groups which involved a large amount of extra work ensuring a biosafe environment and working practices. Staff have provided support in many ways to parents home schooling their children especially through educational materials and regular contact. They have done all of this whilst meeting the needs of their own families in lockdown. Governors are fully aware of the additional stress this has caused and we commend the Headteacher and her staff on their professionalism, care, and dedication to the pupils and their families at all times.

Governors would also like to thank parents and carers for their support of the school throughout this year. We admire the way you have dealt with these unprecedented and very worrying times. We have seen many examples of the successes of home schooling reflecting the hard work of parents and their children. We appreciate your understanding of the pressures on the staff and thank you for the positive feedback you gave in so many lovely ways. It means a lot to everyone.

I would like to thank my fellow governors for their work on behalf of the school. Our role is to support the school but also to monitor and evaluate its work as critical friends. Our emphasis in the second half of the year has been on supporting through the current challenges whilst continuing with our normal work as much as possible. We are very proud of everyone associated with the school. It is a great community.

Hugh Porter

Chair of Governors