

Annual Governance Statement for Dogsthorpe Infant School

September 2016 to July 2017

Introduction

During the academic year the Governing Board of Dogsthorpe Infant School has continued to work with school leaders, staff and stakeholders in carrying out its three core functions:

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

The Board delegates the internal organisation, management and control of the school to the Headteacher, Mrs R Waters. The Headteacher implements the strategic framework established by the Board.

Our Governance Structure

At Dogsthorpe Infant School the Governing Board establishes, monitors and reviews the strategic framework by delegation of responsibilities to three committees. These delegated responsibilities are clearly defined in committee terms of reference which are available on the school website.

The work and reports of each committee are reported to meetings of the full governing board, which meets five times per year. The Chair of Governors is Sue Hartropp.

The Finance and Resources Committee meets twice termly and makes decisions about how the school uses its budget, and oversees personnel and staffing matters. The Committee also has oversight of the development and maintenance of school premises. The Chair of this committee is Al Kingsley.

The Strategic Development Committee meets termly and receives regular reports on the school's implementation of the National Curriculum and scrutinises pupil achievement and progress data. This includes data for the achievement of key groups of learners, for example those eligible for the pupil premium grant, and those who have a special educational need or disability. The Chair of this committee is Catherine Wilson.

The Policies Committee, established during the course of this year, reviews and develops policies identified within the school's policy review programme and in accordance with its delegated powers. Some policies, eg those for Safeguarding and

staff pay and as identified in the Committee's terms of reference, are reviewed by the full governing body. The Committee meets termly and is chaired by Sue Hartropp.

The Board has appointed individual governors to lead on key aspects of the school's provision. Our nominated governor for safeguarding, (Gaynor Mansell), reports termly to the Board about how the school is carrying out its statutory duties for safeguarding; our nominated governor for special educational needs and disabilities, (Catherine Wilson), carries out a similar role for the oversight of the school's provision for this group of learners. Other nominated governors include Al Kingsley for finance. Health and Safety matters are overseen by the Finance and Resources Committee.

Ensuring Clarity of Vision, Ethos and Strategic Direction

This year, the Board has carried out its core function for vision, ethos and strategic direction in the following ways:

- Regular monitoring of the school development plan and progress towards the targets on this. This is carried out through regular discussion based on reports received from the headteacher both at full governing body meetings and in committees, with supportive challenge given for any strands of the development plan which have fallen behind schedule or are on track to achieve their target. This year's development priorities have been wide-ranging, covering all aspects of the school's work and leadership, the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' personal development and welfare (with a special focus on attendance), and improving pupil performance across all sections of the school, and focusing on maths, reading and writing.
- The governors discussed with the headteacher and deputy headteacher the school development priorities for 2017-2018, as part of a full governing body meeting in the Summer term 2017. School staff have also contributed to the planning. The priorities for the next academic year are:
 - To continue to strengthen leadership and management
 - To improve children's speech, language and communication skills
 - To continue to raise standards in writing
 - To enable children with SEND to make good progress in reading, writing and maths
- Governors hold a termly governor day and on these, as well as during governing body meetings, they discuss the ethos and strategic direction for the school. They have discussed the social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of the school – for example the implementation of the Behaviour Policy – and they have reviewed progress towards targets on the School Development Plan – for example for Assessment, Reading and Attendance.
- The views of stakeholders are sought during Local Authority monitoring visits, the headteacher's annual questionnaire for parents, staff and pupils, direct questioning on governor days and at consultation evenings. Aspects of celebration or concern are shared with the governors, and the results of questionnaires and/or discussions with staff and parents are analysed and the results acted upon where necessary – ie by looking at the Behaviour Policy in practice, which was found to be working well, with consistent application of this by staff.

- Governors have also met with the School Council to seek their views on different aspects of the school's work
- The value of partnership working with other schools across the city has been valued highly. The school is part of the self-improving schools' network and is linked with St Thomas More and Old Fletton primary schools. The Chair of Governors is also part of a group which links St Thomas More, Old Fletton and Hampton College Primary Schools. The school has participated in cluster and collaborative work with schools in the city – for example in moderation of work.
- The school has taken a 'bulge year' class in Reception, starting in April 2017, to help with the shortage of school places across the city.

Particular challenges faced this year.

- The continuing embedding of assessment without levels has meant an increased workload for school teaching staff and the senior leadership team
- The academies agenda – an ongoing challenge
- Staffing absences
- Ensuring continuing and appropriate provision for children with specific needs in a climate of nationally and locally diminishing resources.
- Lack of engagement from some parents whose children are too frequently absent, despite the continued intervention from school staff and also governors
- The ongoing challenge of improving attendance and reducing the amount of lateness, although good progress has been made this year for both of these.
- Settling in and managing children in the 'bulge year' class, part way through the year, many of whom have never attended school, and many of whom have English as an additional language

Holding the Headteacher to Account for the Educational Performance of the School

The Governing Board has held the Headteacher to account by raising questions on pupil performance, monitoring the school's programmes and initiatives for raising standards for all children, and assessing the impact of the school's use of resources, including its pupil premium [and sports premium] funding. Governors have supported the Headteacher in ensuring that sufficient funding is available for staff professional development and have ensured that robust staff performance management procedures have been implemented.

Governors focus closely on performance data in Strategic Development Committee meetings, asking challenging questions and pursuing any apparent weaknesses in performance. This challenge is recorded in the meeting minutes, which are published on the school website. Challenge is also given by governors during full governing body meetings, and minuted.

Learning interventions are observed during governor day visits to classes, so that governors can see for themselves how well policies are put into practice, and the way in which interventions help pupils to improve their learning.

Separate governor visits have been carried out to explore the school's use of Pupil Premium funding and the impact of this.

The use of sports premium funding is monitored by governors through reports received from the headteacher at their meetings and by personal observation during governor days.

The continuing professional development of staff is linked closely to the strands of the school development plan and reported by the headteacher to governors on a regular basis. Governors monitor spending on this as well as its success in aiding progress towards the targets on the school development plan and most importantly its impact on pupil outcomes.

Overseeing the Financial Performance of the School

In meeting its third core function of ensuring money is well spent, the Board and Finance and General Purposes Committee have worked to ensure that the school's financial resources are allocated to reflect its strategic priorities. The school's budget for the current financial year (2017-2018) is £1,306,000 of which 72% (£941k) has been allocated to staff salaries and development and a further 6% (75k) to curriculum resources, including ICT. The school plans to retain a reserve of 8% = £90,000 for the purpose of contingency funds.

Governors have visited school regularly to review day to day financial activities as well as undertake a review of site capital projects and repairs and maintenance planning. Separate reviews have been undertaken to review current and future ITC requirements as part of a longer term plan to refresh equipment. After the completion of a major capital project last year, the school is in a stronger financial position for the current financial year.

Our Impact

The impact of the Governing Board's strategic leadership of the school is reflected in the school's success this year. It received a 'good' rating at its Ofsted inspection published in March 2016 – a true recognition of the hard work of all the school staff and especially the headteacher. The report states:

- 'School leaders, including governors, know their school very well. They have effectively focused their efforts and energy in the most important areas, especially improving the quality of teaching and rate of pupils' progress
- Senior leaders and governors regularly monitor the work of the school. They use this information to evaluate what needs changing and make the improvements essential to move the school forward.
- Although many governors are relatively new, they have already formed a very effective team which benefits from a wide range of expertise and experience
- Governors work closely with the headteacher and staff to help maintain the rapid impetus of improvement and ensure that the school provides a good education for all pupils.
- Checks on the progress of pupils are analysed very closely to ensure that pupils do well, and to question and challenge leaders if they do not.
- Governors manage the performance of staff, including teachers, rigorously. Decisions and pay increases are based on a good range of evidence

- Thorough oversight of the school's finances, including the use of additional funding, helps ensure that the school achieves good value for money.
- Under the excellent leadership of the Chair, a national leader in governance, the governing body is both efficient and effective. Governors are ambitious and aspirational, with a clear objective to provide high-quality education.'

Our Plans for the Future

Future plans for ongoing improvements of our school are set out in our Strategic Plan, which is posted on the school website. These include taking the action necessary to enable our children to have the skills, knowledge, understanding, confidence and desire to achieve their very best, enabling them to play an active part as responsible and caring members of the school community and beyond. Children at Dogsthorpe Infant School are all encouraged to 'Dream, Believe, Shine.'

Plans for the future also include:

- Moving to 'Outstanding'
- Increasing parental involvement with the school
- Researching into and identifying relevant opportunities for conversion to an academy, in line with government request, to inform a decision which is in the best interests of the school, all its pupils and the community
- Continuing and developing termly governor days; succession planning and governor recruitment; engagement with local businesses

Contact us

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas. The Chair of Governors (Sue Hartropp) can be contacted through the school office (01733566849) or by emailing her:

Chair@dogsthorpe-inf.peterborough.sch.uk

Details of the membership of the Governing Board, governor attendance at meetings, and other information including meeting minutes of the full governing board and the Strategic Development Committee are published on the school website. Other minutes and information are available on request