

## **Governors' Annual Statement to Parents 2021**

As we approach the summer holidays, I am pleased to be able to report on the work of the governors during this second 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, Rev Liz Hassall - left at Christmas, Ann Chappell, Julie Cater - January onward (Church Foundation), Felicity Stasiak (Local Authority), Catherine Brookes, Pete Wilson (Parents), Mrs Walsh (Staff), Elly Dawson, Laura Saeedi, Norman Jackson, Barbara Lunn, Hugh Porter (Co-opted). Hugh Porter was Chair for the year.

We were sad to lose Rev Liz as she moved to her new post in York. Ann Chappell is stepping down after more than 12 years though happily she will continue to be involved with the school. Catherine Brookes is also relinquishing her post but has offered her continued support. Felicity Stasiak's term as Local Authority governor has come to an end. We thank them all for their invaluable work as governors. James Champion will take Catherine's place as parent governor from September. Governors would like to appoint Edgar Seligmann to replace Felicity. We will have a vacancy for a Church foundation governor until Liz's replacement has been appointed.

The full Governing Body met four times in the course of the school year. All meetings were held virtually using Microsoft Teams. There are three committees - Personnel Premises and Finance, School Improvement and Headteacher's Performance Management. The first two met each term and the third twice in the year. Attendance at meetings was 93%. Details of individual governors and minutes of meetings can be found on the school website. A governor is linked to each school subject and they held virtual meetings with the subject leaders. There are also governors responsible for safeguarding, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and Looked After Children. Governors do like to know parents' opinions and I would like to thank you for completing the regular survey questionnaires sent out by Mrs Jackson.

### **Our vision**

Governors are responsible for setting the vision and strategic direction of the school. This term we consulted widely on a new vision and this was adopted by governors in June. We also developed a new Strategic Plan(2021-24). Both have been issued to parents. Governors are grateful to Mrs Jackson for her work on these important initiatives. The vision and strategic plan are implemented through our annual School Improvement Plan. Governors reviewed progress on the plan three times this year and agreed the basis of the 2021-22 plan. Given the disrupted nature of this school year we were impressed by the progress the school has made in many areas. We also reviewed many school policies to ensure they continue to reflect the ethos and values that underpin school life as well as statutory requirements.

### **Educational performance**

The decision once again 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 staff have however conducted formal assessments (including NFER tests) each term to gather evidence on pupil performance and in particular areas of learning deficit caused by disrupted schooling. The School Improvement Committee reviewed the data from these assessments. This indicated that many older children were making the progress we would expect. Inevitably younger children were more affected as they are less able to benefit from online learning. Governors were pleased by the progress of pupils with special educational needs. That the pandemic has not had a significantly detrimental impact on the children's education is testament to the work of parents in supporting home schooling and the hard work of the staff in enabling virtual learning and the catch up work undertaken back in school.

This year governors have focused particularly on the school curriculum and the children's learning experience in the classroom. We moved from class to subject linked governors to support our monitoring in this area. The school has exciting plans for the curriculum moving forward and governors are keen to support them.

### **Financial performance**

Our Personnel Premises and Finance 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. 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 support the installation of a Walk a Mile track to promote physical and mental wellbeing and enable use of the school field year round. We received regular reports on the premises, health and safety, biosecurity risk assessments and practices, and staffing matters. We approved the staffing structure for 2021-22 and participated in appointments. We have focused in particular on the use of Catch Up funding as well as the Pupil and Sports Premium grants.

### **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 Children Partnership. Governors have reviewed the appropriate policies and received the Headteacher's Annual Safeguarding Report. We ensure staff and governors have undertaken the training necessary to keep our children safe.

### **In conclusion**

The governors are very grateful to Mrs Jackson and the staff for their hard work throughout this very unusual school year. Staff went above and beyond to support parents home schooling their children especially through excellent online learning resources and regular contact. When we have been lucky enough to have the children in school the staff have worked extremely hard to keep them safe and catch up with lost learning. Governors are fully aware of the additional stress this has caused and we commend the Headteacher and her staff for their professionalism, care, and dedication to the pupils and their families at all times.

Last year I wrote this: "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 make no apology for including it again as it reflects your part once again this year in helping create the soul of our school.

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. We can only do this successfully with the full co-operation of the staff. I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Mrs Jackson for the time and effort she has given to keep governors fully informed and respond to their challenges. It has been a terrifically demanding year for her but she has been unstinting in supporting us in fulfilling our role.

**Hugh Porter**

**Chair of Governors**