

Galleywood Infant School



Annual Report of Governors for 2015/16

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to record for the benefit of all stakeholders a summary of the activity undertaken by the Full Governing Body (FGB) during the Year.

2. Membership and meetings

During the past year the FGB comprised the following membership:

- 1 Governor appointed by Essex County Council

- The Head Teacher

- 1 Staff Governor (elected by all staff)

- 3 Parent Governors (elected by parents)

- 5 co-opted Governors

In addition we have also had 2 Associate Governors, who are not formally part of the FGB but who attend and make valuable contributions.

During the year the FGB met formally on 4 occasions and held a further, informal strategic planning meeting.

At the beginning of this year, we revised our committee arrangements and have operated with 4 main committees, Learning & Ethos, Resources, Data and Pay & Performance; each of these committee has met at least 3 times during the year. Governors are members of at least 1 of the committees and in most cases attend more. We also have other committees which meet as and when required.

3. School Development

Each year the FGB approves a School Improvement Plan. This covers a rolling 3 year period and sets out objectives for maintaining and continually improving the school. It covers matters ranging from school premises, safety, staffing and of course teaching. Throughout the year, we monitor progress against the Plan and where necessary make adjustments to priorities.

4. Monitoring Visits

The Governors arrange a programme of monitoring visits during the year and each non staff Governor aims to attend at least 2 such visits. We aim to plan our monitoring visits to particularly check progress against the priorities within the School Improvement Plan. During this year we have tried, in our visits, to increase the time we spend speaking to the children to make sure that we get their views on school life. The non staff Governors are not education experts or professionals and as such we do not try to assess the professional standards of the teaching that we see. The visits do however enable us to see how the priorities are being pursued and with what level of success. For example, in this current year, improving the standard of Maths across the school was a key priority and during our visits we have been able to see staff have adopted different approaches and how the children have responded to that. The visits also help us to witness the day to day operation of the

school. Each monitoring visit is followed up with a report to the FGB and, usually, discussions with the Head and appropriate staff. If any action is required as a consequence of a visit, the FGB monitors the implementation of that.

School staff, and the children, always make us welcome and we hope they find our input helpful.

5. Head Teacher performance

A significant role for the Governors is to monitor and assess the performance of the Head Teacher (HT). A panel of Governors undertakes this. We agree with the HT a set of objectives for the year and meet with her twice during the year to review performance against these. The HT similarly sets objectives for other staff and regularly assesses how these are being met. All of these objectives, for HT and other staff, are linked to the School Improvement Plan. To assist us, for the objective setting and main review meeting, we buy in the services of an experienced schools advisor. This provides us with a skilled and independent view.

6. Skills and Training

In order to ensure that members of the FGB have a wide and appropriate range of skills, we maintain a 'skills audit' capturing the particular talents that each Governor offers to the FGB. That helps us to ensure that we focus our contributions where they can be of most benefit, and ensure that where we identify gaps we can aim to correct that.

Governors attend appropriate training during the year to ensure that necessary skills and understanding are up to date. Governors report, at each FGB meeting, on training they have undertaken and this is recorded in minutes. In addition to individual Governors attending external training, we also have each year, at least 1 joint training session for which we bring in an external tutor on a currently significant topic. During the current year we spent this session learning how we can continually raise our, already high, achievement standards across the school.

7. Governance

Our school is a significant, publicly funded, community resource and as with any sizeable organisation it is important that the Governance arrangements are appropriate, and robustly implemented. At least once during each year, Governors undertake a thorough check of our operational arrangements to ensure that they remain suitable and that they are utilised properly. We are supported in that by buying in, when appropriate, external assistance; for example we have checks on our financial arrangements and specific educational tasks.

A major task for us is to ensure that the School remains operational within the resources that are allocated to us. During the year, it became clear that the financial pressures on us in the coming years were increasing and accordingly, we felt it right to review our staff structure. Arising from that we decided it was appropriate to make changes which unfortunately required some redundancies. We are confident

that despite the consequent loss of many years of experience, the staff structure that we now have in place will enable us to maintain our performance standards.

8. Joint working with St Michaels Junior school

We maintain close cooperation with the junior school on all matters that impact on both schools. A major aspect of that is ensuring that the transition from our school to the juniors is as smooth and successful as possible. Our staff groups work increasingly closely to aim to deliver that easy transition.

9. Safety

During this year, Governors have continued to be concerned at the level of careless and inconsiderate actions of some people in dropping off and collecting children at school. We want to do all that we can to avoid the types of accidents and incidents that we know have occurred at other schools. This is a problem that arises at many schools and finding local solutions is not easy. We have taken advice from various statutory agencies and will continue to seek further actions that we can take. We believe that some of the traffic behaviour outside school is illegal; we have compiled details and are now forwarding that to Essex Police.

10. Visibility of Governors

Whilst parent and staff Governors have daily contact with school families, others of us fulfil our roles somewhat behind the scenes through meetings and daytime visits. However we recognise that we do need to be accountable for what we do and that has prompted the preparation of this report. Accompanying this report on the school website, you can find brief profiles of Governors.

11. The future

Parents will be aware that, for some years now, Government policy has been to encourage schools to adopt Academy status. Earlier this year, there was some suggestion that the Government might introduce legislation to force all schools to pursue this; although that now seems not to be the case, it is clear that the Government intends to encourage all schools becoming academies within the period of this Parliament. Over the past few years, Governors have taken the view that, at the time, it was not appropriate for us. With the added Government push on this, it is right that we look again at this question. Accordingly we plan, early in the new school year to set aside time to consider all aspects of Academy status and whether it is now the time for us to move in that direction.

12. Conclusion

Each year brings different challenges for governance of the school and 2015/16 has been no exception to that. During the year we welcomed 4 new Governors, who have very quickly made highly useful contributions to school life.

It is now 5 years since the school was last subject to an OFSTED inspection and we can anticipate that it will not be too much longer before we are re-visited. The school aims to maintain high standards in all that we do and the FGB tries to ensure, sometimes by buying in external inspections, that everything about the school is

maintained at a level that will enable us to anticipate an OFSTED inspection with confidence.

We understand that OFSTED will often pay particular attention to 3 key issues for Governors; strategic vision for the school, accountability for performance, financial responsibility. We aim to ensure that the school is well equipped to satisfy scrutiny of these issues.

Our shared aim is to continue to do all that we can to ensure the school offers our young people the best possible opportunities and hope that will, at the appropriate time, be confirmed as and when we are inspected externally.

13. Contact

The names, and short profiles, of each of the Governors are on the School Website and our photos are in the school entrance lobby. We are happy to be contacted by parents, friends who wish to discuss any aspect of the school's activity. We can be contacted either via an email to the school or by letter via the school; if something is confidential, please put in sealed envelope marked for personal attention of a named Governor or the chair of Governors.