



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. Governors have a wide range of responsibilities but consider they fall into 3 main tasks: ensuring a 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.

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 1 Associate Governor, who is not formally part of the FGB but who attends and makes valuable contributions.

All governors clarify, on a regular basis, any other interests that might conflict with their role as Governor.

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

During this year we 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.

All meetings held have been well attended by Governors and have all been quorate.

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. We always try to ensure that, in our visits, we spend time 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. During this year, continuing improvement in the standard of Maths across the school was a key priority and during our visits we have been able to observe various ways in which staff have been attempting to secure this and how the

children have responded. 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. Staff 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 had 2 training sessions for which we bought in an external tutor on currently significant topics; we focused these sessions on Child Safeguarding arrangements and preparations for any imminent OFSTED Inspection.

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. Governors aim to continually check that our operational arrangements 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. Alongside preparing a budget for each new year, Governors attempt to project the financial position for the school over a rolling 3 year period.

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 continued to work increasingly closely to aim to deliver that easy transition.

9. Safety

During this year, Governors remained 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 continued to take advice from appropriate statutory agencies and will take whatever actions we can. The real solution however lies with those of you who deliver and collect children from school. We know that the vast majority of our children live a short distance from the school and there ought to be no reason for many of them to travel to and from school by car. Please avoid this as much as possible and, when it is necessary, take every possible care to comply with traffic and safety considerations.

Visibility of Governors

10. The future

Government policy continues to encourage schools to adopt Academy status although, with a few exceptions, there is currently no formal requirement for schools to pursue this course. Governors have continued to monitor the political and legal aspects of the situation as well as aiming to ensure that the school is in the best position to benefit from any changes that might be made. Governors will continue with that course and will take appropriate action as and when that seems beneficial for the school.

11. Conclusion

2016/2017 has been another busy and challenging year for the school. Significant staffing changes were made at the beginning of the year and it is pleasing to note that school performance has certainly not suffered from those changes.

It is 6 years since the school was last subject to an OFSTED inspection. It remains unclear when we may be subject to further inspection but Governors are determined that all aspects of the school's operation should be maintained at the highest possible level so that, if and when external inspection occurs, we can be confident. Governors' main focus has to be on the main tasks of ensuring a strategic vision for the school, accountability for performance and for financial responsibility - we aim to ensure that the school is well equipped to satisfy scrutiny of these issues.

Our overriding aim though is to continue to do all that we can to ensure the school offers our young people the best possible opportunities.

12. Contact

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.

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 and 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.