



## **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/20**

### **The Governing Body Structure**

Borough Green Primary School had a full governing board throughout the 2019-20 academic year, all twelve positions filled as per the following structure –

- 2 Parent Governors appointed by ballot of the parents at the school
- 1 Local Authority Governor appointed by the Local Authority
- 1 Staff Governor appointed by ballot of the staff
- 1 Headteacher
- 2 Partnership Governors appointed by the Governing Body
- 5 Co-opted Governors appointed by the Governing Body based on a skills audit

The Governing Body appoints a professional Clerk who is responsible for arranging meetings, taking minutes and following up on all actions. The Clerk also advises on procedural matters and plays a key role in the work of the Governing Body.

Governors are volunteers who apply for and are appointed to their roles (except for the Headteacher), are independent and have equal status to each other. A Chair and Vice Chair are elected by the Governing Body and work closely together with the Headteacher and the Clerk.

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the three core strategic functions of the Governing Body at Borough Green Primary School are:

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

The BGPS Governing Body is proud of the inclusive, welcoming ethos of the school and offers support and encouragement to the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team to help the progress and success of the school.

The full governing body meets eight times over the academic year to inspect, review and agree official documents, such as policies, Headteacher reports and, most notably, the School Improvement Plan. This annual planning document is used to identify the key areas on which the school and the Governing Body wish to focus during the academic year. It includes scheduled milestones and measures to assist with ongoing monitoring as well as impact indicators so that the Governing Body can assure itself that the actions taken within the plan will improve teaching and learning outcomes for all children.

The BGPS Governing Body uses the Circle model for monitoring specific areas, whereby governors are divided into pairs and formally visit the school at least 3 times during the year to monitor key priority areas. Formal monitoring visits allow Governors the opportunity to observe and communicate with staff and pupils to ensure that actions agreed in the School Improvement Plan are being actively undertaken by the school. After each visit, a formal report is prepared and presented at the next Governing Body meeting.

The Headteacher's Appraisal Committee is supported by an external advisor. Additionally, there is a facility to bring together small panel/committees as and when needed. The Governing Body has set up Terms of Reference for a Joint Panel with Wateringbury Primary School, in order that we may collaborate, share training and support each other as necessary.

The Chair of Governors has regular meetings with the Headteacher and Clerk outside of full Governing Body meetings.

Governors are also encouraged to visit the school informally for events such as a whole school assembly or a school play to better familiarise themselves with the school and its pupils, or parents' open days to offer a governor presence, and/or supporting fundraising events organised by the Parent Teacher Association.

The Governing Body and the committees all have clear terms of reference and all Governors are required to abide by a Code of Conduct.

### **Year 2019/20 - Meetings, Monitoring Visits and Focus areas**

The 2019/20 academic year has been extraordinary with the ordered closure of all schools in term 4 to reduce the spread of Covid-19. With this in mind, it is necessary to view the year in two halves. At the start of the year, specific areas for monitoring visits were agreed:

- Early Years and Nursery,
  - Health & Safety,
  - Safeguarding,
  - Finance,
  - SEND and Pupil Premium,
  - Teaching & Learning.
  - GPS & Writing
  - Sports & wellbeing
  - Foundation Subjects & High Score
  - GDPR
- (Governor Training & Development is monitored separately.)

Behaviour was to be observed by all monitoring pairs visiting the school while pupils are present and included in their reports as an additional section.

**12<sup>th</sup> September 2019** – FGB meeting in school, attendance 11/12.

Governors reviewed monitoring areas and began focus on a long-term vision for the school, a 5 year aspirational plan to be gradually incorporated into the School Improvement Plan throughout the year.

**17<sup>th</sup> October** – in school, attendance 7/12

Introduced 'hot topics' for the subject link governor to discuss with the rest of the governing body at alternate meetings, to achieve deeper understanding of certain topics and improve skills audit.

**28<sup>th</sup> November** – in school, attendance 9/12  
Safeguarding discussed as 'hot topic'.

**16<sup>th</sup> January 2020** – in school, attendance 10/12

**19<sup>th</sup> March** – with the Coronavirus crisis at its most severe, the meeting was rescheduled to daytime as a matter of urgency to discuss the imminent closure of the school. Attendance 9/12, two governors joined via video link.

Three additional emergency meetings followed, all performed remotely, as the governing body tried to keep abreast of the constant changes to DfE advice and government guidelines, to support the Headteacher and all staff as they worked through uncertainty and difficulty.

**9<sup>th</sup> April** – attendance 11/12

**23<sup>rd</sup> April** – attendance 11/12

**29<sup>th</sup> April** – attendance 8/12

**14<sup>th</sup> May** – remote meeting, attendance 9/12

Unable to continue working towards targets originally set out at the beginning of the year, the Governing Body shifted its focus to the pressing issues of finance and well-being until the end of the academic year.

**25<sup>th</sup> June** – remote meeting, attendance 12/12

**16<sup>th</sup> July** – remote meeting, attendance 12/12

Considering the extra demands on the Governing Body this year, the overall attendance and commitment of Governors has been excellent. Every meeting has been quorate and they have fulfilled all statutory duties during the school year.

### **Governing Body Skills & Knowledge Development**

The Governing Body recognises that to effectively fulfil its role, it must ensure that all of its Governors have the required skills and knowledge to support the achievement of the school's priority objectives. Recognising the importance of training and development, the Governing Body has a Training Policy in place and appoints a Training Governor to ensure that there is a committed and consistent focus on the areas where the Governing Body needs to develop. Continuous personal and corporate development draws on training provided by the Local Authority, by members of the school's leadership team, and by access to provision (particularly in respect of welfare and safeguarding) offered online by the DfE and other government agencies. Regular skills audits are undertaken to identify and address any skills gaps together with an annual self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the Governing Body over the school year.

All governors completed a self-evaluated skills audit in June 2020, results identified significant increases in the areas that required improvement.

Due to the Coronavirus crisis, training is currently only available online, the Clerk is updating Governors on alternative courses and resources available to develop and improve overall skill levels.

A 360 Chair review was completed by all governors and reviewed in February 2020.

The Governing Body is a member of the National Governors Association and uses this and other relevant information channels to ensure it remains abreast and up to date on relevant developments in the education sector.

### **Governor focus areas for 2020/21**

The Governing Body will continue as a priority to closely monitor the wellbeing of Headteacher, staff, pupils and parent communities as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect school and home life.

Specific monitoring areas have been reduced at the start of the year, or simplified, to allow time to continue to closely monitor well-being and the measures in place to help pupils' progress to get back on track.

- Early Years and Nursery
- Health & Safety
- Safeguarding
- Finance
- SEND and Pupil Premium
- Teaching & Learning – with additional focus on writing and 'closing the gap'.  
(Governor Training & Development separately.)

Monitoring visits can continue but shorter durations or remote meetings are acceptable.

The Governing Body will continue to meet remotely in term 1 and review meeting options as circumstances and guidelines unfold.

They will return to the long-term vision for the school and assess what is still relevant and achievable under new circumstances, remaining mindful that operations are vulnerable to sudden change.