

Annual Governance Statement

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/24

Whole School Aim

'Learning Together with Kind Hearts and Determined Minds'.

School Value

'Belonging – Generosity – Mastery – Independence'

Governors' Role

The Governing Body is key to the leadership of Borough Green Primary School. The Governing Body supports and challenges the Headteacher to continually improve the School and provide the best education for every child. This Annual Governance Statement is one way in which the Governing Body communicates its work and the impact we have had on school improvement to our stakeholders.

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 Governing Body Structure

The Governing Body is made up of a group of volunteers who bring a range of skills and expertise and come from a variety of backgrounds. Governors are committed to improving the education of every child in our School and invest a huge amount of good will, hard work and time.

Borough Green Primary School had a full membership of our Governing Body throughout the 2023/24 academic year, with 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 and crucial role in the work of the Governing Body.

Five new governors joined the Governing Body during 2023/24, filling or replacing one Co-opted, one Parent and two Partnership Governors whose term of office had been completed. The chair and vice chair are elected by the Governing Body and work closely with the Headteacher and the clerk. In September 2023, the Governing Body elected Charles Copping and Claire Nash as Co-Chairs of Governors and Stephen Cole as Vice Chair.

Attendance of each Governor is monitored and recorded. The table below is a summary of the attendance for each Governor during the 2023/24 year.

| Name of Governor | Attendance |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Alistair George Booth Co-opted Governor | 2 out of 3 (Resigned) |
| Jemma Bale (nee Butterfield) Staff Governor | 5 out of 8 |
| Stephen Cole Parent Governor | 9 out of 10 |
| Charles Copping Co-opted Governor | 9 out of 10 |
| Gail Cox Partnership Governor | 2 out of 2 (New Governor) |
| Tammy Flower Partnership Governor | 7 out of 9 (New Governor) |
| Julie Harvey Co-opted Governor | 8 out of 10 |
| Jayne Ingman Co-opted Governor | 6 out of 7 (New Governor) |
| Karen Jackson Ex-officio Governor | 2 out of 2 (New Headteacher) |
| Claire Nash Co-opted Governor | 9 out of 10 |
| Richard Pearce Parent Governor | 2 out of 2 (Resigned) |
| Gary Redrup Partnership Governor | 1 out of 3 (New Governor / Resigned) |
| Ben Taylor Local Authority Governor | 9 out of 10 |
| Faye Wood Parent Governor | 8 out of 8 (New Governor) |

Training

To effectively fulfil its role, the Governing Body must ensure that all its governors have the required skills and knowledge to support the achievement of the School's priority objectives. All members of Governing Body have undertaken extensive training and, supported by the training governor, continue to do so.

Mandatory training such as Safeguarding and PREVENT were carried out during the academic year. The Governing Body used a mixture of online and in person courses/ training sessions to further their knowledge and understanding for the monitoring areas they are responsible for such as finance, health and safety and safer recruitment training.

The impact of this is that the Governing Body has kept up to date regarding the latest requirements and expectations from the Department for Education, vital during this period of uncertainty with policies and plans changing rapidly, and governors are able to understand and challenge the information and data presented to them.

Impact of Full Governing Body Meetings

The Full Governing Body met ten times over the 2023/24 academic year to inspect, review and agree school policies and monitor progress against the School Improvement Plan which identifies the key areas on which the School and the Governing Body wish to focus during the academic year. The School Improvement Plan includes measures and milestones that the Governing Body uses to satisfy itself that progress is being made against objectives and that all actions being taken are improving teaching and learning outcomes for all children.

The Governing Body met either virtually or face to face over the 2023/24 period. Two meetings were conducted virtually with the rest in person. Every meeting was quorate and overall attendance and commitment by governors remaining high.

The Full Governing Body continued at each meeting and during monitoring visits, to question the School on its decisions and actions. This was to ensure that the School's standards and expectations remained high and that pupils from all backgrounds and abilities were supported. Information from data, Headteacher reports and monitoring visits enabled the Governing Body to scrutinise pupil progress across all areas including vulnerable groups.

The particular areas of focus for 2023/24 were:

- Quality of Education
- Behavior & Attitudes
- Personal Development
- Leadership & Management
- Early Years Provision
- SEND

The school budget was scrutinized and reviewed in detail at Full Governing Body meetings, as well as by the finance monitoring pair who have professional finance experience and who meet regularly with the School's finance officer and Schools Financial Services. Using benchmarking information, governors compare the School's spending with similar schools and ensure resources are being used in the most effective ways to support the best education outcomes for all children.

Ofsted

At the beginning of March, the School was visited by Ofsted as part of their inspection process. Governors met with the lead inspector who questioned Governors on a range of issues which focused on:

- How we knew that what the School told us was what actually was happening on the ground
- How we knew what the School was doing was right. e.g. safeguarding
- KCC SEND provision
- Attendance

Following the inspection, Ofsted sent out their report which noted that *“Governors are well trained and active in their roles. They provide an appropriate level of challenge and support to help move the school forward. Staff feel well supported, and the school benefits from a positive relationship with its community.”*

Governors were pleased to maintain the Good rating particularly given the many changes that the School had during the 2023/24.

A full copy of the Ofsted inspection report is available on the School website.

Leadership

Following the resignation of the former Headteacher, in September 2023 the Governing Body undertook a review of the Strategic Options for Borough Green Primary School. Following this review, Governors recommended the appointment of a new substantive Headteacher. The appointment process commenced in October 2023 and culminated in February 2024. Governors were pleased to be able to appoint of Mrs. Karen Jackson, who commenced at the start of the Summer Term 2024.

During the Summer Term, the Governing Body received and accepted the resignation of the Acting Deputy Headteacher. The Governing Body commenced the search for a replacement Deputy Headteacher in May 2024. The process will conclude in the new academic year (September / October 2024).

Monitoring Focus Areas in 2023/24

BGPS Governing Body uses the Circle model of governance. Governors are divided into pairs (as detailed below) and usually formally visit the school up to 3 times during the year to monitor priority areas.

Governors use monitoring visits as a chance to get to know the School better, to observe and communicate with staff and to hear the pupil voice. Visits enable governors to ensure that actions agreed in the School Development Plan are being taken forward by the School. A monitoring visit report is prepared and presented at the Governing Body meeting following the visit, allowing other governors to ask questions.

In 2023/24, Governors conducted 27 monitoring visits, including mandatory areas such as Finance, Safeguarding, SEND and Health & Safety.

Specific governor monitoring areas identified for 2023/24 were:

- Leadership and Management (3 visits)
- Early Years and Nursery (3 visits)
- Health & Safety (3 visits)
- Safeguarding (3 visits)
- Finance (6 visits)
- SEND and Pupil Premium (3 visits)
- Teaching & Learning (3 visits)
- Governor Training & Skills
- Website Compliance (2 visits)
- Wellbeing – there is no separate wellbeing monitoring pair, as all governors looked at staff and pupil wellbeing on every visit. Governors did however appoint a Governors to focus on wellbeing moving forwards.
- SATS Monitoring (1 visit)

Performance Management

Headteacher Review - Due to their being no substantive Headteacher until the Summer Term no performance review was completed during the academic year. This will be completed in 2024/25.

Clerks Appraisal – Whilst not a mandatory requirement, good practice suggests that the Clerks performance is monitored and reviewed. This was completed in July 2024 with the Clerk meeting all of her set objectives. New objectives were set for the 2024/25 academic year.

Governors Appraisal – A skills audit was conducted in September 2023 and July 2024 to identify the breadth and depth of skills within the Governing Body as well as to identify areas that needed strengthening. This enabled the Governing Body to ensure that suitable Governors continue to be recruited as required.

Governor focus areas for 2024/25

One of the core objectives of the Governing Body is to “Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction”. To meet this objective, in September 2024, the Governing Body will undertake a review of the Schools focus to provide a direction of travel for the next 3-5 years. This will be presented to stakeholders at the end of Term 1.

Following the resignation of the Acting Deputy Headteacher, the Governing Body have already commenced the search for a replacement. The Governing Body will look to make an appointment in September / October 2024 ready for a January 2025 start.

The School Development Plan for the 2024/25 academic year focuses on the areas below, the progress of which will be monitored during Governor monitoring visits:

- The Quality of Education
- Behaviour and Attitudes
- Personal Development
- Leadership and Management
- Early Years Provision
- SEND

Over the 2023/24 period, Governors appointed a number of experienced Governors to the Board. Despite this experience, Governors remain committed to personal development (including training) to ensure the Headteacher, SLT and staff are appropriately challenged.

The Governing Body, the Headteacher and senior management team and indeed all members of staff are constantly striving to improve and develop the School.

During 2024/25, monitoring pairs will continue to focus on their key focus areas but will also continue to report on general wellbeing of staff, pupils and safeguarding in general.

Governors will continue their work to improve communication with parents and carers, pupils and the community.