

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT RECREATION ROAD INFANT SCHOOL

Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Board of Recreation Road Infant School – July 2017

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the three core strategic functions of Recreation Road Infant School Governing Board are:

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

Governance Arrangements

The constitution of the Governing Board remains unchanged and the group consists of the Headteacher, one Staff Governor, two elected Parent Governors, one Local Authority Governor and seven co-opted Governors. Co-opted Governors are those who have the essential skills and commitment to the school in order to ensure effective governance to support the school's ongoing success. They bring skills from the world of education, finance, research, media, architecture, all of which are valuable resources for the school. During the year a member of the non-teaching staff has become an Associate Governor in order to ensure this large group of staff has direct representation.

The Full Governing Board meets each half-term plus an additional meeting in April to approve the annual budget. Two committees also meet half-termly in order to focus more directly on specific aspects of school life. These groups are Teaching and Learning who consider what happens in the classroom and wider educational developments whilst the Resources committee focuses on staffing, premises and finance. Each committee feeds into full Governor meetings making recommendations to that wider group. Papers of both committees are available to all members. Each Governor has a specific area of responsibility which is matched to areas of the School Development Plan.

All Governor meetings are professionally clerked and supported by a member of the County's clerking service.

Attendance Record of Governors

Our Governors continue to display a high level of commitment to their role and meeting attendance figures are shown later in this statement. At no time has a meeting had to be cancelled because it failed to be quorate, so ensuring essential decisions could always be made in a timely manner.

Summary of areas of work undertaken by Committees and Full Board meetings

- Governors have continued to keep alert to the ever changing educational landscape and have aimed to be proactive in ensuring the school is ready to meet the ongoing changes which confront school leaders today. All Governors are now signed up to a support resource called 'The Key' which provides regular and up to date information, comment and resources on all the latest educational statements.
- Our Pupil Premium funding which is designed to add value to some of our more vulnerable pupils had been carefully spent and monitored to ensure that the gap between attainment of these pupils and others has been significantly reduced. Special Needs pupil progress has also been monitored to ensure that all pupils are achieving their true potential. The work of our support staff cannot be underestimated in this respect – they have made an outstanding contribution to our children and are a vital part of our school community.
- We have been very encouraged to see how the work of The Nest has developed during the year and know just how much this has impacted not only on the children but also the families of those who have benefitted from this support. It is hoped that the national Nurture Award will be secured in the very near future.
- Teaching and Learning committee has continued to concentrate on the excellent work which goes on in our classrooms but special emphasis has been placed on the use of data management; changes to KS1 SATs and the impact of this on classroom practice; further developments in the way phonics is delivered; closing the gap in specific areas of attainment; changes in the way in which reporting to parents is managed and the time at which these documents are sent out; ongoing development of Mantle of the Expert and the school's role as a lead school in this field. The results for this year again reflect the incredible work which takes place in our classrooms by our dedicated staff. Excellent transition arrangements are again taking place to ensure pupils both arrive and leave our school as well prepared as they can be. Each year we see further refinements and improvements in this area.
- Resources have been looking at further material improvements to the school fabric and projects which have taken place during the year have seen the new canopies for more classrooms and the laying of further areas of astro-turf is scheduled for this summer. Discussions are ongoing as to how further small working areas might be created within the building in order to maximize existing space to the full. One of the biggest challenges facing this group is to continue to monitor the school budget in an atmosphere of many unknowns and ever tightening of resources. The new National Funding Formula is still awaited and this will necessitate very careful consideration in the coming months. We are more fortunate that some of our other local schools in being able to manage the increase in pay required without having to cut staff but this is an ongoing challenge as we face the future. We are extremely fortunate in the skills of our School Support Manager for her very wise management of our accounts.
- Health and Safety checks have been regularly undertaken by a Governor including attendance at a fire practice. We are very aware that the safety of our children and staff must be one of our key areas of responsibility.

- Given the very high national profile of Safeguarding, we now have two Governors sharing this responsibility. There are regular updates to all Governors and a Governor has worked with the school on the requested return to the Local Authority audit of Safeguarding. Termly monitoring checks on the Single Central Record have now been built in for a Governor to carry out alongside the nominated leads.
- This year's Governor In School Day focused on Equality which is an area of the School Development Plan and one where we are working towards a national award. We considered this in as many ways as we could taking in aspects of classroom practice; inclusion of all children to meet their needs; integration of support staff into classrooms, lunchtimes, their own well being; range of literature and resources in use; displays around the building; pupils with English as a Second Language to name some of the areas we reviewed. As always this is an incredibly useful day giving us a real insight into the exciting opportunities in which our pupils are involved on a daily basis. Our thanks to the school for welcoming us in this way.
- Our school budget still remains in a strong position but we are undertaking a longer financial review in the light of likely government cuts in real terms to our annual budget. We need to be prepared for making planned savings whilst not undermining our core purpose to deliver the best possible education to the children in our care.
- There is an area of work which has been ongoing throughout the year and that is our close working with a group of schools to consider the possible formation of a Multi Academy Trust under the cooperative model. This is a major undertaking and already many hours have been spent considering the options, the advantages and the pitfalls. We still have time on our hands but there is an enormous amount of work needed if we are to be in a position to bring forward a proposal to create such a group. We want to be in control of our own destiny and are talking with like-minded good and outstanding schools, both mainstream and special. These discussions will continue and nothing is likely to happen during the rest of 2017 although there may be significant decisions to be made in 2018. Once plans become clearer we will ensure that all stakeholders will be kept informed.
- As you all know, we have now received the resignation of our headteacher, Serena Dixon, as from the end of 2017. Much more will be said about the amazing work she has done during her years at the school but for this year it has presented the Governors with their biggest challenge and a task which is their sole responsibility – that of appointing a new head for January 2018. We have been supported in this by the Local Authority and in July, Michael Bunting, currently deputy and co-head, was appointed to lead the school forward into a new era.
- We have continued our ongoing responsibility of reviewing school policies, many of them now being reviewed annually and these are all available on the school's website
- Minutes of the Full Governing Board and of the sub-committees are public documents which may be found on the school's website or by making a request at the school office.

Future Plans

- Staffing development and supporting the new headteacher as they establish themselves into this challenging role.
- The academisation process will continue to remain high on our agenda as this is one of the biggest decisions we shall need to take. It is very likely a decision will be made during the coming academic year.
- Budget planning will also need to remain high in view of proposed government funding changes.
- Effectiveness of ourselves as governors and further developing our role in order that we may best support the school.

How to contact the Governing Body

We are always open to suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents and carers. Please contact us via the school office or directly at chairofgov@recreationroad.norfolk.sch.uk

You can find out more about Governors on the school website.

A list of Governors and their attendance at meetings follows