

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT RECREATION ROAD INFANT SCHOOL

Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Board of Recreation Road Infant School – July 2019

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 clarity, vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the Headteacher 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, politics, management, all of which are valuable resources for the school. This year the staff governor is a member of the teaching staff and represents both the teaching staff and support staff in this valuable role. There have been some changes in membership and there remains one unfilled vacancy for a co-opted Governor. In addition, there are some Governors who are nearing the end of their four year term of office which presents an additional challenge as valuable experience may be lost if individuals feel unable to continue in this vital role.

The Full Governing Board continues to meet each half-term plus an additional meeting in April to approve the annual budget. Two committees also meet half-termly 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 the wider group. Papers of both committees are available to all members and some Governors do attend both committees in order to keep fully informed. All documents are centrally stored and accessed via Governor Hub, an electronic platform to which all Governors have full access. 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. Unfortunately there has been an occasion this year when a meeting had to be cancelled because it would not have been quorate, owing to personal pressures on peoples' time. However, all essential decisions continue to be made in a timely manner.

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

- We have been very encouraged by the growing strength of both our senior and middle leadership teams with some excellent staff appointments. Our two NQTs have proved a real asset bringing fresh ideas, enthusiasm and energy to progress. Both have not only successfully completed their induction year but are now looking to take on areas for further development and leadership in September.
- We considered how we might benefit from the Norwich Opportunities Area initiative but felt this was not directly aimed at the infant sector in many of the areas in which it was involved. However, we were able to access leadership training and signed up to the Inclusion Charter. We have gained greater benefit from VNet resources, especially in relation to staff training and leadership advice.
- Our Nurture resource through The Nest remains a valuable asset enabling our more challenging children, for whatever reason, to access learning and adjust to school life. The Lunch Haven has proved an investment which has had an impact on ensuring a safer and more positive lunchtime experience for all children.
- Staff and Governors were involved in discussions to clearly identify our core purpose as a school. As a result, 'Building strong foundations for a lifelong love of learning' was finally agreed and will soon be appearing on all school documentation. We will next be working together to finalise our long-term vision for the school.
- Governor monitoring has continued throughout the year with regular visits taking place to monitor classroom practice, pupil progress, the school environment, staff and pupil well being, pupil attainment and outcomes. Our annual In School Day was held in early February where the core subjects were the focus of our observations along with considering the impact of new leadership structures. These prove to be very valuable and insightful days which are appreciated by both staff and Governors.
- We have looked carefully at the programme for enhancing delivery of Phonics and have been encouraged by the detailed work and planning which has taken place to ensure this is an integral part of a three year delivery. Results from this year's Reception have been especially encouraging.
- Two Governors have this year undertaken a new initiative working more closely with staff to support wellbeing. They have been willing to offer a listening ear and to work

alongside colleagues in a different role to that previously undertaken. In a time of increased challenges in education it has been felt this is an increasing area of need and one to which Governors were happy to respond.

- As a result of the Council's decision to remove SEND funding from Cluster provision this has led to the winding up of closer liaison between our local group of schools. This may have led to some degree of isolation but the good relationships which had been built up over the years are continuing in a less formal manner with regular discussions among school leaders on aspects of ongoing collaboration. In particular, we are forging ever closer links with Avenue Junior School recognising our shared children and family groups. Where this may lead in the future will remain to be seen although any plans for academisation are firmly off the agenda.
- We have continually returned to discussions around the future working of the Recreation Road Sports Centre and swimming pool, both very valuable community resources which are jointly managed by ourselves, Avenue Junior and Parkside School, although we exclusively bear the costs of running the pool. We have met with representatives of the Council, Sports Factory and the UEA SportsPark to explore ways in which these may be more effectively marketed and managed. This is an ongoing piece of work but a very necessary one.
- We have had to come to terms with the Local Authority's adoption of the National Funding Formula for Schools which has impacted adversely on the primary sector. Norfolk had previously allocated funding weighted more towards primary schools but this has now changed so that the national formula applies across all sectors, the result being a significant drop in our school income set against ever increasing costs. Both our previous and our new Finance Officers have looked at every way in which to reduce expenditure without adversely affecting classroom provision, but this year we have had to address the very difficult challenge of adjusting our staffing budget as the only meaningful way in which to bring about significant savings. We have always valued our staff as our best resource but this year we have had to look at a restructuring of our support staff in order to balance our budget. It has been a very difficult process and we are extremely grateful to our Headteacher for the manner in which this has been handled and to our wonderful staff for the exceptional manner in which they have not only understood but also assisted us to work through to a strong outcome. As a result, we now have a more streamlined service but one which ensures, not only parity of contracts, but also equable provision for our pupils across the entire working week.
- Complexities of school budgets are difficult sometimes to explain but certain monies are ring fenced and cannot be used to offset other needs. One such area is capital spend for which a comparatively small sum is allocated annually and may be amassed over a set number of years to enable larger building programmes. We have had ongoing concerns over the safeguarding aspects of our site and, after negotiations with the Council, have secured matched funding for this to be significantly improved with work taking place during the summer holiday. We are sure this will not only

promote the safety of our premises but also enhance the entrance to our school. Watch out for the change!

- We have continued our ongoing responsibility of reviewing school policies, many of them now being reviewed annually according to an agreed timetable 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

- Continuing Staff development and support including NQT induction.
- Development of middle leaders in subject specific roles.
- Future of the Sports Hall and swimming pool complex.
- Closer collaboration with other local schools
- Continuing financial oversight in line with revised SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standards).
- Developing a strong Governing Board ensuring effective training, mentoring and succession planning.
- Effectiveness of ourselves as governors and further developing our role in order that we may best support the school.
- Constantly working with the school towards Vision 2027

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~~