

# ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT RECREATION ROAD INFANT SCHOOL

## Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Board of Recreation Road Infant School – July 2020

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 several changes in membership during the year and finally we reached our full strength following several recruitment campaigns. Two new Parent Governors have been elected while two experienced Governors have agreed to remain in role for an additional period so ensuring that valuable expertise and experience is not lost. We have also been joined by another co-opted Governor who brings a wealth of experience from the wider world and skills very transferable to the school sector.

The Full Governing Board has continued to meet each half-term plus an additional meeting in April to approve the annual budget. Two committees also meet half-terminally 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 and we remain very grateful for all the work undertaken in this respect since clear minute taking which records questioning and challenge ensures we and the school fulfil our responsibilities to a high standard. We are also extremely grateful to the Headteacher for the excellent information with which we are provided and the support especially of the Leadership Team for the manner in which the school is run.

### **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. This ensures that all essential decisions continue to be made in a timely manner.

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

This year has become quite unprecedented in the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the entire country. As a school and especially as Governors we must put on record our very sincere thanks to all our Staff for the manner in which they rose to the many challenges presented by this situation. We have remained open throughout the entire 'lock down' period to ensure that vulnerable children and those of key workers were able to continue to attend school and be in a safe and nurturing environment. Our staff teams worked on a rota system so that everyone's safety could be protected. We ensured that meals were always available for children and for those families in real need throughout this period.

When school re-opening was to take place, as Governors we were worried as to how we could accommodate two-thirds of our children if all Reception and Year 1 were to return. The Staff worked tirelessly to establish how things could be put in place to ensure sufficient distance between children, cleanliness of all facilities, PPE for staff should the need arise, isolation of 'bubbles' of children and Staff, a new curriculum offer to ensure that a return to school would be exciting and valuable, plus a hundred and one other things which had to be done. As Governors we gave our full backing to whatever decisions the school felt it necessary to take and we have been so encouraged by the wonderful response of pupils and parents as children have gradually returned to school, albeit as yet on a part time basis. What the future will look like in September remains to be seen but we know that whatever decisions are taken, the education and safety of our children and staff will be central.

In spite of all the challenges of the second half of this school year we have considered the following areas:

- As a school we are incredibly fortunate in our Staff who have given over and above throughout this year. Our senior and middle managers have continued to grow and develop in their roles and those staff who have joined us more recently have proved themselves as very worthy additions to our school.

- We continue to access some features of the Norwich Opportunities Area initiative as well as accessing 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.
- Governor monitoring has continued throughout the year with regular visits taking place to monitor classroom practice, pupil progress, the school environment, staff and pupil wellbeing, pupil attainment and outcomes. Unfortunately our annual In School Day had to be cancelled as this was due to take place during the first week of lock down. Plans had already been made for the day and it is hoped a future day will be able to take place in the coming academic year as the value and insights of such a day cannot be underestimated.
- More discussions have taken place with Avenue Junior School recognising our shared children and family groups. It had been intended that a working group be set up to explore closer collaboration but this had to be put on hold for the time being.
- Discussions have continued around the future working of the Sports Hall and swimming pool, both very valuable community resources which are jointly managed by ourselves, Avenue Junior and Parkside School. This is an ongoing piece of work but a very necessary one which is now also suffering a significant financial impact since these facilities cannot be hired out at present resulting in a significant loss of income.
- School budgets continue to be a challenge and we are very fortunate to have the business acumen of our School Support Manager as well as the Headteacher who have done an excellent job in ensuring we meet our financial obligations at a time where there are ever more claims on school budgets. We remain financially sound but we are in a position where making further savings could have significant impact on the quality of provision we can offer.
- Our building work undertaken last summer to improve our main entrance and make the site secure has been a really welcome project which has made a vast difference to the safety of all whilst on site. Other building work has included the refurbishment of some of the toilets and we would hope to do more of that in the future.
- 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. A significant number of policies are those which are Local Authority based especially around Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Human Resources and Pay.
- We undertook the challenge of conducting all of our meetings for the second half of the year as virtual meetings in order to continue to fulfil our responsibilities whilst respecting everyone's safety. This has ensured that we have carried out our statutory duties as well as remaining in contact with the school.
- 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**

These plans are much in line with those outlined last year since the pandemic forced some developments to be put on hold

- Continuing Staff development and support.
- Development of middle leaders in subject specific roles.
- Supporting the school to gain School of Sanctuary status
- Ensuring the quality of the curriculum meets equality and diversity targets.
- Future of the Sports Hall and swimming pool complex.
- Closer collaboration with Avenue Junior School
- Continuing financial oversight in line with SFVS (Schools Financial Value Standards).
- Developing a strong Governing Board ensuring effective training, mentoring and succession planning. This to include induction of a new Chair.
- 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](mailto: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