

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT RECREATION ROAD INFANT SCHOOL

Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Board of Recreation Road Infant School – July 2021

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 has been only one change in membership when one co-opted governor stepped down. This position has remained vacant as we consulted on potential federation with Avenue Junior School which will result in the dissolution of the RRIS board.

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-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 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. Due to ongoing restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic all governor meetings have been held remotely this year.

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

This year has been shaped by the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the entire country. As a school and especially as Governors we must again 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.

DRAFT

School re-opening in September required a huge shift in working practices so that children, parents and staff could be kept safe, and the risk of infection reduced as much as possible. 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, 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 received regular updates on the school's risk assessment and procedures, and gave our full backing to the decisions the school felt it necessary to take and we have been so encouraged by the wonderful response of pupils and parents as children returned to school.

We remained open throughout the entire lockdown 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. Staff worked incredibly hard to provide an accessible and engaging online learning experience for the lockdown period, and during subsequent periods of self-isolation for children. This required not only content planning and creation, but also the provision of equipment at home for many families.

What the future will look like in September still 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 this school year we have considered the following areas:

- Our main focus has been plans to form a federation with Avenue Junior School. This has been the culmination of several years of discussion between the governing boards and leadership teams about closer working between the schools, and has now been agreed with positive endorsement from the governors, leaders, staff and parents at both schools.
- The federation working party, comprising three governors from each school along with the Heads and Norfolk County Council representatives, met every two weeks during the spring term to prepare a consultation document for staff, parents and the wider community. This was shared with staff before the Easter break, and with parents and the community shortly after the break.
- Following the consultation period in which 14 responses were received, RRIS and AJS governing boards voted unanimously to go ahead with the federation. As a result, the individual boards will be dissolved on 31st August 2021 and a new federation board will be constituted.
- 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, although much of this has had to be conducted remotely, limiting the opportunities for our usual activities such as observations of classroom practice and learning walks. We hope that these will recommence next year.
- 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. Works have started at the pool, funded by the Greater Norwich Growth Board to improve access during school hours and maximize letting potential
- 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. Fortunately, the new funding formula has been beneficial to us, and we are currently in a sound financial position.
- Toilet provision in the school has been reviewed, especially in light of issues raised by the pandemic, and significant funding from the school budget has been agreed to improve capacity.

- 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.
- 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

The RRIS Governing Board will formally be dissolved on 31st August 2021, and governance of the school will be overseen by the newly constituted Heigham Fields Community Federation. They will continue to focus on

- Maximising the advantages of federation for both schools
- Continuing Staff development and support.
- Development of middle leaders in subject specific roles.
- Future of the Sports Hall and swimming pool complex.
- Continuing financial oversight in line with 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.

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