



Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body of Orchard Park Community Primary School

September 2016

Purpose

To give an overview of the work of the Governing Body at Orchard Park, covering how we operate, what we are focussing on and how to contact and engage with us.

The Governing Body's Role

The three core strategic functions of Orchard Park Community Primary School's board are:

1. ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. holding the head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and
3. overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

How the Governing Body works

Our governing team has 11 Governors. These are made up of:

- James Wilson - Governor - Chair of Full Governing Body
- Stacey Harper – Headteacher - Staff Governor
- Jess Bond - Local Authority Governor – Vice Chair of Full Governing Body and Chair of School Effectiveness Committee
- Janice Fuller - Co-opted Governor - Chair of Resources Committee
- Revd Chris Lowe - Co-opted Governor
- Katherine Thornley - Co-opted Governor
- Michelle Davies - Co-opted Governor
- Beata Ryckowska - Co-opted Governor
- Alison Tweddell - Parent Governor
- Lucy Fogden - Deputy Headteacher - Co-opted Governor
- Nicky MacColl - Senior Teaching Staff - Staff Governor
- Jennifer Hefti - Clerk to Governors

The full Governing Body meets twice a term and sometime additional meetings are held for a specific purpose. Our governance structure has committees, with all governors being allocated to one of these committees as well as attending the full governing body meetings. The Committees are;

School Effectiveness – which focuses directly on teaching and learning – covering the curriculum, teaching strategies, behaviour, pupil progress,

children with additional needs, attendance and the breadth of issues which impact on the effectiveness of our school

Resources Committee – which deploys the school’s budget according to our priorities, considers the school facilities and premises and also covers staffing issues such as performance management, structure, professional development and HR

As well as attending the formal committee meetings, governors visit the school regularly to review particular aspects of the school’s work. These ‘governor visits’ allow us to scrutinise and support key areas of school life and develop proposals for improvement. Equally members of the Governing Body directly fill a number of key roles, for example leading assemblies and small group work, supporting the parents’ association, meeting with the school’s improvement partners and being available on site for parents and families to ask questions

The governors gather and analyse a range of data and information to ensure the school is running effectively, including scrutinising the budget position, pupil progress data, the impact of provision for vulnerable groups, attendance reports, behaviour information and feedback from pupils and parents in a variety of formats.

We also undergo regular training in all aspects of school life from safeguarding to finance.

Minutes of all our meetings are available from the school office on request. If you would like to know more about the governing body's work, please do contact the Chair, James Wilson, via the school office.

Attendance record of governors

Attendance at meetings is generally good. Governors have never cancelled a meeting because it was not “quorate” (the number of governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made). See the website for details of individual governors’ attendance.

The work the done by the governing body over the academic year 2015 - 16

How Governors ensured clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

The vision for Orchard Park was developed collectively at the start of the academic year, through joint work between governors, school leaders, all staff, children and parents/carers.

Our agreed vision is:

Orchard Park is a place where children are empowered to reach their full potential, with the highest possible aspirations and passion for learning. With values and respect, our children are confident to move from our nurturing environment to explore and succeed in the wider world.

This vision drives the school's Self Evaluation Framework and the key priorities identified and addressed through the School Development Plan.

Governors take a clear strategic role approach to their work. During 2015-16, this has been demonstrated through work on establishing enhanced arrangements for staff performance management, which clearly articulate expected standards and monitor staff performance through a robust range of observations and assessments, as well as a review of the newly-established nursery class at the school.

Governors have taken a range of strategic decisions this year designed to drive forward school improvements, including the redevelopment of the playground and the approval of a restructure of the Senior Leadership Team.

How Governors have held the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils

The Full Governing Body has a well-functioning system of distributed leadership, with all Governors taking on designated 'lead' governor roles for broad aspects of work such as EYFS, data and pupil progress, finance, safeguarding, as well as being the designated governor for monitoring specific aspects of the School Development Plan targets and actions, which is clearly identified in the plan. This includes monitoring actions such as whether the school is meeting its safeguarding requirements, how the school is responding to the British Values curriculum and the impact of pupil premium funding.

Governors use information from a wide range of internal and external sources to provide professional support and challenge, especially with regards to outcomes for pupils including vulnerable groups. This includes data from internal and external sources, reports from the Headteacher, feedback from pupils via the School Ambassadors, the results of parental questionnaires, observation, monitoring visits, participation in meetings with the School Improvement Partner, focused committee meetings and discussion with senior leaders.

At regular meetings of the School Effectiveness Committee, data on pupil attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics has been presented to the Governors. Governors have used these meetings to assess the progress of different identified groups of pupils against national standards – this has included the whole year, boys / girls, children with special educational needs, children in receipt of pupil premium and children with English as an additional language. If progress was slower than we would expect for any of these groups, Governors have questioned the Headteacher as to why this was and what action was being taken to address areas for development. Governors have also regularly monitored other datasets such as attendance, behaviour/detentions, quality of teaching, attendance and exclusions.

A small group of Governors undertake the Headteacher's performance management, supported by the School Improvement Partner and Governors carried out monitoring to ensure that teachers' performance management had taken place in accordance with the agreed policy and procedures.

How Governors have overseen the financial performance of the school and made sure its money is well spent.

Governors monitor the school budget throughout the year, including scrutinising income, expenditure against agreed budget, variance and outturn. Governors formally agreed the budget in May 2015.

Throughout the year, the Resources Committee monitored the school's financial priorities, considering how these could best be met. Governors have also ensured that proper procurement procedures have been followed.

Governors have visited the school to meet with the Finance Manager to get an in-depth understanding of financial issues.

Our Priorities for 2016/17

The work on the school's vision has helped us shape the specific priorities for our work this year. These priorities reflect the most important aspects of school life and the specific things we are working on to build on our strengths and address any areas for improvement.

Our key priorities are:

- Effectiveness of leadership and management – including further improving communication between all stakeholders, to develop the role of subject leaders and to research and respond to the academisation agenda
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment – including ensuring that teaching is always good but predominantly outstanding, to further develop the high-quality broad and balanced curriculum, and to develop a learning dialogue for all
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare – including securing outstanding behaviour from all pupils, embedding the mission statement amongst all stakeholders and further improving pupil wellbeing
- The Early Years Foundation Stage – including improving progress and attainment in Communication, Language and Learning, to strengthen planning and assessment and maximise access to nursery provision for three year-olds within Orchard Park

These priorities form the structure of the School Development Plan – which guides our work during the year – and ensures all our team members know what they have to do to achieve our aspirations for our children. Governors have a key role in holding the school to account for delivering against the priorities – supporting and challenging the school team continually.

Communication and Feedback

The Governing Body believes it is vitally important that the school and wider community understand what we do. We have therefore taken measures to be as transparent as possible. The school website contains information about who governors are and what the Governing Body does. Governors are also in regular contact with staff, pupils and parents/carers through a variety of communication methods.

The Governors formally commission feedback surveys from both parents and pupils on an annual basis and analyse what children and families are telling us in setting our priorities, planning our agendas and making decisions. For example our forward plan for this year includes reviewing the school's catering arrangements because this is an areas where a number of parents made comments in the most recent survey.

We would encourage everyone with an interest in Orchard Park to respond to the surveys, but equally to feel free to raise any questions or concerns with either the staff team or the Governing Body at any time.

James Wilson

Chair of Governors