

PENDRAGON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020-21

The role of the Governing Body is an intrinsic part of the leadership of the school, although often unseen by parents and carers. We are here to oversee the school is providing the best for every child to the best of their capabilities. This statement is one way in which the Governing Body can articulate our role in school leadership, the impact we have had on school improvement, and the transparency of additional activities. The Governing Body is made up of a group of dedicated volunteers, who invest a huge amount of good will, hard work and time for the sole purpose of improving the education of every child in our school. The Government expects us as your Governing Body to be a dynamic group of highly skilled individuals who focus on supporting the Head Teacher and all the staff to shape the strategic direction of school.

As Governors we are accountable for the performance of our school; we are measured by three core strategic functions:

- **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction** - the FGB help decide the school's strategy for improvement. It's not our job to get involved in the day-to-day management of the school but to focus on key issues that will raise standards and achievement.
- **Holding the Head Teacher to account** for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff - we use our knowledge and experience to support and challenge (in a constructive way) the Head Teacher and staff so as to get the best possible teaching and outcomes.
- **Overseeing the financial performance of the school** and making sure its money is well spent – we work with the staff to ensure that the school makes best use of its resources.

Governor Membership, Vacancies and Attendance

The Instrument of Government Governance for Pendragon allows for 14 governors across different categories. The FGB Membership currently stands at 12, with a vacancy for a Staff Governor that we hope to fill soon and will be recruiting for Co-opted Governors in September. It is made up of representatives from the school and the community it serves.

Through the course of the 20-21 Academic Year, the FGB has seen a larger than normal turnover, mostly due to the understandable inability of some governors to commit the time necessary due to the excessive demands placed on them due to the pandemic. Although we lost 6 experienced governors, we have recently recruited 4 governors, 3 of whom were elected by Parents. Over the course of the year, all Governors at Pendragon have demonstrated positive attendance and engagement with their work. Further information about governor attendance can be found on the school website under the Governor tab.

The Structure of Governance

As well as meeting as a full Governing Body, Pendragon currently has five additional committees that enable oversight, support and accountability towards areas of identified priority and statutory coverage. These committees are - Standards, Premises including H&S, Early Years, Finance and Personnel. All committees, and the FGB overall, have the duty of overseeing the school's safeguarding responsibilities and managing the updates and implementation of school policies aligned to their particular areas of responsibility. In addition to the above, the FGB also constitutes a Salary Review Committee and Head Teacher Performance Management Panel annually. Committees related to particular purposes such as dealing with complaints or exclusions are constituted as they are required, in line with the determining policy guidance.

This has been quite an unusual year, but the FGB remained responsible for providing support and oversight during these challenging times. Given the extraordinary situation, Governors have focussed on critical areas where the School needed immediate support. In particular, Governors have been kept informed on the School's plans and have had oversight and input into key priorities, including:

- Overview of safeguarding procedures, taking into account remote working and the particular impact on vulnerable families
- Mental health, workload and wellbeing of staff
- Health & safety provisions in response to the pandemic, including approval of the School's risk assessments
- Additional support for disadvantaged children and children with SEND
- Overview of remote learning provision
- Input into and monitoring of the Recovery plan

In order to minimise contacts, many usual Governor meetings and visits have been cancelled or moved online and the Chair and Vice-Chair have been the main contact point with School (as well as specialist link Governors, such as Safeguarding & SENDPP links, when appropriate) and have taken a primary role in ensuring the Governors remain up to date with School actions. Regular contact has also been important to ensure there have been sufficient opportunities for support and discussion with the senior leadership team around the School's response to the crisis. Through this Governors have supported the School with key priorities, such as monitoring the budget, developing the strategy for returning children, remote learning (including accessing additional computers) dealing with bubble closures and developing robust risk assessments. In order to provide full, informed support, it has also been important for Governors to keep up to date with Government guidance. In addition, certain critical actions have continued, including reviewing and approving the School budget for 21/22 and completing safeguarding reviews.

Since late May 2021, with the roll out of vaccinations and regular LFTs, members of the FGB re-commenced in school monitoring, but to minimise risk to the children and avoid crossing bubbles they were unable to access classrooms during the working day but hope that from September full visits can be resumed.

Impact of the work of the Full Governing Body

Over the course of the last academic year, the Governing Body has demonstrated notable impact with regard to;

- Supporting the school's Risk Assessment with regard to Covid-19 and enabling the safe return to school for children and adults alike
- Receiving updates from the Head Teacher to inform their work in response to the pandemic, in order to ensure the continued education and safety of all children.
- Overseeing updates with regard to the progress made against the School Recovery Plan, particularly following the period of remote learning.

Impact of the work of the Personnel Committee

This has been a challenging and busy year for the Personnel Committee. Changes to working practises and Government legislation driven by the pandemic has created a need to respond flexibly to individual personnel needs and a need to support them throughout some challenging periods. The committee has had particular impact by their work in;

- Monitoring and response to Staff workload & Well-being
- Recruitment & Selection, ensuring safeguarding remained the highest priority
- Salary Review - ensuring all Staff were appraised and rewarded fairly in accordance with the Salary recommendations
- Ensuring compliance with all current legislation and Covid guidance
- Reviewed many of our personnel policies

Impact of the work of the Finance Committee

Over the course of the last academic year, the Finance Committee has both set and monitored the School budget. Liaison with the external financial advisor and collaborative work between the school financial secretary and the Chair has ensured that the school remains financially stable. The Finance Committee has shown impact by;

- Ensuring that the Catch Up Premium is invested effectively to provide optimum impact upon children's learning and recovery
- Monitoring and publishing the additional PE and Pupil Premium spending
- Discussing how best to structure and finance the school's staffing and classes to ensure a continued quality of education and financial sustainability
- The setting of a robust and fair budget for 2021-2022

Impact of the work of the Premises & H&S Committee

Whilst the normal work of the committee has been impacted by our inability to get in to school, our Staff governor was able to fulfil all the basic monitoring of the school fabric, fixtures and fittings and necessary decisions were conducted remotely by the whole committee. Despite these limitations, the committee has still demonstrated impact by ensuring;

- Essential contracts with maintenance companies including Grounds maintenance were both in place and adhered to
- Approving the necessary replacement of one of the kitchen ovens. We were also pleased to work with the catering company to ensure that hot meals were provided for the children despite challenging covid restricted circumstances
- Adapting the cleaning protocols as required by the response to the pandemic

Impact of the work of the Standards Committee

Over the course of the last academic year, the Standards Committee has demonstrated notable impact with regard to;

- Ensuring that children have been able to engage in remote learning with access to suitable devices
- Ensuring that school leaders have adapted the school's curriculum to accommodate children's lost learning over the course of the pandemic
- Ensuring that the school has adopted an updated curriculum approach towards teaching children about relationships and sex education, aligned to changes in Government expectations

Impact of the work of the EYFS Committee

The EYFS committee is responsible for monitoring both the Pre-School and Foundation Stage with the differing challenges this brings. The committee has shown impact by;

- Agreeing to being an early adopter of the new EYFS Framework and supporting the Team Leader in its implementation
- Supporting the FS team in ensuring the FS Christmas play could take place, even if it had to be watched remotely!
- Responding to the challenge of limited funding as Pre-School numbers fell during the pandemic

Governor Training

Governors work collectively, benefiting from our different points of view and skill sets; however, the FGB is committed to expanding its knowledge and undertook the following training;

- Safeguarding – to effectively fulfil our duties by assuring that the safeguarding arrangements for all children at Pendragon are robust. All governors complete annual and any update training when required, and additional training was completed in Prevent and Safer Recruitment
- Monitoring the Curriculum – in order to ensure that our monitoring and questions are informed to gather the most important information from curriculum leaders. In addition, courses were completed on understanding performance data and improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
- LA Briefings – in order to remain up to date with latest Local Authority information with particular emphasis this year on the approach towards safe school reopening
- EPM Briefings – in order to remain up to date with the latest Human Resource legislation and guidance with particular emphasis on compliance throughout the pandemic
- Head teacher appraisal
- The mental health and well-being of children
- New to governance training

Governor Monitoring

As well as attending meetings, governors are also expected to visit school to understand more about school life and particular areas of priority. Due to the restrictions placed on Governor's ability to visit the school, the majority of monitoring has had to be completed remotely. Governors who are also Parents have submitted reports based on the remote learning provision offered to their children. Where possible, and once vaccines and testing were in place, Governors have completed subject monitoring with subject leaders although they have been unable to engage with the children in order to protect bubbles. In addition to the above, Governors have also undertaken monitoring in relation to Safeguarding, the Curriculum, Premises & Health and Safety, including Public Health inspections, SENDPP Provision and Staff Well-being & Recruitment

Forward Planning

The FGB is looking forward to returning to a more “normal” structure to its work in the forthcoming academic year, as we are sure is the whole school community. Over the last year we have reflected on our current structure and reviewed how we operate. In an effort to be a more effective and dynamic FGB, from September 2021 we will be reducing the number of sub-committees to three as follows:

- Resources (to cover finance, premises, lettings etc)
- Curriculum (to cover all aspects of the curriculum, including early years)
- Personnel (to cover HR and H&S related matters)

In addition, we will be focussing on;

- Working with staff to identify the long term plans of the school in the creation of our School Development Plan.
- Ensuring that the school is suitably prepared for OFSTED inspection
- Working with the Senior Leaders to ensure all children who have been impacted by the last year are given all the support needed whether it be educational gaps and/or emotional resilience
- Providing continued oversight regarding the impact of expenditure upon children's outcomes, particularly the appropriate and effective use of catch up funding
- Supporting the school to continue in their adoption of the new Early Years Framework
- Working with staff and our Achievement for All mentor to formulate and embed a well-being for all programme

Other information and contact

Further information regarding the work of the Governing Body can be found at: <http://www.pendragon.cambs.sch.uk/website/>.