

Guillemont Junior School

Annual Statement by the Governing Body for 2021-22

This annual statement, in line with the DfE's recommended good practice, outlines how the governing body has fulfilled its responsibilities and how it has met the three core strategic functions of the school's governing body as set out by Government:

- 1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction*
- 2. Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils*
- 3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.*

Underpinning these are the oversight responsibilities for ensuring the safeguarding and wellbeing of the school community.

It has been another extremely challenging year for everyone involved in education, not just the education professionals but families and children, as we emerge from the pandemic and return to 'normal'. As governors, we have again been admiring of the hard work and initiative shown through the year by the school leaders and staff to enable children to make progress, enjoy their school life and be kept safe. The staff value the very appreciative feedback from so many parents and carers. They also thank you, the parents and carers for your tolerance and support over the two and half years since we went into the first 'lockdown' and school closures.

Catch-up continues to be a priority and, although much has been achieved, the reality is that it will take a while to deal with the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's progress. The school continues to provide focussed high-quality teaching for vulnerable and those other children who need additional help and excellent pastoral support led by our Pastoral Team, including the school's ELSA.

We are delighted that the Year 6 children who missed out on so much in Year 5 were able to enjoy their Activity Residential and able to prepare and perform a production 'Cinderella Rockafella' before their parents, carers and families. Therefore, with excellent Key Stage 2 results they were able to leave Guillemont on a high! Governors spoke to many of these children who thoroughly enjoyed their time at Guillemont and were looking forward with confidence to the secondary phase of their education.

In December 2019 the governors agreed to the school entering into a Partnership Agreement with Pinewood Infant School which was renewed in May 2021 to run until December 2022. This arrangement has flourished with close collaborative working to the benefit of both schools. The day-to-day management of Pinewood is the responsibility of Mrs Carolyn Burleigh, Head of School, with Mr Denis Foster continuing as Executive Head teacher of both. In October 2021 Pinewood was subject to an Ofsted inspection and graded as a 'Good' school with 'Leadership' and 'Personal Development' as 'Outstanding' - an excellent outcome. Pinewood was also invited to operate a Resourced Provision for autistic children by the Local Authority - this is scheduled to open in November. There is a longer-term proposal for a similar resourced provision to be opened at Guillemont but any such proposal would require governor approval and go out for consultation before any formal agreement to proceed. Although the governing bodies are independent of each other, they are aligning the governance across the schools, for example, where possible, having common policies. It has been decided by the governing bodies to proceed to federate the schools. This means that, although the school remain independent and separate, there will be one governing body to whom the Executive Headteacher will be accountable. As this represents a change in the governance of the schools, the proposal to federate is required to go out for consultations to all interested parties, including parents/carers. This process commences 12th September 2022 and all parents/carers at both schools will be informed and notified accordingly.

Governance Arrangements

These are fully described, together with the composition of the governing body, on the school website: www.guillemont.org.uk/About-us/Governance

Attendance record at meetings

Governors have excellent records of attendance at meetings, attendance is monitored by the clerk to the governing body. Absences from meetings are invariably for compelling reasons e.g., unavoidable family or work commitments. Individual governor attendance records are published on the school website:

The school has reverted to its usual routine of governing body and committee meetings which had been disrupted by the pandemic. There being twice termly full governing body meetings with sub-committee meetings timed to align with statutory duties and the school's cycle of activities. The shared philosophy regarding Safeguarding and Wellbeing across the partnership schools led to the decision to have a single Safeguarding and Wellbeing committee, its membership comprising leaders and governors from both schools. This demonstrated the ability for governors to work across both schools to their mutual benefit and strengthened the case to consider federation. Committee meetings have been held both in person and, when appropriate, virtually. Both governing bodies met both together and separately with the LA for their guidance on the procedures to be followed for schools to federate.

Systems, (overseen by the Chair of Governors and the Executive Headteacher), are in place to ensure that the Governing Body and the school meet their statutory duties and that Government and local authority guidance and advice are followed in school policies and practices. These are regularly reviewed and updated particularly in the areas of safeguarding and wellbeing.

The Work of the Governing Body 2021-22

Meeting the three core strategic functions of the School's Governing Body:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

The governors fully subscribe to the vision statement and the school's strategic direction to which they have contributed and regularly review it with the school leaders.

However, if federation proceeds it will be an early task of the newly constituted governing body to develop a new vision statement and set the strategic direction of the federation.

2. Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils.

Day to day the school is driven by the School Improvement Plan. This sets out the targets for pupil progress and attainment and for the quality of teaching and learning. It is for the governing body to hold the headteacher to account for meeting these targets.

With the lifting of Covid restrictions governors have been to visit the school and maintain oversight responsibilities more directly, talking to subject leaders, receiving presentations from members of staff, and most importantly talking to the children. These activities, together with the questioning of the termly reports from the headteacher and feedback from Hampshire Education Inspectors give governors a wide perspective of the school's progress. It is evident by the fact that Guillemont is full and both schools have waiting lists for cohorts starting this September they are highly regarded by parents and the local community.

3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Each spring the governors review and agree the budget for the school financial year which is submitted to the local authority (LA). In the autumn, the progress of expenditure against budget and priorities are reviewed and approved by governors and submitted to the LA. Governors receive regular budget progress reports from the headteacher at their half-termly meetings. The school follows its Financial Management and Probity Policy (see school website) which is reviewed annually. The governors also make an annual Effective Buying Statement (see School website) which sets out the principles the school adopts in purchasing goods and services to ensure best use of funding to improve the quality of education delivered and the well-being of its pupils. The governors are required to make an annual Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) return to the LA, the purpose of which is to assure the LA (and Government) that the financial management of the school is sound and effective. Governor checks on the school's financial control procedures are carried out on a two-yearly cycle.

The governors also follow a schedule to ensure school policies and statutory requirements are periodically reviewed, acted on and appropriately updated and posted on the school website.

Although school funding is always an issue, the school is now operating at capacity and is therefore in a stronger position financially. With prudent management the school has been able to make improvements in the accommodation and take on two major projects, a new Adventure Playground/amphitheatre and the refurbishment of the school library. These are both scheduled to be completed over the summer holiday

ready for the new school year. The Landscape project continues to improve the grounds for environmental, recreational and educational purposes.

The Governors' Performance Management Committee sets and reviews the Executive Headteacher's annual targets, and the Personnel and Pay Committee oversees the management of staff performance and pay.

Training Courses and other Events Attended

Hampshire Governor Services offer a range of training courses (both online and in person) covering all aspects of the governors' role and provide briefings on topical matters affecting schools. The school subscribes to take full advantage of the services offered to enable them to be better informed and effective. For the moment courses continue to be delivered but for the moment are presented online - webinars.

The governing body as a group have had two training sessions, jointly with Pinewood, on 'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities' and 'Assessment in the Curriculum'. Governors individually attended courses and events on a range of topics, including:

- Hart & Rushmoor Chair and Vice-chair of Governors Networking Meetings
- Hampshire Governors Annual Conference

The clerk also attends the Clerking service briefings. The Chair (or Vice-chair) of Governors attends the termly NE Hants Governors Forum which provides a two-way channel for the exchanges of views and information between local governors and the County and National Governor representative bodies.

The governing body belongs to the *National Governance Association (NGA)* which provides many resources and services for governors and produces a very informative newsletter received by all governors.

The school subscribes to an information and advice database called *School Bus* to which all governors have access to as well as the school leaders and teachers.

Hampshire Governor Services have now moved to providing a blend of in-person training courses complemented by online webinars.

The aim is to maintain a governing body well equipped to meet its responsibilities and to be knowledgeable about what is happening in the wider education sector.

Looking Forward to 2022-23 and Beyond

The governors and school leaders remain fully committed to improvement - to make the school even better so we do the very best we can for every child. An immediate priority continues to be 'catch-up' to enable children to be at the level they would have been but for the pandemic. This is being achieved by funding additional high-quality teaching and learning with strong pastoral support as already mentioned. At the same time the school must ensure children receive a broad curriculum and have exciting learning experiences. There had to be compromises in the short term, but we are moving beyond that and children can now enjoy a rich curriculum and opportunities to develop in the fullest sense as young people.

Guillemont continues to be extremely popular and very successful in attracting new pupils - the school has a waiting list for the September 2022 intake and is effectively 'full'. This is against the backdrop of a surplus of primary places locally. To protect the school against the current national financial situation, careful management of the budget needs to be sustained. We will continue to seek opportunities to make further improvements to the school, the criteria being that they are planned, affordable and cost effective in enhancing the well-being or education of the children.

The school's strength continues to be in the quality of its staff and its leadership team which has been further strengthened by its experiences of the two and half years.

It will be the governors' task to follow through on the proposal to Federate with Pinewood Infant School in the coming weeks.

The Strategic Plan 2019-23 and the School Improvement Plan 2022-23 together set out the vision we have for Guillemont children and the plans of how to achieve it.