



Aspire and Achieve All Together

Governors' Report to Parents and Carers July 2017

The Role of the Governing Board

A Governing Board has three core functions for its school, as set out in the 2017 Department for Education's Governors' Handbook:

- setting the strategic direction
- holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school
- ensuring financial health, probity and value for money.

These core functions are consistent with the criteria that Ofsted will use to judge the Governing Board.

It is important that Governors understand where the line lies between the Governing Board's strategic responsibilities and the management responsibilities of the Headteacher and senior leaders.

Responsibility for all operational day to day matters are managed by Miss Williams and the senior leaders.

Why are Parents important?

We recognise that engaging with parents is an excellent way for governors to get to know our school; its strengths, weaknesses and its community. As a Governing Board we will want to ask the views of our parents to inform our strategic planning and give parents the opportunity to help shape their child's education, as well as being reflective about school performance and its own effectiveness.

A school needs to understand its parents for many reasons. Parents choose schools and have an enormous influence on their child's learning. As Governors we should make sure systems are in place to enable all parents to put forward their views at key points in their child's education.

For us, strong governance is a key part in our successful school.

With this in mind, as an effective Governing Board we will:

- Ensure that the school is engaging effectively with parents and consulting them on proposals;

- Use parental views to inform the school's self-evaluation and strategic planning to improve the education of pupils;
- Consider information from sources independent of the school leaders to help improve the school: parents' perceptions are a key source;
- Report back to parents the results and the changes Governors and trustees make as a result of listening to parents.

We will therefore write to you periodically to give you information about the school, to share our perspective on progress, and to invite your views on aspects of its life.

This is the first such report and we hope that you will find it helpful.

A Good School with Christian Distinctiveness

As Kirtlington is a Church School, we have a responsibility to maintain a Christian distinctiveness. We aspire to be a welcoming, inclusive family with a strong Christian ethos, a sense of community and a commitment to excellence for all children in our care.

You will be familiar with Ofsted and its rigorous inspections, but as a Church School, we are also subject to a second inspecting regime called SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools).

Currently, we are rated Good by both the inspecting bodies. The strategic objective of the Governors and the Headteacher is the solid improvement, with the aim of achieving outstanding status in both areas

Professional visitors and advisors who visit the school often comment on the enthusiasm of the children and their motivation for learning so we are building on good foundations. School works best when it can work hand in hand with home.

A Celebration of Success

This year has seen change within the Governing Body and the staff cohort. We have welcomed three new governors with expertise in Education, and Business that will add to our already highly skilled board.

Our staff cohort has seen changes in that we have said goodbye to some talented members to pastures new and retirement, but we have also welcomed some very experienced and well-qualified replacements for the new academic year.

We are very confident that Miss Louise Williams has recruited an excellent team and look forward to working with these colleagues in our drive towards Outstanding.

Our Headteacher shows commitment, and an outstanding grasp of the myriad issues that come her way. Her personal warmth and calm approach have been vital in steering the school through all the current changes. We couldn't have a better head!

One issue always at the top of mind for Governors and staff is safeguarding. The physical changes to school this year: the new “air-lock” entrance, the pavement barrier in front of the playground gate and the replacement fort have all been driven by the need to keep children as safe as we possibly can. Just this month we have undergone a safeguarding audit and we were delighted that we were graded Outstanding in the majority of areas. Our lead governor on safeguarding is Annie De Bono who reports to all our meetings. Governors and staff carry out regular health and safety checks and in the spring we were subject to a local authority inspection which was also overwhelmingly positive.

For a second consecutive year we have been delighted by the recent outstanding SATs results, particularly by our Year 6 children. This group did well at KS1 so the challenge to the staff has been to add value to a high-achieving cohort. It looks as though they have done just that and the children of Year 6 can leave confident of doing well wherever they go next. We look forward to a very promising group of children in Year 2 benefitting as much from the teaching and learning environment here as the Year 6s clearly have. Children all have different academic ability but our job is to help them fulfil their potential, at whatever level.

Our next steps are to develop our new priorities for the coming academic year.

Our Future Challenges

Change inevitably brings challenge. You will know that the government remains keen to drive academisation through the educational system. Currently two-thirds of the county's primary schools are still under local authority control but the number is declining as the ability of the LA, under vast financial pressure itself, to support its schools, is gradually weakened.

Until now we have not pursued investigating whether academy status is right for Kirtlington, but we will be investigating this option and its benefits over the course of the coming school year. Any decision will be considered very carefully as to what is right for our School and its children and stakeholders will always be consulted.

This brings me to the issue of finance. 90% of the school's income derives from the local authority. This is related directly to the number of children in the school. Over the last two years the school roll has fallen from 105 to less than 90. This is partly a matter of demographics (many of the schools in this area have seen similar declines). But it does have an immediate financial impact. Meanwhile, the government is proposing a new funding formula for schools from September 2018 which, if introduced, would adversely affect small rural primaries like ours. We are facing a considerable financial squeeze. We review every item of expenditure but our room for manoeuvre is not limitless.

Kirtlington School Friends does a fantastic job in raising money for school, but it's clear that we need to move to a new level in future.

How to contact us

The views given by parents should have an impact on the work of the governing board, including at a strategic level, with the opportunity given to parents to contribute to the development of the school's vision for its future. Parents' views on the school's strengths and weaknesses and their aspirations for the future are a significant contribution. We therefore would like to encourage you to share these views.

If you have any concerns about any aspect of your child's progress, please try to raise this with your child's class teacher in the first instance. If this does not resolve the issue, please then talk to the Headteacher.

You can contact Governors through the school office, at parent evenings, and any other school events. We also have two parent Governors who are representatives of all Parents.

There is an opportunity every year at Parents evening to complete *Parent View*. This is paper-based parent questionnaires and allows parents to share their views about their child's school.

Thank You

I wanted to pay tribute to you all and thank you for encouraging your children in their positive attitudes towards their learning. Positive parental involvement has a significant effect on pupil's achievements. The school and the parents all have crucial roles to play and the impact is greater if parents and schools work in partnership.

I wish you and your families a lovely summer break.

Kirtlington School Governing Body