



Syresham St James CE Primary School Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020

As the Governing Body of Syresham St James CE Primary School, we are proud of the school and its welcoming, inclusive ethos and strong family atmosphere.

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the three core strategic functions of the Governing Body at Syresham St James CE Primary School are:

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

Governance Arrangements

The Governing Body is made up of 11 Governor roles as follows:

- 1 Head Teacher
- 3 Parent Governors (elected by the parents of the school)
- 1 Staff Governor
- 1 Local Authority Governor
- 3 Foundation Governors
- 2 co-opted Governors

During the school year 2019-2020, the Governing Body met four times over the course of the year. In addition the Resources Committee and Strategy and Premises & Safety Committee each met three times, once in each term to fulfil their statutory responsibilities. The Curriculum committee did not formally meet throughout the year, however the necessary curriculum requirements were discussed and agreed during the relevant Full Governing Board Meetings. No meetings were held to consider pupil discipline or staffing matters.

The Governing Body appoints a professional Clerk who is responsible for arranging meetings, taking minutes and following up on all actions. The Clerk also advises on procedural matters and plays a key role in the work of the Governing Body.

Governors are volunteers who apply for and are appointed to their roles (except for the Headteacher), are independent and have equal status to each other. A Chair and Vice Chair are elected by the Governing Body and work closely together with the Headteacher and the Clerk.

Attendance of Governors

The overall attendance record of Governors has been excellent, and every meeting has been quorate during the school year. Details of the attendance of school Governors are published on the school website under the Governors section.

Key Issues Faced and Addressed by the Governing Body



In March 2020, the school closed to most children during the COVID-19 pandemic. From March to July the school remained open to the children of key workers and also to vulnerable children. From June, pupils in nursery, reception, Y1 and Y6 returned to school. Throughout this period, children received online learning. Staff maintained contact with their pupils and particular attention was given to children from hard to reach families or in vulnerable families. As a governing body, we approved risk assessments and were consulted on the school re-opening.

In May 2017, Ofsted judged the school as Good, acknowledging the many strengths of the school and the good quality of education which has been maintained by the leadership team in the school since the last inspection.

As we headed towards March 2020, the internal results flowing through were very good with improvements across the board. Many areas were at or above national average. The main area for improvement for 2018/2019 was in the number of children attaining the very highest levels and working at greater depth, especially disadvantaged pupils. Unfortunately, due to the Covid pandemic, there were no national results for primary schools. Children had been assessed during the Autumn term and progress tracked throughout the year.

The focus, as always, is to make improvements overall and to ensure that children are given opportunities to learn and develop to make the best possible progress that they can. To promote and maintain high aspirations for each child and for the school.

We give additional consideration to our vulnerable children. Safeguarding of pupils and staff is also a key issue, especially regarding E-safety. Mr James Ferguson is the governor with a specific safeguarding role. By providing a safe and stimulating environment and by listening to our children we aim to improve attendance in school. Improvements in the school environment are prioritised and expenditure agreed within the context of the whole school budget. Particular expenditure for Pupil Premium and Sports Premium are monitored carefully.

Assessment of Impact

As no national tests were undertaken in 2019/2020 and the majority of pupils were not in school beyond March, the impact of the curriculum, teaching and targeted interventions is difficult to fully assess.

During September 2019 to March 2020 staff maintained close tracking of pupil progress, this was routinely monitored by governors. Staff training, targeted interventions, high aspirations and quality first teaching contributed to furthering and accelerating pupil progress.

Governors evidence this from classroom visits, monitoring books and discussions with children and staff. These visits were not possible from March onwards. Within the curriculum, there is a responsibility to develop children academically but also to develop them spiritually, morally, socially and culturally (SMSC). Pupils have had many opportunities to develop in terms of music, sport and educational visits. Children report that they enjoy school and that they feel safe.



The Headteacher's Appraisal Committee is supported by an external advisor. Additionally, there is a facility to bring together small panel/committees as and when needed. The Governing Body has set up Terms of Reference for each of the committees in order that we may collaborate, share training and support each other as necessary. The Governing Body and the committees all have clear terms of reference and all Governors are required to abide by a Code of Conduct.

School policies are reviewed on a rolling programme throughout the year, and the Governing Body has statutory responsibility for some of these. We publish these policies on the website.

Financial Well-Being of the School

Finances are a constant challenge in school; however we continue to ensure that the money which is available is used to ensure the continued improvement of the education of the children.

Through its Resources Committee, the Governing Body has regularly monitored the school budget and challenged decisions to ensure best value for money is being achieved in all areas of spending. Governors have also kept track of the impact of reductions in national funding for schools. Governors regularly review pupil numbers, which are the key to the school's income, and make decisions about marketing as required. The school finances remain in a positive place despite challenging circumstances, although it is recognised that continued focus in this area is needed to ensure the future budgetary requirements of the school can be met.

Governing Body Skills & Knowledge Development

The Governing Body recognises that to effectively fulfil its role, it must ensure that all of its Governors have the required skills and knowledge to support the achievement of the school's priority objectives. Regular skills audits are undertaken to identify and address any skills gaps together with an annual self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the Governing Body over the school year. These are identified and monitored through regular skills audits of the Governing Body and an annual Governing Body self-evaluation. The Governing Body is a member of the National Governors Association and uses this and other relevant information channels to ensure it remains abreast and up to date on relevant developments in the education sector.

Future plans for the Governing Body

During 2019/20 children have missed the stimulation, camaraderie and safety that schools provide as well as face to face classroom teaching. It is important for governors to ensure that the school is safe for staff and pupils and that the education and welfare of the pupils is paramount. It is essential that we attempt to catch up on missed curriculum time at a rate that is appropriate for each child.

- Embedding of monitoring in core and foundation subjects, to enable us to continue to monitor the curriculum and review results and predictions for all pupils, including vulnerable groups.
- Ensure resources are deployed appropriately.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training to provide even more innovation in the classroom and to promote a skills, knowledge and enquiry based curriculum in line with new Ofsted regulations.
- Ensure children are motivated and self-motivated to learn and to reflect on their own targets.
- Monitor attendance and review strategies.
- Make well considered decisions regarding expenditure.
- To develop the Governing Body's own self-evaluation skills to enable the Governing Board to have an accurate view of the impact of its work.



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The Governing Body will continue to develop and work towards the longer-term strategy of the school, to closely monitor financial status and progress against plan and to work closely with the Headteacher and staff to deliver the best outcomes for our pupils.

We continue to build on the partnership between the Governing Body and the teaching staff. Each link year group governor continues to follow the progress of their respective year group as they move through their primary school years. This new set continues to enable the linked governor to see progress across the whole curriculum and ensure our continued improvement in line with national requirements.

How you can contact the governing body

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents – please contact the Chair of the Governing Body, Mrs Janet Cox at janetc@syreshamprimaryschool.co.uk You can see more information about the role of the Governing Board in the Governors' section of the school website www.syreshamprimaryschool.co.uk