



Syresham St James CE Primary School Annual Governance Statement 2020-2021

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 2020-2021, 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), they are all 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.

Governors are volunteers and receive no payment for what we do although we can claim expenses. No governor at Syresham Primary School has claimed expenses in the last three years. Most of the work of a Governing Body is not confidential and parents can attend meetings as observers. If you wish to do this, please contact the Chair of Governors.

Attendance of Governors

Governors have excellent attendance at meetings and we have never had to cancel a meeting. Full attendance records can be found on the school website, under Governor Information.

Key Issues Faced and Addressed by the Governing Body



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.

Following the turbulent end to the school year in 2019-2020, it was so good to see the school and nursery welcome back all pupils in person in September 2020. The school day looked and felt different with class bubbles, social distancing, split break times etc, the children and staff settled in well to their new classes and the new way of school life.

The governors liaised closely with the school to ensure the continued safety of the children and staff as they continued to navigate their way through an ongoing pandemic, including limiting the number of visitors to the School and Nursery, and to support this the governors met virtually until the last meeting of the year in July 2021 when we met in person at the school in the fresh air outside in the playing field.

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. However as everyone returned back into school in person in September 2020, we were very conscious of the impact which lockdown had not only on the way in which children learnt remotely. An impact which has been well documented by the government and seen across many schools in the country. Various research studies determined that School closures had led to serious learning losses, with primary-age school pupils making virtually no progress studying at home and that learning losses were particularly pronounced in families with low levels of education.

We give significant additional consideration to working with the Head Teacher to understand how the approach to teaching would be adjusted to build a structure which would ensure that children's learning and understanding and progress would get back on track. This meant a complete overhaul of the way in which the teachers approached their teaching and the interventions and initiatives put in place to deliver the right level of education for each and every child. The governors were impressed and proud of how the staff pulled together to ensure that the changes which were needed were quickly implemented and as we ended the year, although it is fair to say there is still work to do bring children back to the where they need to be, the foundations which have been laid by the team will pay dividends as we head into the new school year in 2021-2022.

Safeguarding of pupils and staff, including wellbeing were a key priority for the governors, as children and teaching staff returned to school. Janet Cox is the governor with a specific safeguarding role. By providing a safe and stimulating environment and by listening to our children and staff we were able to provide support in ensuring the wellbeing of everyone. This included holding lessons outside when the English weather allowed, using the local community to support lessons and learning, whether it was a walk around the village, visit to the church or the local pocket park. It also included ensuring Improvements in the school environment were prioritised and expenditure agreed within the context of the whole school budget.

Assessment of Impact

As no national tests were undertaken in 2020/2021 teaching and targeted interventions are difficult to fully assess fully, however throughout the year staff maintained close tracking of pupil progress, training,



targeted interventions, high aspirations and quality first teaching contributed to furthering and accelerating pupil progress.

During the year, limited governor visits were undertaken, however they stayed in touch with the teaching staff, with each governor linking to a teacher and holding check in calls.

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

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 subject governor continues to follow the progress of their respective subject.

Other plans include;



Syresham St James
Church of England Primary School



High Street, Syresham, Northants, NN13 5HL
Tel: 01280 850269 www.syreshamprimaryschool.co.uk

- Continue to work on developing further the aspects of our school which make us unique and uphold the School Aims.
- Consider how best to use governor's time and skills, ensuring our efforts are focused on our three core functions, and are always in line with our School Development Plan.
- Seek to ensure suitable succession planning is in place to help support the continued improvement of the school.
- Identification, selection and training of new governors. Making governance effective, timely, in line with our strategic and mandatory themes is key to effective governance.

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