

Suffield Park Infant and Nursery School Annual Governance Statement July 2023

Members:

Mrs Nichola Stewart
Dr Vivienne Lennox – Chair
Mr John Sansby – Vice Chair
Mrs Emma Borthwick
Mrs Alyson Appleyard
Cllr Tim Adams
Mr Jack Rogers
Ms Emily Murley-Lown

All school governing bodies have three core strategic functions

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 money is well spent.

Our governing body is currently made up of:

- 4 co-opted governors
- 2 parent governors
- the headteacher
- 1 staff governor

We have four vacancies. Co-opted governors are appointed by the governing body and are people who have the skills to help the governing body carry out its core functions.

The governing body fully resumed face-to-face meetings after the pandemic, so that we could see for ourselves what was happening in school and talk to staff and children about the successes and challenges they were facing.

Our in-school monitoring has focused on the curriculum subjects and how the children build on their prior knowledge and skills as they move up through the school. Subject leaders have made presentations at each the governing body meeting, and we have followed this up by talking to children about what they are learning in school. We have also monitored how the school's ethos is woven throughout everything we do; in classrooms, assemblies, sports day and in our nurture principles, and we have seen many examples of the staff and children all demonstrating how "confident, resilient, ambitious and brilliant" they are.

The full governing body met six times during the past year and received reports from the Head Teacher and our committees, who also met regularly to monitor the work of the school.

Our committees are:

- The finance and personnel committee
- The curriculum committee

- The nursery committee
- The health and safety & buildings committee
- The strategy committee
- The headteacher's performance management committee
- The pay committee

Over the past academic year, the main areas for focus of the governing body have been:

- Supporting the Head Teacher to manage the school and nursery whilst she led the staff in their work to ensure continued safe, high-quality education and support was accessible to all pupils and their families-
- To ensure that all children with additional needs had high quality support and education tailored to their individual needs.
- Helping the school to secure additional SEND funding from NCC for the Nurture Unit to best meet the needs of the children across the school.
- To ensure that funding for disadvantaged children was used to enable them to make accelerated progress and close the gap in attainment with other children.
- To monitor through the year, that the school was addressing the staff and children's wellbeing and emotional needs resulting from the legacy of instability and uncertainly brought about by the pandemic.
- To ensure that the school maintained the focus on improving the children's mastery of phonics and love of reading to improve their life chances following our work with The Wensum Trust, a DfE literacy hub.
- To monitor the continued progress in embedding the new bespoke curriculum for our children, designed to seamlessly build on their learning as they progress through education. We work closely with VNET, a local Norfolk educational organisation who provide a wide range of staff training and bespoke support and advice to the school.
- To ensure we offer the highest quality of education for our children whilst maintaining financial viability in both the school and the nursery during a time of uncertain funding and a falling birth rate.
- Reviewing policies on a rolling programme.

The finance and personnel committee has worked with the senior management team and our finance officer to agree the school budget and spending priorities. It has monitored spending each month and adjusted the budget as required to ensure school priorities are adequately funded. It has successfully completed the Schools Financial Value Standard and ensured value for money. Staffing has been reviewed and adjusted according to pupil numbers, specific pupil needs and funding available.

The curriculum committee and Full governing body looked at children's progress and how effective intervention strategies have been to help the children rapidly catch-up learning previously lost during the pandemic. They monitored the school improvement plan, supported the school's work towards Nurturing Schools' accreditation and the introduction of the Balanced system to improve communication skills for children, ensured safeguarding arrangements were robust and received reports of any complaints.

The nursery committee celebrated the setting's OFSTED outstanding judgement following the inspection in November 2022. The committee received reports from the nursery

manager and finance officer on all aspects of the nursery including staffing, finance, safeguarding and the delivery of the EYFS. They monitored the nursery budget, staff workload and sustainability and have been in close contact with NCC Early Years to resolve sustainability issues resulting from a high level of children and families with additional needs.

The health and safety & buildings committee has received reports from the Head teacher and site manager including risk assessments and reports of any accident or injury. They have reviewed recommendations from the site manager regarding site maintenance and approved capital expenditure on refurbishment projects.

The strategy committee has primarily been concerned with maintaining high quality teaching provision. They have monitored the class structure, staffing levels and wellbeing. They were fully involved in strategic decisions to provide support for our children with additional needs and supported the Headteacher and finance officer in accessing necessary SEND funding for the nurture class.

Minutes of the governing body meetings are public documents. If you would like to see any of the minutes please ask in the school office.

Priorities for governing body in the coming year include:

- To support and challenge where necessary, the senior management team to improve outcomes, both educational and emotional, for all children.
- To support and monitor the wellbeing of the Head Teacher and all the staff.
- Monitoring the progress of the school's development plan, which includes; a continued focus on phonics and reading, to improve the outcomes in writing, to ensure the curriculum delivery supports knowledge acquisition and progression, extending the expertise in speech and language support across the school and to ensure the school reflects a nurturing rationale.
- Diminishing the difference in attainment between disadvantaged and other children
- To monitor the school's effectiveness against the Intent Statement
- Ensuring that sufficient funds are available to meet the needs of all pupils.
- To monitor that external partnership arrangements are the most beneficial available for our children.

We always welcome feedback and ideas from parents– please contact the Chair of Governors via the school office.

Unfortunately, both our current parent governors find they are unable to continue next term, so we will be looking for three new parent governors to join us. If you are interested in finding out more about being a school governor, please ask at the office for one of us to contact you to discuss what the role involves and what you might be able to contribute.