Suffield Park Infant and Nursery School Annual Governance Statement September 2026

Members:
Mrs Nichola Stewart
Dr Vivienne Lennox – Chair
Mr John Sansby – Vice Chair
Cllr Tim Adams
Mrs Alyson Appleyard
Mrs Rebecca Cooper
Mrs Beth Grant
Mrs. Sarah Francis
Mr P. Mick Hayhurst
Mrs Joanna Herrieven
Mr Daniel Ward

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:

- 5 co-opted governors
- 1 Local Authority governor
- 3 parent governors
- the headteacher
- 1 staff governor

We have one vacancy for a co-opted governor. 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 full governing body holds meetings at the school each half term, as well as governors regularly meeting in smaller committees to discuss certain aspects of the school in greater depth. At each full governing body meeting we all receive a detailed report from the Head Teacher and our committees. We also visit the school as often as possible so that we can see for ourselves what was happening in school and talk to staff and children about the successes and challenges they are facing.

Our 'in-school' monitoring has focused on the school's ethos and the curriculum subjects, with a focus on how the children build on their prior knowledge and skills as they move up through the school. Subject leaders have made presentations at each full governing body meeting, and we have followed this up by talking to children about what they are learning in school. We have monitored how the children were progressing in phonics and writing. We have also monitored how the school's ethos is woven throughout everything we do; in classrooms, assemblies, sports events and in our nurture principles, seeing many examples

of the staff and children all demonstrating how “confident, resilient, ambitious and brilliant” they are.

Our committees are:

- The finance and personnel committee
- The nursery committee
- The health and safety & buildings committee
- The strategy committee
- The headteacher’s performance management committee
- The pay committee

The work of our previous curriculum committee has been covered in the full governing body meetings to ensure that all governors are familiar with the school’s core role of educating our children and how groups of children are progressing. This change has also enabled us to reduce staff workload by reducing the number of meetings they are expected to attend and reduced repetition.

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

- To work with the school and Local Authority to ensure sustainability in the light of a reducing number on roll due to the local falling birth rate, increasing numbers of pupils needing additional support, and limited SEND funding.
- To monitor the progress and attainment of all pupils.
- To monitor staff workload.
- 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 our Nurture and Autism Units, to best meet the needs of the children across the school to enable all children to make maximum progress.
- 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 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 continue the focus on improving standards of writing of pupils and to work with external partners with expertise in this area.
- To monitor the continued focus on nurture across the school.
- 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.
- Reviewing policies on a rolling programme., including safeguarding procedures and promoting good attendance.
- To monitor the school’s progress in line with the new Ofsted framework.

The finance and personnel committee has worked with the senior management team, our finance officer and LA advisor 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 supported the Head Teacher and SENDCO in their bids for additional funding to meet the increase in numbers of pupils with complex SEND needs. It has successfully completed the Schools Financial Value Standard and ensured value for money. The staffing structure has been reviewed and adjusted according to pupil numbers, specific pupil needs and funding available.

The full governing body looked at children's progress and how effective intervention strategies have been to help the children catch up with their peers and maximise their individual potential. We monitored the school improvement plans, supported the school to further embed the ethos of nurture in line with our 'Nurturing Schools' accreditation, and designation as a 'Centre of Excellence' for the 'Balanced System', a whole school initiative to improve communication skills for children. We ensured and monitored that safeguarding arrangements were robust and received reports of, and investigated any complaints. We have monitored the current class structure, the impact of the Nurture and ASD classes on all pupils, staffing levels and wellbeing.

The nursery 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 with the increasing numbers of children with additional needs, and the increase in funded childcare hours.

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 was primarily concerned with maintaining high quality teaching provision within the new staffing structure. 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 specialist classes and those children with additional needs in the main classes.

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 as they continue to embed the mixed age class structure.
- Monitoring the progress of the school's development plan, which includes:- to improve the outcomes in writing, to improve the percentage of children who are fluent readers and to embed the culture of Nurture throughout the school.
- 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 despite cuts to the SEND funding.

- 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.