

Streatley C of C (VC) School

Healthy Happy Humans



Version 1 , July 2018

Annual Governance Report 2017/18

Chair's Welcome

Welcome to our annual governance report in which we review our activities for the past year and reflect on our own effectiveness as a governing board. This report covers the key events for the year, a review of our working arrangements, and our self-evaluation of the quality of governance.

Key events for this year

- Ofsted inspection
- Succession planning
- Financial Review
- Governor Development Plan

Ofsted inspection

In March 2018 the school received a short one-day Ofsted inspection. The inspection was undertaken by the Regional Director for the South East, and although this was for only one day, it was an extremely thorough process. The assessment not only included the current status of the school but also the capacity to develop further. Evidence was obtained from pupils, teachers, parents and members of the Governing Board. We were delighted to be judged as a consistently good school which was in alignment with our own self-evaluation of the school's performance.

Expanding the Role of Governor Visits

Governors undertake class visits to their assigned year group. These visits provide an opportunity to evidence the progress that is reviewed in the sub committees. The effectiveness of these visits was however reviewed early in the school year. Although being assigned to a year group will remain an important part of the Governing role additional subject visits were also adopted. These visits focus on a specific topics or subjects and allow a review to be made across year groups, and within the school generally. At the start of last year maths was identified by the Headteacher as an area needing further attention. As a board we were able to assess the effectiveness of the specific interventions through the school visits. IT has similarly been put under focus.

Review of finances

The financial challenges that schools face is well documented in the media. Streatley School is no exception. Funding has not increased which has meant a real time cut in school funding generally. Careful financial management is therefore key. As a governing board, we carefully scrutinise our budget funding, ensuring money is spent well whilst supporting the school's improvement priorities and securing value for money. We check our schools' financial performance against schools both nationally

and locally using annual bench-marking information published by the Department for Education (DfE).

An annual budget is prepared each year which includes a 3-5 year forecast. We were delighted that through the effective management of finances combined with the outstanding fund raising abilities of FOSS the school was recently able to acquire 30 new laptops for pupils to use, updating a dated IT infrastructure.

Governor Succession

The departure of the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors at the beginning of the year was planned carefully as the permanent appointment of the Head Teacher had recently been made. The Board were grateful for both departures being geared around this appointment. The recruitment of replacement Governors was undertaken following a skills assessment of the Board, highlighting where the expertise was required. This assessment now forms part of the recruitment process to ensure further appointments are targeted to the needs of the school.

Governor Development Planning

The direction of the school is reviewed each year and forms the basis of the School Development Plan set by the Head teacher. The role of the Governing Board forms an integral part of this plan providing support and oversight. To remain effective in the future it was agreed that the board should also formulate a development plan. This would mirror the direction of the school plan but would also ensure the objectives established in the school could be effectively evidenced by the Board. The plan will be agreed at the beginning of each year and reviewed regularly.

Governor Overview

The work of the full board and sub-committees is based on an agreed set of terms of reference which are reviewed annually. The governing board is supported by a professional and highly competent clerk. The clerk provides advice on all procedural and legal matters as well as providing very effective administrative support.

Good processes exist to ensure the work of the governing board is conducted effectively and efficiently. For example, an annual work planner ensures all aspects of governance are addressed, and a mechanism for regular policy review ensures school policies are reviewed on a timely basis. All governors adopt a code of conduct and declare any business interests (which are published on the school's website). We continue to monitor individual governor's attendance and report that the overall level of attendance is good.

Governors are knowledgeable, well informed and keep abreast of emerging developments accessing information from senior leaders and a range of external sources including: The Department for Education (DfE), Ofsted, West Berkshire Council and The Key for School Leaders.

During the year governors accessed a variety of training courses from the local authority and other providers.

Review of quality of governance

The governing board's remit is to provide 'confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance' (DFE Governance Handbook). Our core functions are to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff;
- Oversee the financial performance of the school making sure its money is well spent

As a board, we take our function and duties very seriously. We work in close partnership with school leaders to create a culture and ethos of continuous improvement placing the best interests of our children at the heart of our work. Our board meetings are conducted in an atmosphere of openness and trust, enabling honest dialogue with plenty of healthy debate as we work towards finding effective solutions.

As a board, we have the right people around the table. Governors are drawn from a variety of different professional backgrounds with a strong set of skills, knowledge and expertise to draw on. We have a good mix of experienced and new governors – all are very dedicated, committed, engaged and above all determined to make a difference to the lives of children at Streatley.

Dan Lowery
Chair of Governors
July 2018