

Annual Statement from the Governors for the 2013/2014 Academic Year

The Department for Education (DfE) recommends that it is good practice for the Governing Body of all schools to publish an annual governance statement to explain how it has fulfilled its responsibilities in relation to its core functions, which are set out in summary in the DfE “Handbook for Governors” as:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding the Executive Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the Federation and its pupils, and the performance management of Staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the Federation and making sure its money is well spent

The Governors bring a mixture of expertise with backgrounds ranging from the financial and legal sectors, education, the arts, industry, healthcare, the church, local knowledge and experience, life skills, parenting skills and general family life. The experience provided by each Governor complements the skills of the Staff and the result is a very effective team. We are committed to continuous improvement and lifelong learning for all members of our learning community.

Governors work strategically with the Headteacher and Staff to agree Federation priorities, improve standards and provide a range of challenge and support to the Federation leadership team. The full Governing Body meets once each half term to discuss and agree the strategic direction of the Federation and to review progress, but a substantial part of the work is managed through committees. Two committees, Finance and Resources, and Standards, Achievement and Inclusion, meet five times a year, the Strategy Group meets at least once each term and the Pay Committee and other working groups meet as required. Meetings of all these groups are timed to allow the minutes of these meetings and key items to be considered at the following full Governing Body meeting. In addition, we pay regular visits to the schools as part of our monitoring process and also to share in celebrations and other special events.

Minutes of Governing Body meetings, Headteacher’s reports, statutory documents and the Federation’s policies are available for inspection through either school office. The most recent approved set of Full Governing Body minutes is available to read in the reception area of each school. Governors are always interested in hearing the views of parents and children and messages can be left for us at the reception desk in either school.

For the academic year 2013/2014, Governors consider that the impact of their contribution to the three core responsibilities are as follows:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

- Following requests from some parents and staff for church school status for the junior school, Governors discussed a variety of options. Consultation with staff, parents and the wider community led to a decision to affiliate the Junior School to the Dioceses of Winchester and Portsmouth in March 2014. This has formalised the strong links already in place between the school and the parish church and has resulted in a staff/church working party agreeing methods of enhancing collective worship across the Federation and ensuring statutory requirements are met.
- Governors worked closely with the Local Authority and the Diocese in the selection process for appointing a new Executive Headteacher. (This was completed in 2014/15). All Governors attended full Governing Body training on this appointment. Governors obtained agreement from the Local Authority that, in the event that Governors were not able to appoint a substantive Headteacher from January 2015, an Interim Executive Headteacher would be appointed to ensure continuity of senior leadership.

- At Governors' request, both school councils discussed and agreed what the children would like to see in their new Headteacher. Their ideas formed part of the pack for candidates, along with the views of staff.
- Staff and Governors worked together to formulate and agree the Federation's core values of Love, Respect, Aspire. A very productive joint staff/governor training session was held in September 2013, followed by discussions with support staff. Both Heads of School and the Chair of Governors visited an outstanding Church of England school to see their values in action and training was attended. The values were agreed in March 2014 and have been embraced by the whole federation community. Governor monitoring shows that the children know the values and can articulate them in a manner appropriate to the age and stage of the children. The values are reinforced continually by staff and are the focus of an award instigated by Governors.
- Governors participated in reviewing the school improvement plans and tied governor monitoring into school improvement priorities. This has led to more effective monitoring and changes to data presentation, particularly for vulnerable groups, for Governors.
- In conjunction with the Federation leadership, Governors carry out a robust annual safeguarding audit, action plans are written and any amendments to practice put in place.
- Governors carried out a Pupil Perception Survey on the subject of bullying in October 2013. Governors were pleased that responses reflected information supplied by the Senior Leadership Team and showed that pupils were knowledgeable and equipped to deal with any unkind behaviour within the Federation.
- Governors worked very closely with the Federation leadership and the Parish Council to resolve issues with an outside provider's before and after school provision, resulting in the provision of high quality before and after school care from an alternative provider on the Federation campus.

2. Holding the executive headteacher to account for the educational performance of the federation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff

- Governors have a rolling plan of staff presentations at full Governing Body meetings. In 2013/14, these included presentations on literacy, numeracy and vulnerable groups and a presentation by the SENDCos on individual education plan provision mapping. Governor knowledge is increased and there has been increased accountability for the schools.
- The Standards committee has an agreed schedule of data to be presented to governors. Data is interrogated at each meeting and has resulted in changes being made to data collection and presentation to ensure more effective tracking of all groups of children and individuals within those groups by the schools.
- Governors monitor attainment and progress of pupils closely through the analysis of external reports such as Raiseonline as well as through Headteacher reports and discussion at Governor meetings.
 - On average children join the school in Reception with skills and knowledge below national expectations. For the current Year R cohort who entered the school in Sept 2014, the percentage of children in line with age expectations on entry was 13% in reading, 18% in writing and 30% in number.
 - Overall, pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1. In July 2014 the percentage of pupils achieving the expected benchmark of Level 2b by the end of Year 2 was in line with national average for reading, writing and mathematics.
 - The percentage of pupils attaining the national benchmark of Level 4b+ at the end of Key Stage 2 in July 2014 was significantly above the national average in mathematics and in line with the national average in reading, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Overall value added scores in July 2014 identified progress through Key Stage 2 as significantly above average in mathematics and reading and in line with national average in writing.

- Strategy Group meetings not only allow time for strategic thinking and planning, but also enable Governors to hold the Headteacher to account at a higher level. For example, Governors requested changes to the Executive Headteacher's written report to reflect leadership, progress and attainment across the Federation, rather than for each school. This has led to more cohesive working across the two schools and effective working between teachers in Years 2 and 3.
- Following their annual self-evaluation and review of the Governing Body action plan, Governors changed from being linked to classes or year groups to linking with subjects across the Federation. This has already led to some changes in planning within each school and across the Federation to ensure consistency and eliminate duplication.
- The Governing Body buys into Hampshire Governing Services, enabling Governors to attend effective training sessions and conferences both as individuals and as a full Governing Body. Take up of training is good, developing Governors' skills and keeping Governors informed on developments both nationally and locally. Governors also attend training sessions run by the National College of Teaching and Leadership, including the Chairs' Development Programme. These training sessions enable Governors to make better informed strategic decisions.
- Nearly all Federation events have at least one Governor in attendance, giving parents the opportunity to speak to us. Governor attendance at parents' evenings began the process of consultation about church affiliation for the junior school, as a number of parents took the opportunity to raise the issue with us.
- The annual Governor Federation Day gives Governors an extended opportunity for listening to the children's views on their learning and learning environment and looking at children's work with them. This has led to focused questioning at Governor meetings.
- The Executive Headteacher reports to Governors on performance management of staff; this includes governors on the Pay Committee scrutinising anonymised objectives. Governors responsible for pay and performance management attended training on the new Pay and Appraisal requirements from September 2014.
- The Executive Headteacher's performance management is carried out by a designated group of governors, supported by an external adviser who also assists in setting the Headteacher's objectives. A review officer is in place.

3. Overseeing the financial performance of the Federation and making sure its money is well spent

- A number of members of the Finance and Resources Committee are finance professionals with experience of budget setting and monitoring. Members of the committee carry out finance training both from Governor Services and also attend National College workshops, such as Financial Efficiencies. The committee has clearly defined terms of reference and these, along with delegated powers, are reviewed annually. Members of the committee carry out a schedule of financial controls during the financial year. Agendas for the committee take account of the timetable of financial events.
- Governors ensure that appropriate budgets are set and monitored throughout the year. Financial benchmarking against schools nationally takes place annually and informs decision making. Governors ensured there were sufficient funds available to upgrade ICT provision across the Federation, which has led to improved efficiencies in finance and administration as well as improving the quality of the children's learning and their learning environment.
- A Pay Committee has been formed to take account of the new Pay and Appraisal requirements and terms of reference have been formulated and agreed.
- The Federation pay policy is reviewed annually in line with the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document and an approved policy is in place reflecting the changes in regulations from September 2014.

Key Issues for the Federation

The most significant issue in both 2013/14 and 2014/15 has been the selection of the new Executive Headteacher from January 2015, following the retirement of the previous postholder.

Governors worked very closely with the Local Authority and the Diocese in drawing up the key tasks, job description and person specification and also consulted with staff and children to ascertain their views on the requirements for their new Headteacher. All Governors participated in a two session training course on recruiting headteachers, which included critiquing the panel on their interviewing skills in mock interviews with existing Headteachers. Most of the panel have successfully completed safer recruitment training.

Advertisements were placed both nationally and within Hampshire. When Governors shortlisted the candidates, they found that the field was not sufficiently strong to progress to interview and the decision was made to re-advertise.

Update March 2015

Governors took the opportunity afforded by the changes to regulations from September 2014 to discuss and amend the Headteacher's pay range and a further advertisement was placed. It was clear that, due to the set resignation dates for existing Headteachers, it would not be possible for an established Headteacher to be in post for January 2015, so Governors took steps immediately to work with the Local Authority to appoint an Interim Executive Headteacher. An experienced school leader was duly appointed and is currently in post. Key tasks and priorities were set and she is already working very effectively to fulfil these.

The second advertisement elicited a very strong field and candidates with a proven track record in leadership and rapidly improving school performance were called to interview. A very demanding two day selection process took place and a very experienced, highly effective Headteacher was appointed from April 2015. As part of the selection process, Governors observed members of the school councils interviewing each candidate. They were very impressed with how the children approached the task, the quality of their questions and their feedback to the panel.

The following key tasks for the Executive Headteacher have been set from April 2015:

- Lead the appointment of the new Head of School of the Junior School.
- By June 2016, raise standards and expectations, embedding consistently good or better teaching over time through rigorous monitoring and evaluation, to enable results in all three key stages to be at least in line with or above national expectations.
- Continue the development of the distinctive Christian character of the Infant School and embed the Church Affiliation of the Junior School through developing and applying the recently agreed values of love, respect and aspire and raising the status of collective worship across the federation.
- Build aspirations and expectations for the community, ensuring that all identifiable groups make accelerated progress, so that gaps in attainment and progress with their peers are minimised.
- Work in partnership with governors and the local authority to build on leadership at every level.

The substantive Executive Headteacher (from April 2015) is attending full Governing Body meetings this term and is in regular contact with the Interim Executive Headteacher. The Chair of Governors is also working closely with them to ensure that there is smooth leadership transition and there is no loss of momentum in the drive for school improvement.

Governors worked with both Executive Headteachers in the appointment process for a new Head of School for the Junior School, following the previous postholder's appointment to headship from January 2015. An experienced Assistant Headteacher has been duly appointed as Head of School and will take up the post in April 2015.

Governors have also taken the opportunity afforded by other staff movement to completely review staffing structures across the Federation and work is continuing on this.

Governing Body Structure 2013/14

Name	Category	Role
Mrs Hilary Bax	Foundation	Chair of Governors Chair of Strategy Group Safer recruitment governor Link governor for music, RE & collective worship
Mrs June Powell	Co-opted	Vice-Chair of Governors Chair of Standards, Achievement & Inclusion Committee Safer recruitment governor SEND governor Link governor for Mathematics
Mr Alec Smith Mrs Debbie Johnson Mrs Sian Smith	Headteacher	Executive Headteacher until Dec 31 st 2014 Interim Executive Headteacher Spring Term Substantive Executive Headteacher from 20 th April 2015
Mrs Jo-Beattie-Edwards	Co-opted	Chair of Pay Committee Safer Recruitment governor Link governor for pupil premium
Mrs Sarah Dunlop	Parent	Link governor for DT and French
Ms Nims Fisher	Co-opted	Safeguarding governor Pastoral governor Link governor for English and Able and Talented children
Mrs Caroline Jerrim	Parent	Link governor for English
Mr Ian Lawson	Co-opted	Training liaison governor Link governor for PE and PHSE
Mr Matt Martin	Parent	Link governor for PE
Mr Andy Milchard	Parent	Governors' Forum representative Link governor for geography, history and computing
Mr John Milne	Authority	Financial controls Link governor for science
Mr Richard Partridge	Co-opted	Infant head of school
Vacancy from Jan 15	Staff	
Mr Peter Taylor	Foundation	Health and Safety governor Link governor for SMSC
Rev Peter Vargeson	Foundation	Chair of Finance and Resources Committee Link governor for collective worship
Mrs Hilary J Pickles	Clerk	
Date of reconstitution: 5 th May 2013 Constitution of Governing Body: 15 Governors (1 Authority, 2 Parent, 3 Foundation, 1 Staff , 1 Headteacher, 7 Co-opted)		

Note: Not all governors were on the Governing Body for the whole academic year as their terms may have ended or they may have resigned.

Finance and Resources Committee	Standards, Achievement and Inclusion Committee
Peter Vargeson (Chair)	June Powell (Chair)
Jo Beattie –Edwards (Vice-Chair)	Nims Fisher (Vice Chair)
Debbie Johnson /Sian Smith (Headteacher)	Debbie Johnson/ Sian Smith (Headteacher)
Hilary Bax	Ian Lawson
Caroline Jerrim	Richard Partridge
John Milne	Sarah Dunlop
Peter Taylor	Hilary Bax
Matt Martin	
Pay Committee	Strategy Group
Jo Beattie-Edwards (Chair)	Hilary Bax (Chair)
Peter Vargeson	Headteacher
Headteacher	Peter Vargeson
Hilary Bax	June Powell
	Nims Fisher
	Jo Beattie-Edwards