

Suffield Park Infant and Nursery School Annual Governance Statement July 2024

Members:

Mrs Nichola Stewart
Dr Vivienne Lennox – Chair
Mr John Sansby – Vice Chair
Mrs Emma Borthwick
Mrs Alyson Appleyard
Cllr Tim Adams
Mr P. Mick Hayhurst
Mrs. Joanna Herrieven

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 parent governors
- the headteacher
- 1 staff governor

We have four vacancies, 2 parent governors, a co-opted governor and a local authority 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 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:

- 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 work with the Head Teacher to strategically develop a new staffing and classroom structure, and to manage the resulting staffing reduction that was necessary due to a falling school role and the consequent reduction in income.
- 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 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 monitor through the year, that the school was addressing the staff and children's wellbeing and emotional needs resulting from the legacy of instability brought about by the pandemic, as well as the recent uncertainty surrounding staffing reductions.
- 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 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 very uncertain funding and a falling birth rate.
- Reviewing policies on a rolling programme., including safeguarding procedures and promoting good attendance.

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. The staffing structure has been reviewed and adjusted according to pupil numbers, specific pupil needs and funding available.

The full governing body took over the role of the curriculum committee and 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's work towards achieving the Nurturing Schools' accreditation and the implementation of the Balanced System to improve communication skills for children, ensured safeguarding arrangements were robust and received reports of 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 and have worked closely with NCC Early Years managers 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 was primarily concerned with maintaining high quality teaching provision within the development of the new staffing and class 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 within the new class structure.
- To support and monitor the wellbeing of the Head Teacher and all the staff during a time of great change.
- Monitoring the progress of the school's development plan, which includes :- ensuring mixed age classes continue to support appropriate knowledge and skills acquisition, a continued focus on phonics and improving the number of children passing the phonics screening check, to improve the outcomes in writing, and to ensure inclusion of SEND pupils.
- 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.

We currently have two vacancies for parent governors, so we will be looking for new parent 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.