

## **Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Board of Fox Hollies Special School September 2020**

### ***Governance Arrangements***

The Governing Board's Instrument of Governance states that the Board shall comprise of 3 elected parent governors; 1 Local Authority governor; 1 Staff governor, the Head Teacher; 5 Co-opted governors, and 2 Foundation governors. The period of office for each governor is 4 years. There are currently 6 vacancies: 3 parent governors, 1 LA governor, 1 Foundation governor, and 1 co-opted governor. It is hoped to fill these vacancies during the forthcoming months.

### ***Attendance Record of Governors***

The record of governors' attendance is available on the school website. No meeting last academic year has been cancelled due to it not being quorate. Governors regular visits to the school to review specific areas of the school's improvement plan have been impacted by Covid-19 and the reduced opening of/access to the school.

### ***Work of the Whole Governing Board***

The Governing Board works together, to undertake its responsibilities in the areas of ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction, holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school, and overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

During the past year, the Governing Board have fulfilled the following responsibilities:

They have ensured clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction by:

- Looking at the school's long term aims within the school improvement plan and how to achieve them;
- Supported the Head Teacher's work to improve teaching & learning within school by re-organisation of the class structure and redesign of the curriculum;
- Reviewing the pupil outcomes and achievements, via information provided by the Head Teacher in reports and through various data.
- Undertaking independent assessments of the effectiveness of the school through visits;
- Ascertaining areas for improvement;
- Reviewing and evaluating the School Improvement Plan to ensure that the above aims are met;
- Working with the Senior & Middle Leadership Teams to develop leadership skills and ensure an effective leadership of the school;
- Attending meetings to update professional development and knowledge;
- Working within the Co-operative Trust;
- Monitoring closely, safeguarding across school and receiving termly updates.

They have held the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school by:

- Challenging the Head Teacher in relation to the pupil outcomes;
- Reviewing and challenging staffing levels and deployment;
- Monitoring progress of the School Improvement Plan;
- Monitoring pupil standards;
- Analysing and challenging data

- Ensuring that their own work enables them to be held accountable for their decisions and actions, i.e., their decisions are transparent and based on the best available information.

They have overseen the financial performance of the school and made sure its money was well spent:

- By receiving, scrutinising and challenging termly finance reports from the School Business Manager
- By ensuring that they keep abreast of developments in school funding
- By ensuring that all financial decisions are made with due regard to financial regulations, impact and within funding levels;
- By ensuring that all statutory and recommended best practice documentation is in place (eg, SFVS, Statement of Internal Controls etc);
- By monitoring an initial deficit budget.

Due to the reduced access and need for additional agenda items for GB meetings, the Governing Board's monitoring of work towards completing the LA Audit Action Plan to address areas for development as identified by the audit process has been reduced. However, this plan has been reviewed and has been a standard agenda item for the year, with work towards completion of outstanding items continuing to take place

The Governors Skills' Audit has been updated and a summary produced. Learning Link training continues to be purchased; Governors will access this training to develop their knowledge and skills. This summary will be used to find governors to fill the current vacancies, based on skills required

The Governing Board continues to oversee and monitor the ever-fluctuating funding. The Head Teacher continues to press for additional funding to mitigate the effects of the reduced funding and has increased the PAN as part of the measures to remove the initial deficit budget for 20/21.

The Governing Board has worked closely with the Head Teacher to manage the effects of Covid-19 and reviewed the necessary documents such as the various risk assessments. At every stage, the Chair has been involved, consulted and updated on the measures taken to manage the situation and provide school places for as many vulnerable students as possible; this has been reported to the GB at every meeting.

The impact of these actions is to provide a high quality, challenging and supportive framework through which to set the strategic direction of the school, create accountability and ensure financial security.; this has been particularly challenging during this academic year with the closures due to the roofing damage and repairs, followed closely by the Covid-19 temporary closure and subsequent management of the partial opening to selected students.

### ***Future Plans for the Governors***

Looking to the future, the Clerk and Chair will identify potential governors to recruit for the vacancies within the school with suitable candidates, based on the required skills as identified in a recently undertaken and analysed skills audit. The areas of least experience and knowledge of the current Governing Board are:

Procurement and purchasing  
HR policy and processes  
Property and estate management  
Experience of external oversight and inspection

Further, the GB's plans are:

- To carry on attending networking meeting to ensure knowledge is current and keeping abreast of Friday updates for governors.
- The Governing Board will resume the audit action plan and the Governing Board Audit Tool to look at reshaping and developing the governing board.
- To be kept updated of the cooperative trust and see the formation of this trust develop and partnerships form.
- To correspond with parents/ carers at least termly.

As a deficit is forecast for the financial year 2021/22, the Governing Board will be closely monitoring the budget and future funding and ascertaining viability considering the current unclear funding proposals.

The Governing Board will continue to monitor pupil outcomes and standards in the school, particularly in relation to the new structure and curriculum, holding the Head Teacher and themselves to account for these.

***How you can contact the Governing Board***

Suggestions and feedback are always welcome, please contact the Chair of Governors via the Clerk (Flavia Highfield), who can be contacted via the School Office.

Approved Governing Board minutes (with the exception of any confidential items) are available for inspection in the school.

September 2020