

Governors Annual Statement

Queenswood Primary School and Nursery Annual Statement

(2019/2020 academic year)

In accordance with the Government's requirements for all governing bodies, the three strategic functions of Queenswood's Governing Board are as follows:

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. Monitoring the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governance Arrangements

Our Governing Board has a constitution of 9 members under the following categories:

- Foundation / Trust Governors (2)
- Parent Governors (2)
- Local Authority Appointed Governor (1)
- Co-Opted Governors (2)
- Staff Governors (1)
- The Headteacher

Note: In 2012 Queenswood joined the Beacon Co-operative Trust, which was set up to form a collaborative learning partnership with a number of other schools. This Trust has since become dormant and no longer has a function. When Queenswood joined the Trust, we became a foundation school, which resulted in the Governing Board assuming corporate responsibility as employers of all the teaching and support staff in the school; this responsibility was transferred from the Local Authority (LA). These responsibilities do not include catering and cleaning staff, or the caretaker, who are all employed through service level agreements with the LA. In addition, the Governing Board also took over responsibility for the land which the school is built on and maintenance of the buildings.

Other than the Headteacher, governors are volunteers who apply for, and are selected and appointed to, their roles following interview, are independent and have equal status to one another. A Chair and Vice Chair are elected by the Governing Board and work closely with the Headteacher. As governors, we provide challenge to the school by holding the Headteacher and senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, learning and school performance. We achieve this regular monitoring, including analysis of data on children's performance and progress and through questioning. Governors also hold the Headteacher to account for the performance management of all teachers and support staff.

The Governing Board considers:

- Standards, attainment and progress of all year groups including early years
- The School Improvement / Development Plan
- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Safeguarding
- Staffing – employment, management, development and training etc.
- Budget and financial monitoring
- Support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Use of both the Pupil Premium and Primary Sports' Grants, and their impact on pupils
- Health and safety for premises and stakeholders

Below are some of the ways in which the Governing Board impact on the strategic management of the school.

School Improvement / Development Plan (SDP)

Senior leaders share the SDP with governors so that we are able to identify and monitor progress made towards the key objectives. The current SDP is based on priorities identified from performance data and the priorities identified through the last Ofsted inspection report. The SDP is reviewed and monitored termly and discussed at full governing board meetings. Additionally, termly support and monitoring meetings are held with the LA, plus meetings with our School Improvement Partner (SIP), employed by the Severn Teaching School Alliance.

Policies

Governor's review and approve all relevant policies on a programmed basis to ensure that all guidance is current and up to date. Special attention is paid to ensure that all guidance complies with the Department of Education's mandatory policy list and the LA's recommended list. In addition, the school website is audited annually to ensure that all the statutory information is displayed and up to date.

Data

Data is made available to governors through termly meetings, with both verbal and written presentations followed by question-and-answer sessions with the Headteacher and members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), enabling the governors to benchmark the data against similar schools, LA schools and schools nationally. Emphasis is placed on pupil progress across all ability groups, including vulnerable and 'at risk' groups, together with the effective use of our Pupil Premium and Primary School Sports Grants.

Finance

The budget and school fund are closely monitored to ensure best value and effective use of funding. Regular meetings are held with the Headteacher and the LA's nominated Finance Officer.

Governor Attendance

Governor attendance at meetings is good and any absences are explained and approved by the Chair.

Governor Monitoring and Visits

Governors are normally required to visit the school regularly to ensure the priorities of the school are evident, and to understand more effectively the key issues on the SDP. These monitoring visits allow governors the opportunity to observe and communicate with staff and pupils, and to ensure that actions agreed in the SDP are being undertaken by the school. After each visit a formal report is prepared and presented at the next full governing board meeting. From this, the progress in the delivery of agreed school priority areas can be actively monitored, and impact on the education of the pupils more effectively assessed. Additionally, the Board underwent specific training to take forward their critically important monitoring role within the constraints brought about by the pandemic. Additionally, visits usually take place to support school events such as Governors' Awards, festivals and sporting events.

Note: Since the onset of COVID-19 and the associated lockdown, only limited on-site (face to face) visits to school have been able to take place. However, governor monitoring has continued through on-line meetings and a modified and updated monitoring programme developed.

Governor Development

The Governing Board recognises that in order to fulfil its role effectively, it must ensure that all governors have the required skills and knowledge to support the achievement of the school's priority objectives. Recognising the importance of training and development, the Governing Board undertakes an internal annual review of its effectiveness over the school year. This incorporates a skills audit to identify any gaps that need to be filled and an agreed budget supports these training needs.

The Governing Board is a member of The National Governors' Association and uses this, together with other sources of information, to ensure it remains abreast of relevant developments in the education sector.

Meetings and Committees

The full Governing Board meets in the second half of each term. In addition to these meetings, our Finance and Staffing Committee meets in the first half of each term. Other committees are formed as required, including:

- Appeals Committee
- Attendance Committee
- Headteachers' Appraisal Committee – this committee is integrated into the Finance and Staffing Committee and is also supported by an external adviser.

No meetings have been held during this year to consider disciplinary or attendance issues.

Note: Since the 'lockdown' all governor meetings have been held on-line via Microsoft Teams.

Clerk to the Governors

The Governing Board employs a professional clerk who is provided by the LA. The Clerk is responsible for taking the minutes of full governing body and finance and staffing meetings, and provides professional advice on procedural matters; the Clerk plays a key role in the work of the Governing Board.

More details about our Governing Board can be found by clicking on the following links:

- [The role of Governors](#)
- [Governor profiles](#)
- [Governors' code of conduct](#)
- [Register of Governors' attendance at meetings \(including meetings dates\)](#)
- [Register of Governors' business and pecuniary interests](#)

Chair's Statement

This is the first statement I have written and I would have started by saying it has been another busy year for the Board of Governors, but this would be an understatement. I have to say there has never before been a year like this. Since early 2020, the COVID pandemic has been at the forefront of everyone's minds and has touched many of our lives in such drastic ways, providing us all with so many challenges. I am proud to say that the whole school community has risen to these challenges and exceeded all expectations. This could not have been achieved without the outstanding commitment of all of our staff and our Headteacher and the support and understanding of our pupils and parents.

I would like to start from the beginning of the Autumn Term 2019.

The months leading up to the start of term were filled with the challenge of identifying a new substantive headteacher. Working in partnership with the LA, we appointed Mr Ferriday (Lee) as Consulting Headteacher (on secondment).

A key priority for Mr Ferriday was to improve pupil performance, standards and outcomes, and hopefully justify a future move from 'Requires Improvement' to 'Good' in Ofsted terms.

Mr Ferriday's task was something of a baptism of fire, as together with improving the performance and outcomes, he had to address the significant financial challenges the school was facing. Queenswood is a school with a small number of pupils on roll, which presents challenges in balancing income and expenditure. Ideally, we need to maximise the number of pupils on the school roll, in order to support the expenditure incurred in running the school. The most expensive resource in any school and the majority of business operations is staffing and associated costs. A restructure of the teaching staff had taken place previously, but it was now necessary to review the support staff to identify the structure required and what could be afforded. This resulted in a restructure of the support staff, which took place alongside developing their role to contribute to the delivery of high quality teaching and learning; this also took place over the time of the Ofsted inspection.

We were inspected by Ofsted on 14 January 2020.

It is fair to say that, whilst the outcome from the inspection did not improve our grading as hoped, there were many positives to be drawn from the [report](#). In brief, it acknowledged the work that had taken place since Mr

Ferriday had been appointed as Headteacher and the improvement that had taken place; however, there was insufficient evidence to support a 'good' rating at that time. From the governors' point of view, we acknowledged that this was disappointing, but remained confident that what we were doing was what was needed to best support our pupils and provide the high-quality of education that they deserve.

The restructure of the support staff took place and unfortunately this resulted in some staff having to be made redundant; it is always sad to say goodbye to staff, some of whom had been with the school for a number of years, but this was unavoidable.

As mentioned above, educational establishments nationally have faced significant financial challenges over recent years with reduced funding and increased costs, making it difficult to balance budgets. This was noted by governors as a significant challenge for Queenswood some time ago, and options to improve the long-term sustainability of the school were being explored; these included further reducing costs, increasing income, federation with another school, and academisation. Additionally, the possibility of closing the school was considered, but quickly discounted as it would potentially have a serious detrimental impact on the local community. After extensive research it was agreed that the best option would be to identify a local academy trust with similar values to those of Queenswood which would meet all of our expectations. A number of options were explored, resulting in us identifying a potential partner, which led to some collaborative learning opportunities with a member of staff from the academy trust lead school coming to teach at Queenswood for a period of time.

Returning to the budget for a moment, the Finance and Staffing Committee continued to keep a watchful eye on the budget, with termly meetings to monitor the school's financial position. The draft budget for 2020/21 was presented early in the new financial year, discussed with the LA and subsequently approved by governors. Governors also considered the Pupil Premium and Sports Premium Grants and examined the impact of this in the previous school year.

Moving on to more recent times and the challenges faced by COVID 19, as a Board, we have continued to hold virtual meetings and conducted much of our usual business remotely. Mr Ferriday and his team have worked tirelessly to complete risk assessments and put in place procedures to minimise the risks for all in school and ensure everyone's well-being. We have worked together in our strategic role to:

- Oversee the introduction and provision of home schooling for vulnerable and at-risk pupils, and in-school provision for children of key workers
- Ensure pupils still enjoy school, feel valued and part of the school community
- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Ensure pupil attainment is monitored and maximised
- Oversee and approve the school's budget
- Ensure all staff are supported as required
- Approve policies and procedures
- Oversee admission of Reception pupils
- Attend school events (prior to lockdown)
- Maintain the impetus to find the right solution to provide long term stability and sustainability for the school

By carrying out our strategic monitoring role, the Board is enabling the SLT to focus on the day to day running of the school, providing support where appropriate.

The Vice-Chair of Governors holds the responsibility for safeguarding and prior to lockdown held termly meetings with the School Council and Children's Safeguarding Board to both engage them in developing Queenswood as a Safeguarding School and learn about their experiences. Another important responsibility is ensuring that there are adequate provisions for keeping children safe online and we used to meet with pupils from different year groups and encourage them to tell us about how this is achieved; meeting children is always an enjoyable aspect of our role.

We continue to review and adapt policies and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet, not only our legal responsibilities, but also, our vision and aims for the school and our pupils. The children and staff remain at the forefront of our decisions as we endeavour to provide the best educational environment for them.

We continue to closely monitor the budget to ensure the school can cope with reduced funding and rising costs, including unanticipated costs due to COVID 19. However, we strive to ensure that staffing levels and resources have not suffered as a result of the necessary changes, and that the workload for the staff is carefully managed. This hopefully ensures that the children's learning and development will continue to be of the highest standard. It is reassuring too that our breakfast and after school clubs are popular and provide a vital service to many parents, although it is with a heavy heart that these had to temporarily close in line with Government guidance.

In the short period of time between the start of the academic year and the onset of the pandemic, the school achieved some of the SDP objectives, including:

- Improvements in the teaching of Phonics and reading so more pupils make good progress.
- Ensuring pupils in the Early Years receive a good standard of focused learning in the outdoor environment.
- The headteacher and subject leaders have made sure the school's curriculum is designed, planned and sequenced effectively in all subjects.
- Ensuring more pupils attend school regularly, enabling them to make much better progress.
- Improvements to the pupils' personal development, so that they are better prepared for life in modern Britain.

During the period of the pandemic the school has adapted the curriculum to support home learning, support pupils' re-integration into school and close gaps in skills and knowledge. It should be noted that all SATS tests were also cancelled. Teacher assessments will be used to judge the standards attained and the progress achieved in the year ahead.

Governor Focus Areas for 2020/2021

I am writing this statement in January 2021 so I am fortunately able to add a little more detail to this area based on events as opposed to aims and objectives.

As you will all be aware, the new academic year started with a number of challenges for schools due to the ongoing COVID situation. The expectations have changed and continue to change at a pace, with schools nationally being in the spotlight in the press in respect of their safety and whether they should be open or closed.

Following the Christmas holidays, schools continue to face major challenges and we are no exception. We are only open for vulnerable children, early years and children of critical workers, with all other pupils being home

educated; the Government has also decided that Key Stage 2 SATS will not take place again this year and work is ongoing in respect of testing for both staff and pupils at a national level.

As the above illustrates, the school community needs to continue to work together and be as flexible and adaptable as possible to successfully implement the changes that will be forthcoming. Undoubtedly, we will have to build on our successes and experience in relation to home education and supporting families to ensure the best outcomes for our children.

In brief, the Governor's will continue to monitor the impact of the pandemic on the school, with particular emphasis on and pupil wellbeing.

Whilst continuing to prioritise the above, it is also essential that we address the other issues we face i.e.

- Prudent management of the budget
- Identifying the right strategy to secure the medium and longer term sustainability of the school
- Ensuring that all safeguarding measures are reviewed and are adapted and robust enough to meet the rigorous demands of operating in such a challenging environment. Prior to the current lockdown, we were planning to have a Teams Meeting with the children and this will be kept under review. In the meantime, the S11/175 Safeguarding Audit has been undertaken we are continuing to closely monitor safeguarding with Senior Leaders.

Additionally, we have just established two Governor Task Groups to:

- Look at establishing nursery admissions
- Review the website.

It is important to note that Mr Ferriday's contract only runs to the end of the summer term 2021. Therefore, governors are engaged in identifying the best solution to maintain the pace of improvement and development needed to reach our initial goal of becoming a 'good' school in Ofsted terms and continue to provide the high-quality education our children deserve.