

Pentland Infant and Nursery School

Governing Body Annual Statement 2016 to 2017

The role of the Governing Body

The governing body has three core functions:

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

The governing body has proved itself to be an active and knowledgeable group, with new members having joined over the last year helping to broaden the skills, knowledge and expertise within the group. The board now combines knowledge of the local community along with skills and experience from the public sector, cultural institutions, the financial world and education. This helps to guide and inform the strategic decisions about the life of our school.

The governors, alongside the school staff team, are constantly seeking to improve every aspect of school life for the benefit of the children. They value the feedback from all stakeholders. Annual parent/carer and staff surveys are routinely carried out and the findings of these inform our self – evaluation, which in turn shapes our school development work. Governors have also held firm on the ‘open-door’ policy that the school operates, whereby we encourage and welcome parents into school, knowing that this gives real opportunity to develop positive working relationships between school staff and families, for the benefit of all children.

A broad and balanced curriculum

The school is committed to providing a curriculum that is broad, balanced and stimulating for all children. The Standards and Effectiveness Committee take a keen interest on monitoring the curriculum offered within school, the quality of teaching and learning and the progress and outcomes for all groups of children.

Staff with Subject Leadership responsibilities prepare reports bi-annually for the governing body and make presentations to the Standard and Effectiveness Committee on a rolling programme. Governors benefit from reports and training from an external school improvement consultant, Mr David Jackson and the school’s Kirklees Learning Partner, Mrs Susan Davis, as well as from the headteacher. Governors have attended Learning Walks in school to observe teaching and learning throughout each class and have discussed findings with the school’s senior management team and Mr Jackson. All these activities ensure that governors have a good overview of teaching and learning within the school and the effectiveness of provision.

Governors are satisfied that teaching and learning is at least Good within the school, with elements of Outstanding practice being evidenced.

A particularly notable achievement this year has been in PSHE, where the school have received the nationally recognised PSHE Charter School Status, in recognition of the excellent teaching and support in school for children’s Personal, Social and Emotional education.

The quality of music teaching, learning and experiences across the school is growing. This year saw over 20 children take part in the Dewsbury Big Sing, a wonderful collaborative event between different age-range schools in Dewsbury.

The school once again committed to working in partnership with arts and cultural organisations as a means of stimulating learning across the curriculum. The successes of last year's work was evident through the case studies and progress measures the governors were presented with. This year has seen a fantastic project of work in partnership with Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) and Manasamitra centred on 'The Life of a Bee', with the culmination being Pentland children having their own sculptures displayed at YSP.

Enrichment Activities

After School Clubs have continued to extend and our pupils now have access to a wide range of extracurricular activities, which help to broaden and enhance their life experiences and their academic progress. The school uses their Pupil Premium and Sports Premium funding carefully to ensure that families face no charge for these activities and that access is equal for all. Children have benefited from having sports coaches in school to deliver football, cricket, archery, boxercise, tri-golf and rollerskating.

Outcomes for Children

EYFS

At the end of Reception Class children are measured against the EYFS Profile to see if they have achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD). Our children's achievement this year shows the school to be just below national figures with 68.8% of Pentland children achieving the GLD compared with the national figure of 70.7%. School has seen an 8.8% points rise since 2016. Our children do well with learning across all the areas of learning, achieving an average total point score of 0.5% above national figures at 35. Governors equate this to very good progress from low baseline starting points.

Phonics Screening

Pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics has risen again: 0.8% rise since 2016 and 11% rise since 2015.

78.3% of pupils achieved expected standard which is 2.9% below the national figure of 81.2%.

66.7% of pupils achieved phonics in Year 2, compared to 61.6% nationally. School provided booster sessions to support these results.

Key Stage 1

Reading, Writing and Maths combined at expected level or better was 78.9% in 2017. This is well above the national average of 63.7%.

Reading, Writing and Maths combined at the higher standard was 15.8% in 2017. This too is well above the national average of 11%.

There remain some in-school gaps in achievement, which the governors are aware of; governors have high expectations for all and carefully monitor the work the school are doing to diminish the difference for these groups.

Budget and Finances

The Resources Committee take a strong lead on the financial decisions of the school. This panel have met regularly over the last year, as always, and have had some tough decisions to make. Whilst we are still anticipating the full impact of the Government's new funding formula for schools, we are already facing severe financial challenges now. The school has consistently lost funding for the last couple of years and as a school and governing body, we have had to put plans in place to deal with this by reviewing all areas of our spending and by having strong financial plans and monitoring in place.

We have held strong on the areas that we feel most benefit the children ie. single age range classes, good ratios of teachers and support staff and enrichment of the curriculum and learning experience. However, finances are being stretched and making decision making extremely complex.

Safeguarding, Behaviour and Welfare

Governors take a comprehensive responsibility for safeguarding within school. They oversee policies and procedures and ensure that any developmental needs within the safeguarding audit are completed fully and in a timely manner. Governors believe that behaviour in the school is a strong contributor to children's overall learning aptitude. The principles and positive behaviour policy that has been set by school has shown to be effective in being explicit about what behaviour is desired. Learning walks and visitor's comments evidence a very positive ethos and behaviour by all in school.

The governing body have also focused on raising the school's attendance over the last few years and are very pleased with the fact that the school achieved 95.9% in line with national targets this last year. The governors believe it is essential that all families understand the importance of good attendance and help contribute to the school's overall target; but most of all we work hard to ensure that children's educational progress and achievement do not suffer due to gaps in school attendance.

Partnerships and Community

Our links with local schools are growing, particularly with those that belong to the Dewsbury Learning Partnership. As resources within the Local Authority diminish, our school, alongside others, has a growing remit to provide wider support and services to the local community, which once would have been provided elsewhere. In light of this, we have combined with other local schools to establish 'Thrive Community Hub'. Our headteacher has the role of Community Hub Leader for the Thrive Community Hub and is a key link between the local authority and schools.

The school have also taken on the running of the old Sure Start Centre on site, giving it a new title of Pentland Well-Being Centre. Our aim is to establish a range of activities and services there for families within the local community; however, this responsibility comes with no funding attached, so as a school we are seeking ways in which this can be made sustainable.

Both these initiatives add another dimension to the work of the school and governing body.

