

Hovingham Primary School Governing Body Annual Governance Statement October 2021

The effectiveness and impact of the governing body 2020/2021

Governors have a clear vision for the school and a very good understanding of their role. In turbulent and sometimes distressing times the governors have continued to play an active and effective role in supporting the school to achieve its overall aim to be a 'great school'. They work hard to ensure that they are effective in holding leaders to account for all aspects of the school's work.

The past year has been a very different and difficult one for all those connected to Hovingham Primary School, including the Governing Body. In 2020/21 the impact of the Covid Pandemic and its consequence 'lockdowns' in school have dominated the thoughts, planning and actions of governors and senior management. More time and effort have been invested in attempts to mitigate the impact of the lockdowns - both in terms of organising teaching and learning when pupils have not been in School, and also the 'catch up' or 'recovery' curriculum when they returned. Obviously, governors have not been centrally involved in this save to give the Principal and staff their support and interest. As we move into the 2021/22 academic year we must continue to follow government and local authority guidance on keeping safe and supporting staff, families and pupils.

Since the national lockdown in March 2020 contact between governors and School has had to be virtual and that has limited our usual activities but we have remained in regular contact with senior leaders and held virtual Board and committee meetings. We have been impressed by the arrangements made to keep everyone safe and congratulate leaders on the thoroughness of the work undertaken.

The governing body has changed since the last report in September 2020. Sally Blunt has stepped down as Chair and has subsequently resigned from the governing body after years of hard work and sterling service. We would like to record our thanks to Sally for her commitment, skills, experience and generosity of time. Such was the size of her role that she has been replaced by two co-chairs – Juliet Bailey and Colin Noble. Additionally, Ishrat Nazir and Sam Saxby-Brown have both left the governing board for personal reasons. Ishrat will be much missed for her local knowledge and connections and her insight of school life. Sam is already missed for his knowledge and experience within the safeguarding field. We have recruited new members to the governing board: Saima Arif who brings experience and knowledge of the local area, and who is an ex-Hovingham pupil; and Violeta Cooper who is a much-respected member of the school staff. As this report is being written we await the results of a parental ballot to choose two parent-governors.

This report would be remiss if it did not refer to the two tragic events which the School had to manage in the Autumn term of 2020. The parental homicide affected many staff, pupils and parents, and this was followed by a staff suicide which affected even more. One of these

tragedies would be enough to test the capacity and resilience of any school; to deal with two, and their unavoidable consequences, is a huge testament to the skills and commitment of the Principal and her senior leadership team.

The Governors would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff for their contributions over the year, especially in such trying times, and to all parents, families and children for their continued support and good will. Let us hope that 2021/22 will enable us to pick up all the threads of the school's ambitious plan to offer a great educational experience.

Background information

The governing body conducts its business to take account of the three roles of governing bodies as outlined in the Governors' Handbook:

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

The governing body contributes to the school's self evaluation and monitors planning on a regular basis through discussion at the formal meetings and more informal meetings and visits. Self-evaluation informs the detail underpinning Hovingham's strategic aims. Governors also ensure that the school complies fully with statutory safeguarding procedures and other requirements. The day to day management of the school is the responsibility of the Head Teacher and senior leadership team.

The composition of the governing body

The constitution of the governing body was changed to 13 members in May 2017.

Membership includes:

- Head teacher
- 1 Local Authority governor recommended by the LA and approved by the governing body – this post has been filled by Saima Arif
- 2 Parent governors
- 1 staff governor formally elected by staff employed at the school
- 8 co-opted governors nominated and appointed by the governing body

The governors have the skills and experience needed for their important strategic role in the school and are committed to that responsibility. However Governors do move on or retire and so we are constantly on the look out for potential new governors who will bring additional skills and expertise to our work.

The governing body operates with the following committees:

- **Strategic Group** – a small group of governors who focus on the future of the school, in line with the strategy agreed by the Governing Board via Board Meetings, and have a responsibility for mitigating key strategic risks. Through its members it also oversees the Performance Management of the Principal and Senior Leadership Team.
- **Resources committee** - responsible for staffing, equality and diversity, finance, property management, health and safety and staff wellbeing
- **Teaching, learning and assessment committee** - responsible for monitoring the curriculum provision, teaching and learning including target setting, standards and

achievement, SEN and ensuring that the governing body is represented at school improvement discussions.

- **Pupil Welfare** - responsible for behaviour, safeguarding, attendance, children's spiritual moral social and cultural development, children and parent voice, extra-curricular activities, cluster and other partnerships.

Meetings of the governing body and attendance

The full governing body met three times this year, all virtually; all meetings were quorate and clerked by a trained professional clerk. The governing board committees met regularly before the lock down and have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the governing body. Attendance at meetings is good with all meetings held quorate in 2020/2021. Apologies for non-attendance are considered on an individual basis and governors appreciate the need for all governors to play an active role.