

Governors' Annual Statement

Annual Governance Statement for the Board of Governors of Howitt Primary Community School

September 2018

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all boards of governors, the three core strategic functions of Howitt Primary Community School's board are:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and
- overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Safeguarding children will remain a priority and our focus will be on emotional, physical and mental wellbeing, online safety and the Prevent strategy.

Governance arrangements

The Board of Governors at Howitt Primary Community School was re-constituted in 2016. The 15-strong board includes the headteacher, one staff governor, six elected parent governors (currently 4 vacancies) and one governor who is appointed by the local authority (vacancy). The other six members have been co-opted onto the board because, in our opinion, they have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and ongoing success of the school. On our board, the co-opted members come from a range of backgrounds including teaching and education, personnel, business and building management, finance and Ofsted inspection. In addition, our governing board also includes two associate governors who are currently the two deputy headteachers at the school. They provide a balanced overview and "hands-on" information about the whole school; they have no voting rights.

The full board meets six times a year to discuss formal business however one of these meetings is allocated to governor training. The final item on every agenda is "*What have we done at this meeting to improve outcomes for children?*"

Every agenda also includes a discussion around one of the National Governors' Association 'Twenty Questions' that every governing board should ask of itself.

We also have three committees that support the work of the school:

- **Resources Committee** with responsibility for finance and budget issues (including pay and performance), staffing, premises, and health and safety.
- **Children and Learning Committee** with responsibility for the curriculum, the children's learning experiences, pupil progress, assessment and community links.
- **Headteacher Performance Management Committee** with responsibility for setting and reviewing challenging objectives for the headteacher. They meet

at least three times a year and one of these meetings includes an external adviser.

In addition we have a **Working Party for Policies** that reviews policies before they are circulated to all governors with a view to ratification at the next full governing board meeting.

Attendance record of governors

Howitt Primary Community School's Board of Governors is a committed team and attendance at meetings is a priority for all governors. A number of governors devote much of their spare time to the school attending events, visiting classes, working alongside teachers and subject leaders, speaking with pupils and meeting with external inspectors/advisors to ensure the school continues to improve. We also undergo relevant training in many aspects of school life e.g. induction, finance, roles and responsibilities, safeguarding and data analysis.

The work that we have done on our committees and on the Governing Board

All schools introduced the Government's National Curriculum in September 2014. Our school has implemented the changes in a very creative way that encourages pupil progress, high standards of attainment, a love of learning and a thirst for knowledge. The new curriculum has been fully embedded throughout the school over the last four years and is continually being effectively monitored and refined to ensure that it meets the needs of our children and reflects further Government changes to the curriculum and assessment procedures.

At the start of each academic year, governors attend an after-school meeting that establishes the school's vision in the light of previous achievements and the way forward. This meeting involves all staff, pupils, parents, governors and members of the local community. We have also attended homework project showcase events, creative curriculum visitors ('WOW' days) concerts, performances and celebration assemblies.

A revised code of practice for supporting children with special educational needs (SEND) was published during the summer of 2014 and over the last four years, the school has implemented the key changes and further developments. Governors regularly review the school's policy that now places greater emphasis on the partnership between school and parents/carers and builds on our existing good practice. This policy is fully embedded across the school and all teachers and members of SLT are familiar with further changes and developments. Governors liaise regularly with the school SEND co-ordinator (SENCo) and we have a named SEND governor who works alongside the SENCo.

We acknowledge that governors have a key role to play in keeping children safe at school. Safeguarding is an agenda item on all governing board meetings and governors receive an annual report on the outcomes of the Safeguarding audit carried out by the Safeguarding Lead teacher. This informs the annual Safeguarding action plan. There is a named Safeguarding governor on our board who liaises

regularly with the Safeguarding Lead teacher. We continually consider and review our safeguarding procedures in line with the Governments' statutory guidelines, following the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' document revised in September 2018.

Governors monitor how the Government's Pupil Premium funding is being spent to help diminish the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and their peers. The named governor for Pupil Premium sits on the Children and Learning Committee and all governors have been updated on how a variety of interventions are helping pupils reach their potential. There is also an Interventions Lead teacher who works closely with the SENCo. This teacher also monitors the impact of Pupil Premium funding on the outcomes of disadvantaged children. We have published a Pupil Premium Strategy on our website that clearly identifies barriers to learning and how the Pupil Premium funding is to be used to address these. This has been reviewed for the year 2017 -18 and a new strategy for 2018 -19 has been put in place.

The Resources Committee has agreed a new three year budget plan and reports that the school's finances are currently healthy. This year this committee supported the headteacher in appointing new staff, two of whom are newly qualified teachers, and a teaching and learning assistant (TLA) to support the disadvantaged children funded from the Pupil Premium funding. This committee ensures the school site is well maintained and secure. A successful health and safety audit has been carried out. This year the school has made additional improvements to the outdoor learning spaces including the addition of a trim trail and a new Key Stage Two canopy. Parents, staff and governors have given of their time to support some of the improvements to the outdoor learning environment. The indoor learning environment has continued to be a focus for further improvement and staff have been supported by the school's Learning Environment Lead teacher and the named governors for this area. In January 2018, a burst pipe caused substantial damage to two classrooms and the adjacent corridor. Governors supported the headteacher and staff to resolve the issue and thereby ensure that the quality of teaching and learning and was not compromised.

The Children and Learning Committee have received regular data updates which inform them of the pupils' attainment and progress. Governors ask probing questions regarding the achievements of specific groups and how they compare to other children. This committee also receives regular verbal and written reports from subject leaders to outline progress with their action plans and their next steps. Subject leaders value this level of support and challenge when they report in person to the committee. Governors welcome this opportunity to ask specific questions of subject leaders as part of their monitoring and strategic role.

The Children and Learning Committee have an integral part to play in school improvement and their roles and responsibility are clearly identified in the School Improvement Plan. This year we have developed a summary of monitoring questions that are linked to each key issue in the Plan. These questions support governors to have an increased awareness of school improvement whilst being an effective strategy to hold school leaders to account.

Governors are proud of the fact that the school continues to offer an effective and very successful provision for two-year olds linked to our excellent nursery provision. We currently support eight two-year olds and have a waiting list. Our nursery is a

lively and welcoming environment that uses every opportunity to extend learning and prepare children to be “school ready”.

Following a series of Governing Board Extraordinary meetings and consultation with the community and all stakeholders, it was agreed that the school would take steps to become an academy and work alongside seven other Derbyshire primary schools to establish the Embark Multi Academy Trust. As always, the children and their education are at the heart of this decision and we are very excited about this next step in the school’s journey and to take the opportunity to work closely with the others schools in this Trust.

We are very proud of all of the hard work of the staff, pupils and governors this year and the impact of this hard work is evident in the school’s overall trend of improvement and the very positive 2018 outcomes our pupils have achieved compared to national outcomes. The governors also wish to thank the parents/carers for their continued support for and encouragement of their children and their increasing involvement in the life of the school.

Minutes of full Governing Board and committee meetings are public documents. If you would like to see any of the minutes, please ask at the school office.

Dates of future board and committee meetings are available.

Governors’ Self Evaluation and training

At the start of the school year 2017/18 each governor completed a self-audit /evaluation linked to the National Governors’ Association skills audit. This helped us to identify our board’s strengths and training needs and we devised a governors’ development plan linked to the six competencies in the “Competency Framework for Governance”. As result governors have received training on:

- Roles and responsibilities;
- Interpreting and questioning data;
- Safeguarding;
- Prevent; and
- Online safety.

The newly appointed Co-Chairs of the governors also attended training and Local Authority strategic briefings specific to their role.

Future plans for governors

During the autumn term of the 2018/19 school year, we are working with the headteacher and the school’s senior leadership team to set the school’s new Improvement Plan. This sets out our priorities for the year ahead, linked to our vision meeting earlier in September and the move to our academy conversion.

We will continue to monitor the curriculum and ensure it is further developed throughout the school with a continuing emphasis on the learning environment and raising standards in writing.

Securing high standards for all our children remains our ultimate goal and we will continue to work closely with teaching staff to ensure Pupil Premium funding is spent effectively and that interventions for disadvantaged children have a positive impact on their achievements and continue to diminish gaps.

We are keen to build on the success of our two-year old provision and work alongside the headteacher to establish wrap-around care.

Howitt Primary Community School is a thriving school and this year we welcome our cohort of 35 children in the Reception year bringing our current roll to 432.

Governors will ensure measures remain in place to support teachers to continue to deliver excellent lessons that promote a love of learning.

We will continue to strengthen our links with the community by showcasing our pupils' talents for sports and music outside school. We have a vibrant school choir and an established community choir. Our links will of course, be strengthened further by our involvement within the Embark Multi Academy Trust. There will be updates on this as the process rolls out.

We will continue to prepare our children for a life in Modern Britain by promoting the British values of democracy, the law, liberty, respect and tolerance as set down by the government. These sit alongside our own school principles of creativity, curiosity, independence, respect, tolerance, co-operation and resilience.

How you can contact the governing board.

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents/carers. Please contact the Co-Chairs of Governors, Mrs Jane Bowley and Mrs Carolyn Wood, via the school office.

A full list of governors with information about what we do is available on the school website.