

GOVERNOR'S IMPACT STATEMENT

2014/2015

2014/15 has been a year of achieving goals, and setting new targets; of further embedding good practice and eliminating that which is less effective. Whilst the school have been able to bask in the glory of some great successes over the last 12 months from academic to sporting, social to financial, at no point have either the governors or staff sat back and allowed complacency to set in. The Governors at Barrow 1618 continue to challenge and support staff in a regular and rigorous way and are rightly proud to be part of such an effective team, whilst recognising that the road to perfection is never ending.

The year began with fantastic SATS results across the key stages, and bounded through victories on the sports field ranging from curling to tag rugby football to cross country, and culminating in the Sainsburys School games gold award for sport (the first primary school in Shropshire). Having raised a substantial amount of money in their lent project last year with their own fund raising initiatives, the children topped this with the lent project this year and continue to be noted when outside the school on trips for the manners and good behaviour. Barrow 1618 are part of the East Shropshire Sports Partnership who have won the winter and summer sports competitions in the county, they currently hold the historic Cressage cup for Netball, have achieved Bronze Learning outside the classroom, and the schoolguide.co.uk certificate of excellence. The funds contributed to the budget by the school itself, as opposed to central government funding have increased considerably and although this is an area for further development, the foundations are being solidly laid.

Governors continue to attend full governors meetings and committee meetings and to visit school as link governors, members of the leadership team, and friends. Through these visits they challenge, advise, support and commend the work of the Head and his school team. They are an intrinsic part of school life.

Early in this academic year, the school was honoured by a visit by the Bishop of Hereford the Right Reverend Richard Frith, who opened the new sports hall and had a tour around the school, a preview of the children's Christmas singing and a visit to Forest School with which he was particularly taken. This visit was the result of the Bishop being interested by a case study written by governors at the request of the diocese for their publication earlier in the year. One of the roles that governors particularly enjoy is that of promoting the school in the wider community and to assist with improving its profile.

The Governors took on specific targets this year of community engagement and helping to improve collaboration and diversity. Initial issues that neighbouring schools, both primary and secondary had with a new free school have now been completely laid to rest. There is a new academy in Morville and the status of "Academy" is far more easily accepted. Barrow 1618 is now warmly accepted into the local sports partnership, has swimming lessons at William Brookes and an extensive sporting fixtures list both home and away. The link with the Chandos school has remained open and there are plans for a visit from a group of children from their school and vice versa, the head is also pursuing closer links with Lightmoor school who also have a very diverse cultural school

population compared to Barrow 1618. The Chair of governors and the Head recently met with Sir Kevin Satchwell at Thomas Telford School to further collaborative possibilities with that school and it is hoped that they may be able to assist with modern foreign languages, extension for the brightest maths students through the maths club and the introduction to possible future funding streams for specific school projects. Teaching schools and multi academy trusts were also discussed very broadly and an invitation extended to Sir Kevin to visit Barrow 1618 in the near future.

One of the other specific targets for Governors this year was to carry out an assessment of where the school was now against the original proposal for a free school, and thereafter to review the strategic direction of the school. The precursor to this was in collusion with the staff and Head to redraft a more concise “School Vision Statement” which was carried out and there followed a series of workshops between a group of governors and the Head teacher at which the initial proposal was assessed against current performance. Areas which the governors felt should no longer be considered a priority were consciously retracted, and those that they felt should be, but were not yet fully in place were highlighted. After this useful exercise the same group carried out a review of the strategic direction of the school with 1, 3 and 5 year targets. This was circulated to all governors, discussed and approved at the summer term governors meeting. The actions arising will form part of the targets for the coming year.

A senior leadership team comprising the head and 2 governors continued to meet often throughout the year on a Monday evening. Whilst it offered an opportunity to review actions over the past week and offer advice on management issues, it particularly concentrated on supporting the delivery of the remaining capital works – specifically the football field and the canopy required by OFSTED to go over the early years outdoor classroom, the construction of the two polytunnels and the fenced livestock area in the far field. The livestock area is not quite complete, but the football field is in use ahead of schedule and the canopy was provided with separate lottery grant funding so that the whole of the remaining capital grant from DfE could be spent on providing the best football field possible. The same grant funding also paid for the extension of the timber climbing frame by the car park. Governors have also assisted with locating a reasonable quote for the painting of the car parking spaces, advice and repair work on the ramp to reception, and three quotes for the possible flat roof replacement on the Nursery. Twice yearly walk arounds by the Health and Safety and Premises committee continue to highlight areas where maintenance is required.

The Health and Safety and Premises committee have also been involved in procuring assistance with the management of Legionella in school and in compiling an asset management plan, unused and unloved rooms around the school have been reinvented following the site walkarounds and the fire policy and fire risk assessments reviewed in detail. Other policies have been updated, risk assessments reviewed and audits carried out of documentation. Governors also met with providers for the new catering provision in school and assisted with their appointment, contracts, review of paperwork and policies. Children grow vegetables for the school kitchen and there is an increase in the number of pupils eating school dinners as a result of the excellent catering provision.

Following the schools OFSTED inspection last summer term, the Head immediately developed a Post OFSTED raising achievement plan and the governors met to discuss

and feed into this, and helped to address the other findings. As mentioned above the canopy was procured for the early years outside classroom and a Link governor position was created for a data link governor. This governor has been in place for a year now and is able to report to governors on the high level of information available in school used track pupils progress and the regularly excellent progress that individuals and whole cohorts are making. Head Teachers targets were set to include specific goals around improving teaching and learning in the classroom where OFSTED still found elements of RI teaching, and it is now the case that teaching in the school is predominantly good with Outstanding features. Governors also continued to monitor and discuss other areas for improvement such as stretch and challenge, marking and capturing experiential working outside work books. Link governors for numeracy and literacy have been involved with the subject leaders in the development of subject action plans for those two areas, and in ensuring that these operational decisions and strategies tie in with the schools broader vision and ethos.

Governors have also given considerable support to the Head in the procurement, design and delivery of a new web site for school. It was recognised that the old web site was not fit for purpose and tenders were sought from three firms, and funds put to one side by the finance committee for a considerably improved and more intuitive and user friendly web site. Information has been updated on the governors section as well as the school areas.

There were two new governors with whom we began this year and the term has finished for one parent governor which will lead to elections at the start of the new academic year. Training has been ongoing however for governors and staff alike. Governors have received child protection training as necessary and Raise online training, IOSH and Health and safety for governors. The governors' skills audit was reviewed and updated as was the questionnaire which feeds information into the audit. No particular gaps were highlighted.

There have however been further staff changes over the year, and again the Governing body have been on hand to assist with shortlisting and interviewing. A new classroom teacher was appointed after just one term in Ash class, following the well managed departure of the existing teacher, further funds were made available for extra teaching assistant time to cover PPA for staff and to improve the effective delivery of lessons. Discussions were also held regarding the further development of middle management within school leading to the appointment of an assistant head teacher. The HR committee have also reviewed the performance of staff and the Head teacher, revised policies and updated literature, as well as carried out staff stress/satisfaction surveys.

The Finance committee set aside extra resources for staff training and for the year 6 cohort who took SATS in summer 2015 where there was considerable special educational need which will have assisted in the success that they achieved. Due to the additional classroom and 12 extra children on roll for whom funding is not covered for the first two terms, the 2014/15 financial year was always going to be a very tight year for the budget, but to date the school have managed to remain within budget and to make allowance for all necessary additional expenditure. Through Head Teachers Performance targets, the Head teacher has been supported in his role as accounting officer for the school.

The Forest school site continues to be used on a weekly basis and is also shared by various other different groups outside Barrow 1618. It is hoped that the various discussions with governors about the possible use of the new school hall by the wider community and the subsequent revision of paperwork, may lead to more take up of this offer as well.

It has been a year of particular challenge for the school in times of change within the whole educational environment, as well as the schools own development continuing apace. The school has had to manage a change from old curriculum expectations to new, old assessment strategies to new, and an old inspection framework to new. The governors have been there throughout to support and challenge and indeed to give praise where it has been due in an incredibly full year.