

Annual Governance Statement by the Governing Body of Thakeham First School for the Academic Year 2016/17

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the three core strategic functions of the Governing Body are:

- 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 it is money well spent.

Governance arrangements

During the 2016/17 Academic Year the Governing Body welcomed two new Governors, Hazel Eldridge and Amanda Otto. Adam Phillips remained as Chair, the other Governors were the Headteacher Mrs Norton, Staff Governor Emma Hopkins, Vice-Chair Wendy Marrable, Jane Blunden, Judith James and Natalie Wills.

We are members of the local community and bring to our role skills from past and current experience in education, finance, insurance, law, publishing, and family and youth work. Our full details and responsibilities are listed on the school website. Each of us is assigned to a key area of the School Strategic Development Plan.

The Full Governing Body meets at least once each term. There are also a number of committees to consider different aspects of the school in detail, and their terms of reference, along with those for the Full Governing Body are available on the school website. The Resources and Strategic Organisation Committee focuses on finance, staff pay and performance management, premises and equipment, and health and safety. The Standards, Teaching and Learning Committee considers curriculum matters, performance data, English, Maths, SEN&D, child protection and safeguarding issues. Both of these committees meet termly. There is also a Pay Committee which meets annually, and a small committee that carries out the Headteacher's performance management and appraisal.

Governors visit the school throughout the year, in line with the Governor Visits Policy, to observe in class, and to support the Headteacher and other teaching staff, and we make ourselves available to meet parents on a regular basis. We also support the school at church services, school assemblies, parents' evenings, and other organised community activities.

Context

The Academic Year 2016/17 was the last one for Thakeham First School. From September 2017 our Year 5 pupils will remain with us (rather than transfer to Rydon Community College) to become Year 6 and we will become Thakeham Primary School as part of a change to the age of transfer for locality schools. This change will involve the school re-locating to a new site alongside a Year 7/8 campus of Steyning Grammar School at Rock Road (formerly occupied by Rydon Community College). The Governors fully supported this plan, and recognise that the relocation and organisation necessary to bring it to fruition has meant that there has been an extraordinary amount of additional work and commitment required from the Headteacher, all her staff and the Governors.

Our work during the year 2016/17

The Governing Body has had a particularly busy year focusing on:

- school improvement following our Ofsted inspection in 2013 and preparing for our next inspection;

- opportunities for quality assurance of key aspects of the school's judgements to support further development;
- supporting the Headteacher in agreeing the plans for the school's re-location to the new Rock Road site in September 2017 as part of a change in the age of transfer for schools in the locality, seeing the school become Thakeham Primary School;
- agreeing changes to the staffing structure, promotion/re-organisation of staff roles, re-organisation of classes, revision of curriculum and resources as part of becoming a Primary School and re-location;
- ensuring that all school policies were in place are fit for purpose, and reviewed as part of the school's re-location and as part of becoming a Primary School, and available on the school website;
- training: individual governors have devoted significant time undertaking training courses designed to ensure that they have sufficient information to enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Achievement and progress

We have studied closely the key data showing pupil achievement and progress, which is tracked termly. This, together with monitoring visits to see learning in action and speaking to staff and children, gives us a clear picture of whether the school is on track to fulfil its ambitious targets for all pupils, and highlights any areas where work might be needed. We look at any vulnerable groups of children and monitor how the Pupil Premium grant is spent and what impact this expenditure has on their outcomes.

There has been a significant investment of the Sports Premium funding that the school received during the year. This has enabled the children to join with other pupils of our STARS partners in taster events, host our own World Games Week, participate in Time to Dance, and benefit from weekly sports sessions with our Sports Coach. We were delighted that this resulted in the school being awarded a School Games Silver Mark Award.

Our plans for 2017/18

We work closely with the staff and Headteacher to set and review targets as part of the School Strategic Development Plan. The groundwork undertaken by looking hard at our own practices as well as those of the rest of the school ensures a continued focus on school improvement and in ensuring we have made progress against the Ofsted areas for development. To assist us in this task the Governing Body commissioned an independent review of its activities and has put in place procedures to cover those areas where the potential for improvement was identified. We are confident that the changes we have made since the last inspection will be recognised, but are focused on ensuring that the school builds on this improvement to become even better. Our key areas for 2017/18 are English, Maths, Science, Computing, and Inclusion. This is a very exciting time for Thakeham School, there will be a focus on ensuring children, staff and parents adapt to their new site, and community, making the most of opportunities that the re-location and becoming a Primary School will bring.

How you can contact the Governing Body

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents – please contact Adam Phillips, Chair of Governors, via the school office. You can see the full list of Governors, and other information about what we do and how we go about it, on the Governors' page of the school website.