



HOLY TRINITY (CE Aided) PRIMARY SCHOOL, CUCKFIELD

Governor Statement 2019 -2020

Learning together with God's love

The Governing Body is pleased to report that it has been another good year for Holy Trinity CE(A) Primary School, despite having totally unexpected challenges resulting from the Covid-19 lockdown. The overall purpose of the Governing Body is to help the school provide the best possible education for its pupils by helping to drive school improvement, and there has been much evidence of the school working tirelessly to support the children and their families before and during lockdown.

The main functions of a Governing Body are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
2. Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff.
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

In addition to this, as Holy Trinity is a **Church Aided School**, we must ensure that the Christian ethos and values are upheld at all times.

The structure of our Governing Body

We have 14 governors and the make up of the Governing Body is:

- 8 Foundation Governors (appointed by the Church), including 3 parents and the Vicar of Holy Trinity Church.
- 2 Staff Governors (including the Head Teacher)
- 2 elected parent Governors
- 1 Local Authority Governor
- 1 Co-opted Governor (staff)

We also have 2 Associate Governors with specific responsibilities.

At present we have 1 vacancy for a Foundation Governor.

The Governing Body works as a corporate body. The workload is shared using the skills and expertise of all, so all members have different allocated responsibilities. We are very fortunate to have a Governing Body with a wide range of skills and experience, and the governors support our school community. The positive and friendly team ethos is vital in carrying out this work.

Meetings

Following a review of the Governing Body committee structure, we now work with two committees; the Resources Committee and the Teaching, Learning and Ethos Committee. The Full Governing Body meets six times a year, and the two committees which have responsibilities delegated to them from the full governing body, meet three times a year, unless extra meetings are required for extraordinary circumstances.

In addition, there are small committees which meet less regularly, such as Admissions, Pay Review and Headteacher Performance Management. Individual governors also have specific responsibilities for which they report to the Governing Body. A Data Protection Officer has been appointed in line with the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Since March 2020, all meetings have taken place using Microsoft Teams virtual platform. Hopefully we shall be able to return to meetings in school in the autumn.

The most important documents reviewed annually by our governors:

- The School Development Plan (SDP) is a key document for school improvement which identifies the main development priorities and tasks to be carried out over the coming year. The SDP is written by the Headteacher, with contributions from the teaching staff and governors and is reviewed and updated throughout the year. Governors conduct regular monitoring visits on specific areas of the SDP and report back to the full governing body with their findings and any recommendations. Governors were pleased to find very good progress this year.
- The Self Evaluation Form (SEF) is the school's own grading against the current OFSTED criteria. The governors review the different sections of the SEF during the year and ensure that there is evidence to support the judgements. Areas of strength and weakness can then be determined and targets for improvement can be decided.
- The school's performance data is the key indicator of pupil attainment and progress throughout the school. One governor has responsibility for analysing the data, working closely with the Head Teacher and other members of staff. The data is presented and analysed at committee meetings and also monitored during governor visits. Data is analysed for year groups, key stages, subjects, abilities, special needs (SEND), disadvantaged and other groupings of pupils, to ensure the school is doing everything possible to help all children achieve their potential.
- The Schools Financial Value Standard document is a tool which helps the governing body to manage the school's budget effectively and wisely. The Resources Committee works with the school's Bursar and oversees the financial performance of the school. They monitor spending, ensuring that the money is well spent according to the school development priorities.
- As a Church of England Voluntary Aided school, we also evaluate our performance against the criteria of the Church Evaluation Schedule and we are subject to regular Diocesan inspections.

The school works in partnership with West Sussex Schools Advisers to monitor and validate school judgements, data, SEF and SDP, and with the Diocesan Advisers for the Church Evaluation Schedule. Training for governors is provided by both WSCC and Chichester Diocese, and governors attend the training sessions that are relevant for them, and usually one annual in-school session for the whole governing body.

Vision and Values

Governors and staff have worked together to review the school vision, values and strategic objectives which have been developed throughout the year. These underpin the work of the school leadership and the governing body. They are displayed throughout the school and are evident in the good behaviour of the children.

Present issues

The expansion of the school was finally completed in September 2019 when we achieved our 14 classes with the creation of the new class, Rowan. For the first time, Years 5 and 6 have been split to form 4 classes, much to the delight of our teachers, and there are now 400 children in the school. However the full capacity of 420 children will not be reached until September 2020.

The OFSTED criteria changed again in September 2019 and the school has been working hard to ensure our children experience a broad, balanced and exciting curriculum. Exciting development and enrichment experiences for the children have taken place this year and the PTA have kindly funded money for this. These experiences included a visit from Sir Teach a Lot, and a return visit from Opera Brava for Year 4. Visits such as the Year 5 trip to the London Eye and Tate Modern and Year 2's visit to Lewes Castle took place, all before lockdown.

We were expecting our Diocesan (SIAMS) Inspection in the middle of March but it was cancelled on the day before it was due, because of Covid-19. We had been visited by our Diocesan Partner in the previous month and she had been very impressed by the preparations for the Inspection and the evidence of a happy, successful school clearly showing its Christian distinctiveness. Again, we are now awaiting our SIAMS inspection, although we know this will not take place before spring 2021. In March 2020, we had our visit from the WSCC advisor who focused on Curriculum Intent, in line with Ofsted, and she was also very pleased with the progress and achievements made by the school.

The year started very well with the establishment of a fully staffed school office, which is functioning very efficiently and happily under the leadership of our new office manager. However, the school SENCO (Special Needs Co-Ordinator) has been absent with ill health all year which has resulted in many problems, especially with the increased number of SEND and disadvantaged pupils in the school. Despite this, provision for our SEND children has been maintained very well throughout the year. Mrs MacGregor has received outstanding help from our SEND teacher, backed by the expertise given by a local SENCO, so that between them they have provided the help and support needed by the children and their families. They must all be congratulated and thanked for their commitment and hard work in a very difficult time. Wonderfully, a new SENCO has been appointed for September 2020, and she is a current teacher in the school and is already preparing for her new role.

The lockdown in March, resulting from Covid-19, led to many new challenges for the school. Governors have been very impressed with the way in which Mrs MacGregor and the Senior Leadership Team calmly organised the changes so quickly, having prepared the staff team for lockdown some weeks in advance. They have been supported so well throughout by all the school staff – teachers, learning assistants, office staff, bursar, premises manager, kitchen manager. Many staff have had their own problems to deal with at home, but they still showed their commitment to the school and gave unstinting support, always thinking of the needs of the children. We owe them so much gratitude!

Teachers have set work for all children throughout lockdown. Their workload increased significantly during this period, from preparing resources, to step by step planning of the work, to supporting parents in home schooling their children. This was in addition to answering huge numbers of emails from parents on a daily basis. Struggling parents also received phone calls from the school offering support. Initially only vulnerable children and those of Key Workers were in school and they really benefited from more individualised teaching. After Easter their numbers rose and the number of staff in school every day had to increase. At the beginning of June, Reception children, Years 1 and 6 returned to school. Each class in a year group had to be divided into 2 bubbles of 15 children, each bubble having a teacher and LSA, and to be socially distanced from all others. This meant that every teacher and LSA was needed to teach in school, and every classroom in the school was used. Planning for a return to a full school in September has started but also planning for the prospect that there could be further lockdowns in the future.

An important priority for the full return in September will be to monitor where our children's learning has reached and start to fill in the learning gaps. It will also be essential to help the children settle happily and quickly back into school. The well-being of the children is vitally important to the school and governors will monitor this carefully.

Governors have had to adapt their work and support for the school since lockdown and have kept in contact remotely. However, Mark Andrews has helped enormously with school finances during staff illness, and Sarah Moss gave valuable support with the strategy spending plan. Many thanks are due to both.

We don't know what the school will face in the next year but the real dedication of the staff under the inspiring leadership of our Head Teacher, supported by a committed Senior Leadership Team, gives great confidence that the children will receive the best possible education and support for their well-being. The priority of the governors is to support the school to ensure the children are happy in a very good school, underpinned by our Christian ethos and values

Janice Peek

(Co-Chair of Governors)
July 2020