

# **Annual Governance Statement**

## **WEST HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2018/2019**

As the Governing Board of West Hill Primary School, we are proud of the school and its welcoming, inclusive ethos and strong family atmosphere. In accordance with the government's requirement for all Governing Boards, the three core strategic functions of the Governing Board at West Hill Primary School are:

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

#### **Governance Structure**

The Governing Board was reconstituted in November 2018 and now consists of 11 governor roles as follows:

- The Head Teacher
- 1 Staff governor
- 4 Co-opted governors
- 1 Local Authority governor
- 2 Parent governors
- 2 Foundation governors

The governing Board appoints a professional clerk who is responsible for arranging meetings, taking minutes and following up on actions. The Clerk also advises on procedural matters and plays a key role in the work of the Governing Board.

All governors are appointed (except for the Headteacher) and are independent and have equal status to each other. A Chair and Vice Chair are elected annually by the Governing Board and work closely with the Headteacher and the Clerk.

The Board is structured according to the circle method. This means there are no committees (except for the Headteacher's Appraisal Committee and the Pay & Performance Committee), which enables the whole Governing Board to take a broader and more informed holistic view of the school.

Each governor has a specific area of responsibility to oversee and additionally a curriculum subject to monitor. Governors are tasked to visit the school at least twice during the school year to monitor key priority areas identified in the school

development plan. Specific monitoring is undertaken for the areas of Health & Safety, Safeguarding and Finance. Formal monitoring visits allow governors the opportunity to observe and communicate with staff and pupils and ensure that actions agreed in the School Development Plan are being actively undertaken by the school. After each visit, a formal report is prepared and presented at the next Governing Board meeting. From this the progress in the delivery of agreed school priority areas can be actively monitored and impact on the education of the pupils more effectively assessed.

During 2018-19 the Governing Board met 9 times, the Headteacher's Appraisal Committee met 3 times and the Pay & Performance Committee met twice. There were regular monitoring and planning visits and governors also visited informally supporting school events. The Chair of Governors has regular meetings with the Headteacher and the Clerk outside of the full Governing Board meetings.

The overall attendance record of governors has been good, and every meeting has been quorate during the school year. Details of the attendance of school governors are published on the school website within the Governors section and this is updated annually after the last meeting of the academic year. Work has progressed well, despite having been three members short on the Board for the greater part of the academic year and being without a full-time clerk for the first term. This situation has now been resolved.

### **Governing Board Skills & Knowledge**

The Governing Board recognises that to effectively fulfil its role, it must ensure that all of its Governors have the necessary skills and knowledge to support the school.

All governors undergo an induction process which involves attending courses and being mentored by other governors. Skills audits are undertaken to identify and address any gaps, together with an annual self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the Governing Board over the school year. Board members have access to further training courses, and annual training in safeguarding is mandatory. There are regular updates from The Governance Consultancy Team who publish a weekly update 'Governance Alert', a termly magazine 'Governance Today' and a termly newsletter 'Checklist'. The Governance Alert is sent electronically every Friday in term time, with a roundup of both local and national items of interest to governors.

The Board are also members of the Devon Association of Governors and use this and other relevant information channels to ensure it remains abreast and up to date on relevant developments in the education sector.

## **Governing Board work - 2018-2019**

The Board collaborated with the Headteacher and her staff on the School Development Plan. This is the annual planning document that is used to identify the key areas on which the school wishes to focus during the academic year. It includes scheduled milestones and measures to assist with ongoing monitoring as well as impact indicators so we can be assured that the actions in the plan will improve teaching and learning outcomes for all children.

Termly monitoring of data has taken place to ensure that expected pupil progress and attainment is being met. This uses other school data including SATs results, Local Authority data, government data, Phonics Screening Check, the Ofsted Data Dashboard and regular internal school assessment data to achieve proper scrutiny.

Safeguarding measures have been updated and are regularly scrutinised to ensure that the school is a safe environment for all. All governors receive safeguarding training and this is updated annually. Additionally the Board has worked closely with the Village Hall Committee to put up signage at the roundabout, not only to improve traffic flow but most importantly improve the road safety for the children. New CCTV has been installed to upgrade the school security as well as new fencing and secure locks on the field gates. This is in line with recommendations from both the police and our county safeguarding audit.

GDPR has been regularly monitored and the school is compliant with the new legislation.

The financial plan has been reviewed and updated in order to keep a firm hand on the budget for the next 3 years. Financial monitoring is a vital and ongoing task of the Board and is an agenda item for each meeting.

The school website has undergone a full review and has been updated as a result.

The Board has reviewed and updated 18 school policies in line with government policy.

A permanent Clerk to the Governors has been appointed, as well as new governors.

The ownership of the school field has been regularised and is now protected for future generations of the pupils at West Hill Primary School.

The Board have worked closely with the Devon Air Ambulance so that there is now a fully operational emergency night landing site.

A new Governor Induction Policy has been written and put in place. All governors have performed a skills audit to ensure that we have a good range on the Board. I am pleased to report that we have no skills gaps at the present time.

A strategic plan for the next 3 years is in development; it has been approved in principle by the governors. In the next academic year it will remain a focus for collaborative work with other stakeholders in the school to ensure a shared vision for the future of the school. There is a link to its outline on the school website.

### **Focus for the next year**

The Governing Board will continue to closely monitor financial status, pupil progress and achievement. The governors will also continue working with the Headteacher and staff as 'critical friends' and engage with parents to deliver the best outcomes for our pupils.

Rowan Ross

Chair of Governors

July 2019.