

## Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Board of Westfield Primary School and Nursery

Autumn 2017

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing boards, the three core strategic functions of Westfield Primary School and Nursery's Governing Board 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;**
3. **Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.**

### **Governance arrangements**

The Governing Board was re-constituted in 2014 and is now made up of 2 staff governors (including the Headteacher), 4 parent governors, 1 Local Authority Governor and 6 co-opted governors. Co-opted governors are appointed by the Governing Board and are people who, in the opinion of the Board, have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school: on our Governing Board three of the co-opted governors are parents, and three are members of the local community.

Over the past two years we have worked to recruit additional governors from the local community in order to continue to diversify our membership and broaden our range of skills. This has been very successful; we have recruited six new members including a Finance Director of a large multinational hotel chain, an Executive CEO of a multi-academy trust in Buckinghamshire, an Emeritus Professor of Biology at a leading university, a senior manager in Trading Standards and a Programme Director for HR and Leadership at a well-known Business School. A number of our new governors have been recruited as associates with a view to them moving into our co-opted vacancies as other existing governors step down.

The full Governing Board meets five times a year and we also have a number of committees to consider different aspects of the school in detail. At our school, we have:

- A **Curriculum, Staff and Pupils Committee** which focuses on teaching and learning, and well-being and behaviour
- A **Finance and Premises Committee** which is focused on financial planning and monitoring, health and safety and premises matters
- A **Pay Committee** which focuses on staff pay

Please see our website at <http://westfieldprimary.herts.sch.uk/our-school/governors/> for a list of our current governors and the committees that they belong to.

### **Attendance record of governors**

Governors have excellent attendance at meetings. Attendance records for each governor are shown on our website at <http://westfieldprimary.herts.sch.uk/our-school/governors/>.

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

The 2016/17 academic year was another extremely busy one for the school and Governing Board. Following extensive research and consultation with the community we have taken the decision to join four other Berkhamsted schools (Ashlyns, Bridgewater Primary, Greenway Primary and Nursery, and Swing Gate Infant and Nursery) in creating the Berkhamsted Educational Trust. Our application to form this new multi-academy trust is currently with the Department for Education and we anticipate conversion to take place in early 2018. The education landscape remains extremely challenging and we believe that this formal collaboration will allow us to keep Westfield's vision and ethos and allow us to have an even greater focus on outcomes for our children. More details can be found on the Berkhamsted Educational Trust page on our website.

We are very pleased with the progress and improvement the school continues to make under Mrs Stace's leadership and in the last year have worked alongside her and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to:

- Recruit our new Deputy Headteacher, Miss Branigan
- Analyse and drill down school data to identify strengths and weaknesses of the school and produce a coherent and accurate self evaluation (SEF)
- Use this Self-Evaluation to feed into the School Development Plan and identify priorities for the school for the coming year
- Develop our Link Governor roles. Link governors worked closely with subject leaders and SLT to monitor progress against school priorities, including developing a Forest School ethos, accelerating progress of disadvantaged pupils and embedding the culture of Growth Mindset and Mindfulness.
- Secure a balanced and sustainable budget, and ensure systems and procedures are in place for the school to achieve value for money.
- Make and support decisions on significant financial outlay, for example with a programme of electrical rewiring in the school as well as investment in the new fitness trail.

We have had a number of new members of staff join us this year, all of whom have settled into the school really well. Despite the worsening school teacher recruitment crisis, Westfield continues to attract high-calibre skilled staff who understand our vision and ethos and are keen to work specifically at our school.

As governors, we are also concerned about our 'vulnerable groups' of children and as such we focus on how the Pupil Premium Grant is being spent by the school and what impact this has on outcomes. Our Pupil Premium governor, Jill Hunt, meets regularly with the SENCO to be updated on the progress of these children. We also have a nominated governor for safeguarding, Jo Head; safeguarding underpins everything that we do and is discussed at our Full Governing Board and Committee meetings.

Our Health and Safety governor, Jo Head, carries out regular checks of the premises with Mr Bray, the school's site manager and reports any concerns to the Governing Board.

One of the roles for the governors is reviewing and agreeing school policies, and every year we review a large number of our documents to ensure they are in

line with recent recommendations from County and central government legislation.

Minutes of the Governing Board and Committee meetings are public documents – you can ask at the school office if you would like to see any of the minutes of our meetings.

To find out more about what the Governing Board has been involved in, download the most recent Governors Newsletter on the governors page of the school website.

### **Future plans for the governors**

The Governing Board is looking forward to continuing to work closely with Mrs Stace and the staff to ensure that all of our children, including the vulnerable groups, are making excellent progress and achieving the ambitious targets set for them. Together we will analyse school data to monitor and assess the impact of actions and initiatives, particularly those identified on the school development plan such as accelerating the progress of girls to diminish the attainment gap against boys in maths.

As a Governing Board we will continue to engage with other governors in the town to explore more ways to work collaboratively, share good practice and obtain value for money. As well as working with schools across the town and beyond, we will also be specifically focused on ensuring that the transition to our new role as a local governing board as part of the Berkhamsted Educational Trust is a success.

We will continue to engage this year with the School Council and Pupil Voice in order to get an independent view from the children within the school, specifically focusing on the impact of mindfulness techniques and the ‘growth mindset’ ethos on pupils’ attitudes to learning and wellbeing.

### **How you can contact the Governing Board**

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents. There are photos of all current governors in the school reception area. You are welcome to contact any of us in person, via the school office or by email at [governors@westfieldprimary.herts.sch.uk](mailto:governors@westfieldprimary.herts.sch.uk).

We would always love to hear from any parents who are interested in finding out more about being a governor at our school.