

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

Autumn 2018

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.

In addition, the Board are also able to recruit associate governors. Associate members are appointed by the governing body to serve on one or more governing body committee. They may also attend full governing body meetings. They are not governors, and therefore do not have a vote in governing body decisions, but may be given a vote on a decision made by a committee to which they are appointed.

An associate member can be given the power to vote on decisions at the committee s/he is appointed to, provided s/he is over the age of 18. Votes are only valid if the majority of those present are governors. Although associate members are entitled to attend full governing body meetings, they cannot vote.

Associate members can also be excluded from committee meetings and full governing body meetings when discussions relate to individual members of staff or pupils. However, they can be used on governing body panels relating to staff discipline, grievances or recruitment.

While associate members can be appointed as chair of a committee, if there was ever a tied vote s/he would not have casting vote, unlike a chair who is a governor.

Associated members should be appointed because of the specific expertise and experience they can contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. The definition of associate member is wide. Subject to the disqualifications set out in the Regulations, the governing body may appoint a pupil, school staff member, or any other person as an associate member so that they can contribute their specific expertise. This can help to address specific gaps identified in the skills of governing body members, and/or help the governing body respond to particular challenges that they may be facing.

Our Associate Members are treated as Governors on the Committees and are able to assume positions of responsibility such as Chair, Clerk etc. and are able to vote. We rarely vote on items at the FGB so Associate status should not mean that their contribution is any less than anyone else.

Associate Governors are bound by the same terms as other Governors in terms of our Code of Conduct and confidentiality rules.

Over the past three 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 2017/18 academic year was another extremely busy one for the school and Governing Board. Following extensive research and consultation with the community we have continued to work with 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 this academic year. 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:

- 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 our new nature area, outdoor table tennis equipment and repairs to fencing. We have also made substantial changes to the school over the summer, moving the Headteacher's office, creating a dedicated space for staff to use for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time and investing in a larger staffroom.

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, Holly Green, meets regularly with the SENCO to be updated on the progress of these children. We also have a nominated governor for safeguarding, Debbie Hawkins; safeguarding underpins everything that we do and is discussed at our Full Governing Board and Committee meetings.

Our Health and Safety governor, Roger Wotton, 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 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 to further increase the percentage of children meeting and exceeding the end-of-year expectations in Maths and Writing across the whole school.

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. In addition, we will designate a 'link governor' for specific focus on mental health in 2018–19.

How you can contact the Governing Board

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents. There are named photos of all current governors shown on the screen 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.

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