

Welcome to the Annual Statement of Governance from the Governors of Kings Worthy Primary School for the academic year 2019-2020. Its purpose is to share key aspects we have been working on as a Governing Body this year and our areas of focus going forward.

The governing body has a legal responsibility which can be summarised by three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Clearly this year schools have faced exceptional challenges as we have all adapted to life in the time of Covid-19. Kings Worthy Primary School has been open to keyworker children throughout, and was ready to open for children in years R, 1 and 6 on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, while simultaneously continuing the programme of learning at home for the remainder of the pupils. There will be much work to do to ensure that all children are reintegrated into learning during the next academic year, and to ensure that our school minimises the impact of the pandemic on our children's education.

### **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction**

This year, school leaders have been working on the new school vision. This builds on the success of BEST and takes it a step beyond. Governors are excited to see progress on this, and look forward to full implementation in due course.

This has been a positive year for the school. We have had our first full year of leadership in place, albeit with Miss Eggleston working with Year 6 for some of this year. School leaders already had the ambition and energy to improve outcomes for all the children at the school, and now the capacity to deliver on these initiatives is in place.

It was an interesting exercise to consult with staff, children and parents over a proposed change to the school day, and Governors are grateful to the many parents who contributed their views to the debate. Hopefully this process reinforces parents' faith in these consultation processes.

Meanwhile Governors have continued with the programme to make our work as efficient as it can be. We have overhauled the policies that we review, ensuring that we spend our time effectively, and have introduced a protocol for virtual meetings – initiated out of necessity of course, but going forward we can be more responsive to issues because we'll be able to meet virtually.

Our new Safeguarding Governor, Alison Skillen, has completed her training and, with the support and expertise at Hampshire County Council, will be putting in place an integrated programme to ensure that best practice is embedded in all that Governors do.

### **Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff**

The Standards & Improvements committee, chaired by Lorraine Suchanek, is responsible for holding the school to account over educational performance. The feedback from our most recent Ofsted report in February 2017 said our next steps should be to ensure that:

- the most able mathematicians in key stage 1 progress quickly to work at a greater depth of understanding, fluency and recall
- the most able disadvantaged pupils progress rapidly from their starting points, so that more of them reach the highest standards in reading and mathematics.

This means that the school needs to ensure that children capable of doing better should get the support that they need to achieve their potential: in particular children in years 1 and 2 in maths, and disadvantaged children across the school in reading and maths.

Next year it will be 4 years since Ofsted last visited, and we will be expecting them to visit again possibly during 2021, although this may be delayed due to the pandemic. Governors undertook some training to ensure that we are prepared for external scrutiny.

One of the key considerations to improving educational performance is attendance. Mr Dodson put some initiatives in place and as a result attendance had been improving. Of course with lockdown this has been put on hold for now, but we will revisit this in the next academic year.

Tessa Atton has been responsible for putting a new robust Governor Visit procedure in place this year. This ensures that Governors come to the school to meet with staff and children to see how they are getting on. Governors are now aligned with a year group, and the plan is to follow that year up the school while also looking at curriculum provision.

Of course having to close the school to all children apart from those of keyworkers, and moving to a distance-learning model was not in our original plan for the year. With little detailed guidance from the Government this has been one of the most challenging times in education. Each school has had to develop an approach which caters to a variety of children in a variety of circumstances. Mr Dodson and Miss Eggleston lead a committed and professional staff and Governors are grateful to them all for that they have done for our community.

### **Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent**

Ensuring that the school's budget is sound continues to be a challenge, and Stephen Benwell capably chairs the Governors' Resources Committee, responsible for oversight of the school's finances. The school receives its funding from several sources: most important is our Budget Share – this is the money that we get from Hampshire County Council. It is calculated per pupil and the school is in the fortunate position of being just about full. Our budget is healthy and additional funds have been put aside to make capital improvements to the site including the outdoor classroom and the upgrade of the Year R outdoor area.

As well as government funding, schools now must be more creative in finding ways to finance the level of education that we aspire to for our pupils. Mrs Cregan joined the school in September as our new Business Manager and has brought new rigour to the office. Meanwhile Mr Dodson has continued to foster strong relationships with external bodies that use the school site and these have proved financially beneficial.

### **Future plans for the Governing Body**

It is true that the challenges that the school faced at the beginning of this academic year bear no relation to the challenges that are faced now. The global pandemic has impacted school life in so many ways: from our Year R children who were starting to develop good school habits only to have a break in their routine, to our Year 1 children who were improving their learning and after some time away are mostly back in school, to our Year 2, 3, 4 and 5 children who are almost all learning at home, and our Year 6 children who have mostly returned but will miss out on the rituals of the end of primary school. And of course those children who remained in school, but must have had to adapt to a much quieter environment. It has surely been a journey for all of us: for governors who have had to find inventive ways to keep in touch with the school without being on site, the leaders

who had to find ways to educate children in lots of different ways: on-site, at home but connected, at home and not connected. The teachers and support staff who have had to pivot to an entirely new way of working a way to keep the school open for the children of keyworkers whilst planning work for children learning at home, to the children who have hopefully made the most of these strange times, and of course to the parents who have had to help their children on their educational journey whilst also working and adjusting to the challenges of lockdown life.

We look to next year and know that there will be catch-up required for every child, not just in their education but in learning habits, operating in large groups, managing their feelings of disquiet or fear or grief. It is a challenge that we are ready for.

I end with a quote which seemed relevant, from chapter 2 of J. R. R. Tolkien's The Fellowship of the Ring:

'I wish it need not have happened in my time,' said Frodo.

'So do I,' said Gandalf, 'and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.'

### **How to contact us**

We welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents and all other local stakeholders. Please contact the Chair of Governors, Claire Welland, via the school office.

Claire Welland, Chair of Governors on behalf of the Kings Worthy Primary School Governing Body