

School Governance Statement: 2021– 2022

Governing Board Functions and Structure

School Governors are required to ensure a clear vision and strategic direction for the work of the school; to hold the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; to oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure its money is well-spent.

Governors meet five times a year to discuss these matters, to approve school policies and the school budget. Committees meet at least three times a year each to discuss the finances, the curriculum, the staffing, and the buildings and site of the school. If necessary additional meetings are scheduled.

We have 3 committees, these are

- Finance, Staffing, Pay and Premises
- Curriculum, Community and Progress
- Head teachers Performance Management

Core Governing Body Functions

Ensuring a Clear Vision and Strategic Direction

This past year has continued to bring challenges related to the pandemic, and the governors are confident that the Headteacher has continued to lead the school extremely well through very difficult times and challenging situations. The staff have been paramount in ensuring the effective achievement of these plans and protocols, to meet the needs of each of the pupils and to keep them safe. The governors are extremely proud of everyone who has been involved in the success of Longwill Primary School for Deaf Children this past year.

In addition to their legal obligations, the governors have been concerned about plans for tackling the challenges that COVID has provided and asked searching questions, in particular about children's safety, staff well-being and workload; the quality of remote learning and its safeguarding risks; and the continued impact on staff absence (Unforeseen absence impacts heavily on the school's budget, and on the teaching and learning for pupils.

Holding the Head Teacher to Account for the Educational Performance of the School

Teaching and Learning – including Curriculum, Assessment and Pupil Progress

This year, governors have had presentations on a wide and varied selection of themes including:

- The Quality of Education
- Behaviour and Attitudes
- English including Phonics
- Online safety
- RPHSE

These presentations have given Governors a wealth of information on the work of the school and the rich learning environment it provides for the pupils. Governors have had the opportunity to ask questions and seek more information if they have deemed it necessary.

The presentation on the Quality of Education outlines the inclusivity of the school and also how the pupils receive targeted support depending on their needs,

There is a strong commitment throughout the school to the Connected Curriculum offer which is adapted to meet the needs of the pupils.

Progress and Attainment

There continues to be a focus on pupil progress particularly in Reading, Writing, Maths and Science, along with a strong focus on Language development and the fact that every lesson is a language lesson. The board receive detailed plans for the spending of Pupil Premium and Sports Premium.

Governors have also had a presentation on the use of Sports Premium and how this enhances the PE curriculum.

Holding the Headteacher to account for the Safety and Wellbeing of the Pupils

The safety and well-being of pupils as always is a consistent thread throughout the year, this included online safety as pupils and families were continuing to use technology more. As we have continued to move back to the “new normal” there has been a focus on pupil attendance and continuing to improve this.

The Governor with Safeguarding responsibility meets regularly with the DSL and reports to the full board on how well the school implements its safeguarding procedures. The SCR is checked annually by an external body and regularly by SLT to ensure compliance.

Governors receive regular reports from the Head Teacher on developments within the school. These include information on:

- Attendance
- Safeguarding Data

Attendance at Longwill has always been excellent, and although it was affected during the pandemic it has now recovered really well. This is thanks to the good relationships the school builds with families and also the children want to come to school. Attendance in the spring term increased to just over 90% in years 1-6. Any child not in school is kept in touch with via the safeguarding team.

Governors and staff have annual safeguarding training and are provided with the latest KCSIE document to read. Safeguarding increasingly has a widened brief including Prevent Duty and online safety.

The Head teacher reports on safeguarding and attendance at each Full Governors meeting.

Overseeing the Financial Performance of the School and ensuring money is well spent.

The Finance, Staffing, Pay and Premises Committee meet 3 times each year. At each meeting the budget monitoring report is presented by the School Business Manager and is scrutinized by governors.

Over the last few years Longwill has had an extremely tight budget and this has been very well managed by the Head teacher and the Business Manager. The financial year which ended on the 31st March this year Longwill proved this by ending the year with a small carry forward.

The school still has some funding outstanding from previous years and Governors along with the school continue to do all they can to try and recoup this money.

The school has seen a significant increase in number of pupils this year, currently 70 on roll. This is extremely encouraging for the funding of the school in the coming year and has enabled our budget forecast to be positive.

Governors however have been extremely concerned about the lack of financial information which the school has received from SFS and the Local Authority. This apparently has been due to the roll out of a new system and has affected all schools in the LA not just Longwill. Governors are monitoring this situation and supporting the school however we can.

Health and safety has to be a priority, this year we have received CO2 monitors which have been installed around the school. There has been a building conditions survey carried out. This has identified some problems with the building which have given Governor's cause for concern. An initial meeting has now been held with the Head Teacher and the LA to identify priorities and a plan for work to be carried out.

The lift which is in place is no longer fit for purpose and this has been identified as a priority for replacement particularly as the school currently has 2 wheelchair users who will need to access this.

In terms of fire safety the school are looking to purchase an Evac chair and ensure staff have the training to use it were it necessary to do so.

Birmingham Special Schools Cooperative

Longwill is part of the Birmingham school's cooperative, and has been since it's inauguration 4 years ago. Two of our Governors are Foundation Governor appointed by the Cooperative. The Chair of Governors and Headteacher also sits on the Board of Trustees for the Cooperative and attends a meeting of BSSCT each term.

The Cooperative continues to go from strength to strength. There has been a great focus this year on Leadership Training and also the development of Subject Leaders. The Cooperative is also looking at ways of raising its profile within the schools and also with the LA. The development of a termly newsletter next year is a positive development in this area.

Governor Training

We believe that as a board of Governors that it is important to continue develop our skills and understanding of school related issues. During the past year most, Governors have attended virtual training provided by the LA. This is funded by school. All new governors are expected to complete the LA Induction training as soon as possible following appointment to the board. A log is kept of this training.

The board also held an away day in the autumn term which gave us quality time to focus on improvements both at board and school level.

We have established a working party to focus of training needs of governors. We have developed an Induction Pack which has been given to all Governors. This will continue to be developed and will be given to all new Governors in the future. New Governors will also be allocated a buddy for their first year to help them understand the processes of how a Governing Body works.

Succession Planning for Governing Body

All Governors complete the Skills Audit document annually. When vacancies occur on the board this document ensure we can look for people with the skills to fill any identified gaps.

This year the governors planned for succession upon the resignation of two members of the Governing Body, ensuring that the work of the Governing Body was not disrupted and that the right skill-sets were around the table at future meetings. The Chair also completed her term of office and a new Chair elected.

Governors School Visits

We have now been able to resume visits to school and several governors have completed these. We believe that these visits provide important information about the outcomes of the school's work. The curriculum committee have also had a tour of the facilities. We have also been able to resume Face to Face meetings which we believe makes for more productive meetings and more detailed discussions. Governors analyse their observations for further understanding of current good practice, as well as the challenges for the school.