



The Department for Education has recently recommended that all Governing Bodies should make an annual statement to parents. This document is intended to give parents an introduction to the Governing Body and an overview of our work.

Introduction

As a Governing Body, it is our job to lead the strategic direction of the school. We work closely with the Headteacher and staff to provide support and challenge.

Our role means that we are in school regularly, reviewing and meeting with staff. We can clearly see that our children benefit from a broad and fulfilling curriculum, with numerous opportunities, not just in the traditional academic subjects, but also in sports, music, drama, cookery and art.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all our staff for their commitment and dedication.

Our Governing Body

Following our re-constitution in May this year, our Governing Body is now made up of 13 governors:

- 5 parent governors appointed by a ballot of parents - Laura Hoyland, Ewan McIntosh, Kerry Kelly, Ian Kildin and Chris Kee
- 5 co-opted governors appointed by the Governing Body themselves based on a skills audit of our requirements - Polly Crook, Sally Valentine *
- 1 staff governor - Alison Mount
- 1 Local Authority governor appointed by the Local Authority - Catherine Baker
- 1 Headteacher – Jean Yendall

*please note that we are in the process of recruiting 3 further co-opted governors and are seeking community representatives with skills in legal, finance and HR.

All our governors have the same remit; they do not represent their appointers, but are intended to be representative of them. We are all volunteers and give up our own time to fulfil our duties.

Our Meetings

In the academic year Sep 2014 – Jul 2015, we met 5 times as a Full Governing Body.

We also had 2 committees:

- Welfare and Curriculum (6 meetings) – responsible for reviewing the attainment and progress of children and monitoring wider curriculum matters.
- Premises, Finance and Personnel (3 meetings) – responsible for setting and monitoring the budget, maintenance, health & safety and staffing.

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Our Responsibilities

Attendance at meetings is only part of the role. We all bring experience and skills from all walks of life and we are all expected to contribute to many aspects of our work:

- we make regular visits into school to monitor specific aspects of our curriculum or areas such as health & safety
- we read papers to prepare for each meeting, prepare reports and undertake agreed actions
- we support staff in recruitment and meetings with Local Authority representatives
- we take part in training in areas such as RAISE online data, performance management, finance and special educational needs provision.

Our work this year

Recruitment of new Headteacher

One of our biggest challenges at the start of this academic year was the recruitment of our new Headteacher. We are confident that we undertook this challenge thoroughly and conscientiously. We started with consultations with parents, staff & children and concluded with a committed group of governors who dedicated 2 days to a robust selection procedure. Mrs Yendall and Mrs Ungerechts have worked closely together to ensure a smooth transition and it is our job, as governors, to support Mrs Ungerechts in September as she settles into life at Sowerby School.

OFSTED

OFSTED came in December and as part of their judgement on Leadership and Management of the school, asked to meet with governor representatives. In our meeting, we were able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the school and its direction. OFSTED inspectors commented that they were impressed by the dedication and commitment of the governors.

Pupil numbers

Our pupil numbers continue to rise, due in part to the new housing development. The Local Authority have now committed to building a new primary school on the estate, however this will not be ready for several years. It is our job to ensure the best use of our resources for the benefit of all of the children in our care.

Conclusion

We hope that you have found this information useful. If you would like any further information regarding our work, we will be publishing our meeting schedule & link roles on our school website in September. We also intend to publish minutes of our meetings.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me via the school office.

Best wishes,
Sally Valentine
On behalf of Sowerby Governors