

## **Governors' Annual Statement 2020 -2021 – A Year of Change**

The academic year 2020/21 continued to be an extremely challenging time for all schools. At Parsons Down, the strongly shared sense of dedication and determination across the Partnership enabled staff to work together, continuing to offer the best opportunities for our children as well as support for each other. In addition, on-going support from parents and carers throughout the year was valued and greatly appreciated.

As well as the global challenge of Covid, the backdrop to the year was one of tremendous change for the Partnership. After a period of some turbulence, the Headteacher and Governors worked closely with West Berkshire Council to achieve long term stability. After much discussion and consultation with the DfE, it was agreed that the Pupil Admission Number would be reduced to 30 from September 2021. Inevitably, this required effective planning and some upheaval within our community but with the knowledge we were creating a new and exciting learning environment for the children, bringing the infant and junior schools under one roof, on the same site. Governors acknowledge that the Headteacher and Senior Leadership team worked exceptionally hard to enable this transition to take place as smoothly as possible, putting in many additional hours. Indeed, all our staff faced extra hours of work in preparation for September 2021, to ensure a very positive and safe environment for pupils on their return.

Governors were involved throughout this process, meeting and discussing with LA officers before the project got underway in April 2021 as well as being mindful and supportive of staff wellbeing throughout the year, at a time of significant change.

Inevitably, the project was delayed at times due to issues around Covid - illness, the supply of materials etc. However, 2020/21 saw the building of a new Foundation Stage classroom and outside area, updating of the junior building, an improved Library, a new location for Twilight Club (wrap around care), upgraded administration areas and a new staffroom. Staff showed amazing flexibility throughout all this for which we are truly grateful.

### **Governing Board activity**

Governors continued to focus on the key areas of school oversight – to ensure the ethos, strategy and clarity of vision; holding the Headteacher to account for the educational offering to and performance of the pupils; overseeing the financial management of the school and ensuring money is well spent. Due to the pandemic, all our meetings were held on Zoom to meet issues of social distancing.

The year saw a significant change within the Board. After much discussion, we agreed a new Instrument of Government, moving to a smaller group of 9 Governors.

<b>Governing Board July 2021</b>	
Headteacher	Catherine Bull
Co-opted Governor	Marilyn Cornwell
Co-opted Governor	Ian Nichol
Co-opted Governor	Sam Bartholemew
Co-opted Governor	Brodie Wood
Local Authority Governor	Rosemary Lilley
Parent Governor	Rhys Morgan
Parent Governor	Vicki Rock
Staff Governor	Karen Neumann

Marilyn Cornwell	Chair of Governors
Ian Nichol	Vice Chair, Chair of Finance
Rosemary Lilley	Safeguarding and SEN'D; Staff Welfare
Sam Bartholemew	Health and Safety
Sam Bartholemew	Pupil Premium Governor
Brodie Wood	Equality Governor

Link Governors are attached to subject areas across the curriculum.

Despite all the challenges, learning continued apace with staff adapting positively to class teaching again on their return in September 2020. On the re-opening of school, Governors were pleased to hear of high levels of attendance as well as effective measures to support more vulnerable children and families. It was evident that the vast majority of children enjoyed being in school again.

School staff provided Remote Learning across all year groups for most of the Spring term. Feedback from our families was very positive about the variety of learning available at this time as well as the regular contact between home and school. Staff worked tirelessly to maintain vital home-school links, especially for more vulnerable children, as well as working in school with the children of key workers.

Governors received regular updates on pupil progress, continuing to consider and challenge outcomes and were well informed about the Covid recovery plans put in place for children to catch up. As all KS1 and KS2 tests were cancelled, it is not possible to report specifically on progress and attainment at the end of the academic year.

### **School Site and Premises**

Our Health and Safety lead Governor worked closely with the Headteacher and Operations Manager to ensure that Covid Risk Assessments were up to date. As the building work got underway, the team's workload increased significantly; Governors expressed their thanks for their diligence and thorough work, ensuring the safety of all those in school.

### **Value for Money**

Changes took place within our school administration team following the resignation of the School Business Manager in the autumn. This gave the Headteacher the opportunity to re-model the team to meet the demands of the changing scene in school. The Finance Committee worked effectively with the new Finance Manager and Operations Manager to ensure that, despite the financially challenging climate, the school achieved a robust budget situation and a reasonable underspend in 2020/21. Governors continue their careful scrutiny of the budget, undertaking the annual benchmarking exercise, comparing our school with similar schools to inform decision making as well as completing the Schools Financial Value Statement.

<b>Finance meetings</b>	
Ian Nichol - Chair	5/5
Marilyn Cornwell	4/5
Sam Bartholemew	4/5
Catherine Bull	5/5

Meetings are also attended by the Finance Manager and Operations Manager.

## **Safeguarding**

The safety and welfare of the children at PDP is always of the highest priority and became of even greater significance in the light of the pandemic. The Partnership operates in accordance with the latest Government guidance and has a clear Safeguarding policy in line with West Berkshire's recommendations. Our Lead Governor for Safeguarding, Rosemary Lilley, made appropriate visits to the school, reporting back to every Governing Board meeting, highlighting any areas of particular concern if necessary. In addition to monitoring safeguarding procedures were being followed and records kept up to date, she also held some very informative 'pupil voice' sessions. Rosemary's commitment to this role is greatly appreciated.

## **Future Plans 2019/20**

Looking forward to the coming year, we are hoping that we can resume our visits to school with learning walks, book looks, classroom visits and observing pupil progress meetings. We will continue our focus on the progress and attainment of all our pupils, striving to offer the best opportunities for their success, balanced with the need to ensure everyone in the school community feels safe and supported. We fully recognise the impact on and challenges posed for children who have missed many months of school life.

Particular attention will continue to be given to disadvantaged pupils and Pupil Premium funded children to ensure positive outcomes for them, monitoring and supporting the Catch Up programmes offered to them.

<b>Governors</b>	<b>Number of Meetings attended</b>
Marilyn Cornwell – Chair	6/6
Ian Nichol – Vice Chair	6/6
Rosemary Lilley	6/6
Rhys Morgan	6/6
Sam Bartholemew	6/6
Brodie Wood	5/6
Karen Neumann	4/5
Catherine Bull - Headteacher	6/6