

**Parsons Down Partnership**  
**Annual Statement 2024 -2025**

**Learn together, grow together, succeed together**

**Introduction to the School and Governing Board**

The Parsons Down Partnership of Schools is made up of an Infant School and a Junior School located on the same site.

Every child can achieve within our schools and we encourage everybody to be the best they can. Each individual has a different talent and our job is to recognise and encourage this.

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the 3 core, strategic functions of the 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 Structure**

The Governing Board of Parsons Down Partnership is made up of the Headteacher, 1 staff Governor, 4 Co-opted Governors, 2 elected Parent Governors and 1 LA Governor.

Co-opted Governors are appointed by the Governing Board and are people who, in the Board's opinion, have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. Amongst our co-opted Governors, members have extensive knowledge and skills in finance, education, health as well as Governing Board experience and expertise. Our LA Governor has vast experience in Safeguarding and SEND.

Once again, we faced changes in membership as one of our Governors had to resign during the year to meet new work commitments. As many schools find, recruiting Governors is not easy so we were pleased to appoint a new co-opted to start in September 2025.

In 2024/2025, the Full Governing Board met on 6 occasions. Minutes of the meeting and copies are available on request at the school office. In addition to the FGB, there is 1 Committee with delegated powers, the Finance and Pay Committee, which meets 6 times a year. Details of attendance at the meetings is available on the website. We also have groups in place which meet when required to deal with complaints or disciplinary matters, should they arise. Terms of reference and membership for all Committees are agreed by the Governing Board annually.

Governors visited the schools and also attended Parents' Evenings to offer parents and carers the opportunity of meeting them and exchanging views. Governors also undertook 'Learning Walks' on key areas of interest, including holding 'Pupil voice' sessions. Individual Governors take on responsibilities for key areas of the schools' activities and report back to the Governing Board on issues and progress. Details of this are available on the website.

## **Vision, ethos and strategic direction**

The School Development Plan (SDP) is the key strategic document for the school, setting out its key plans and priorities for development and improvement over 3 years. The SDP is based on evidence from a number of key sources: the latest OFSTED reports (with a focus on areas identified for improvement), data (the schools' internal data and outcomes of Key Stage tests for attainment and progress) and the Schools' Self Evaluation documents. Local and national policies, context, parent and pupil voice also inform the aims and objectives. The Governors have worked with the Headteacher to ensure the SDP reflects our ethos and priorities, reviewing the plan each term, challenging and supporting the Headteacher in the achievement of its aims.

## **Pupil progress and attainment**

Governors received regular reports on pupil progress and attainment; data was scrutinised and challenged at our Full Governing Board meetings. Governors attended termly Pupil Progress meetings with staff and undertook Learning Walks, book scrutiny etc to inform the data. Additional reports for SEND, vulnerable and Pupil Premium groups were also analysed and discussed with the lead Governors. Presentations to Governors by English, Phonics and Maths lead teachers were very informative.

We were delighted with the Y1 Phonics test results this year with 97% of the children passing the test, well above national and local outcomes. Children also did well in the Multiplication Tables Test, with results above local and national levels. We are aware of the hard work invested by all our staff to support learning; like them, we are also aware that more can be achieved and our plans for this are indicated in the SDP for 2025/2026.

## **School Site, Premises and Development**

We are proud of our modern facilities and excellent outside areas. Not only has there been a lot of work throughout the building to improve the learning environment in classrooms and common areas, this year saw the launch of our exciting OPAL project – Outdoor Play and Learning. In addition to the expected games opportunities, a significant investment was agreed to raise the quality of provision across the school through the project, enabling children to become more imaginative and creative in their play with a wide range of equipment and spaces to explore. Many children have told us how much they enjoy these new opportunities. With so much to explore, there has been a marked reduction in accidents, injuries and disagreements during breaktimes!

The continuing development of the Sensory Garden at the front of the school also provides a welcome and popular space for children to explore in a quieter setting.

Arrangements remain in place for the Health and Safety Governor to meet regularly with the School Business Manager and the Headteacher to review health and safety matters across the whole site, reporting to Governors at full Board meetings.

## **Financial performance**

In yet another year when schools across the country faced some exceptional challenges, the Finance Committee worked extremely effectively with the Headteacher and School Business Manager to mitigate the impact of local and national funding arrangements, particularly in the context of reducing our intake to a one form entry school. In addition, the school began the school year with the uncertainty of a proposed clawback of funds by the Local Authority. This was satisfactorily resolved but impacted the overall management of our funds for some time.

As always, the Committee carefully scrutinised the budget and its management throughout the year, including undertaking a benchmarking exercise (comparing our schools' expenditure to that of similar schools) to inform decision making for the 2025/26 budget. Tough decisions were taken to reduce the risk of a deficit budget whilst still maintaining good standards of education for the pupils. We recognise the huge support from all staff to enable this but appreciate that, despite our best efforts, these financial challenges may impact how we can deliver the curriculum.

Our effectiveness is reviewed by the Local Authority through the annual submission of a Schools Financial Value Statement.

### **Safeguarding**

The safety and welfare of the children at PDP is of the highest priority. Our Lead Governor for Safeguarding makes regular visits to the school, reporting back at every Governing Board meeting, highlighting any areas of particular concern. In addition to monitoring that processes are being followed and records are up to date, she also held some very informative 'pupil voice' sessions. She is also the Lead Governor for our SEND children so met regularly with our Inclusion Manager to monitor the progress of children with special needs or those who may be disadvantaged in other ways.

### **Overview of 2024/25**

In addition to the more formal aspects of our role, Governors have also enjoyed sharing in other school activities; these provide a different perspective on school life. Governors attended school plays, assemblies, the Carol Service, Sports days and the Number Day. The Outdoor Learning Day is an annual highlight, giving Governors the opportunity to see the staff and children taking learning outside in a variety of activities. At the same time, some Governors joined the 'pupil voice' survey of the curriculum – always an interesting experience! Some Governors also supported curriculum enrichment visits away from school.

As well as planned changes, unexpected events arose during the year. Governors were involved in the appointment of a new Deputy Head following the resignation of Lynda Shephard to take up Headship at Victoria Park Nursery School. With 9 applicants and 5 short listed, there was much to consider. We were pleased to welcome Alice Mills, who took up her post in January 2025. In the interim, Mr Nik Allen joined us for a term, working most effectively to support staff during the transition.

### **Future Plans 2025/26**

In partnership with school staff and SLT, we will continue our focus on the progress and attainment for all our pupils, striving to offer the best opportunities for their success. With new curriculum plans developing in Maths and English, Governors will continue to meet with leaders to ensure the quality of teaching and learning is secure, meeting pupils' needs.

Particular attention will be given to SEND, disadvantaged pupils and Pupil Premium funded children to ensure positive outcomes for them, particularly in the light of Government announcements.

In September, we look forward to the launch of The Pod, a designated room to support children who sometimes struggle to manage classroom expectations as well as Stay and Play sessions for children joining us in the future.

