

Governors' Annual Statement 2021 -2022

The academic year 2021/22 brought new challenges for many schools as everyone adjusted to the months following the pandemic. At Parsons Down, the shared sense of dedication and determination across the Partnership enabled staff to work together, offering the best opportunities for our children as well as support for each other. Staff worked hard to identify and fill gaps from missed learning opportunities, reviewing and adapting the curriculum appropriately. As in other settings, a number of our pupils still found it hard to settle back into school life, dealing with on-going feelings of anxiety and uncertainty after Covid, affecting their attendance and opportunities for learning. On-going support from parents and carers throughout the year was valued and greatly appreciated.

With the reduction in roll to a one form entry school, reorganisation still impacted school life. Despite all efforts, the building project was not complete at the start of the school year; lack of materials became quite a challenge for the contractors, causing a range of delays. As class numbers reduced, the majority of the children were working under one roof with only Year1 pupils remaining in accommodation on the former Infant School site. However, the whole school community adapted extremely well to the changing scene as different areas became available with the final handover happening in February 2022. Undoubtedly, the opening of the Foundation Stage outside learning area was a major step forward – it is a wonderful resource. Equally, the outdoor space and the MUGA (multi use games area) are tremendous assets, giving the children great opportunities for sports activities and outdoor learning.

The former main Infant School building was demolished in the summer, an emotional moment for many.

Once again, the Headteacher and Senior Leadership team worked extremely hard to facilitate all the necessary changes. Indeed, all our staff faced extra hours of work in readiness for September 2021, ensuring a very positive and safe environment for pupils at the start of term.

Governors were kept informed throughout the whole process and fully appreciate the additional challenges the staff met over the year, maintaining our awareness of and support for staff wellbeing, at a time of continuing change. 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. As issues of Covid reduced, we were pleased to hold 50% of our meetings face-to-face rather than via Zoom as well as visit the school for particular events.

| Governing Board July 2022 | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Headteacher | Catherine Bull |
| Co-opted Governor | Marilyn Cornwell, Chair of Governors |
| Co-opted Governor | Ian Nichol, Vice Chair |
| 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 SEND; Staff Welfare |
| Sam Bartholemew | Health and Safety; Pupil Premium Grant |
| Brodie Wood | Equality Governor |

After several years with the Partnership, Ian Nichol retired from the Board at the end of the school year. We will miss his experience and valuable contribution. His replacement will be appointed in September 2022.

Link Governors are attached to subject areas across the curriculum.

Despite all the changes, learning continued apace with staff adapting very positively to the new setting. Governors received regular updates on pupil progress, continuing to consider and challenge outcomes and were well informed about the Covid recovery plans in place for children to catch up both in their learning and social well-being. Preparation for end of Key Stage tests was thorough as assessments were re-introduced after 2 years.

As well as a clear focus on English and Maths, staff have worked hard to embed the new curriculum, covering all other subjects in a broad and balanced approach to ensure consistency and continuity of learning.

We were delighted with the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of the Junior School in July, maintaining the judgement as a Good school. As always, the inspection process was fair and thorough, during which time the Inspector, an HMI, met with 4 Governors.

School Site and Premises

Our Health and Safety lead Governor worked closely with the Headteacher and Operations Manager to monitor all Risk Assessments as well as maintaining the termly inspections of the site. Governors expressed their thanks for their diligence and thorough work, ensuring the safety of all those in school.

As the Foundation Stage area would become vacant in September 2022 when all pupils would be accommodated in the main Partnership building, West Berkshire approached the school with their plans to use the building as a temporary home for the Key Stage 3 iCollege while their own premises are redeveloped. Governors and the Headteacher had very positive conversations with the Local Authority and iCollege staff, securing a smooth transition for all involved. The iCollege will run completely independently of the Partnership.

Value for Money

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 2021/22. 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.

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Finance meetings | |
| 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. 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 how 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 2022/23

After some years of change and external challenges, we are all looking forward to the coming year as an opportunity to settle into new routines and build our Partnership under one roof. It is an exciting time. Work is already underway to review our vision and the school's mission statement to make sure it embraces our new status and the community we want to create. Governors will resume our regular visits to school with learning walks, book looks, classroom visits, observing pupil progress meetings and building stronger links with staff. 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.

| Governors | Number of Meetings attended 2021/22 |
|------------------------------|--|
| Marilyn Cornwell – Chair | 6/7 |
| Ian Nichol – Vice Chair | 6/7 |
| Rosemary Lilley | 7/7 |
| Rhys Morgan | 6/7 |
| Vicki Rock | 6/7 |
| Sam Bartholemew | 7/7 |
| Brodie Wood | 6/7 |
| Karen Neumann | 6/7 |
| Catherine Bull - Headteacher | 7/7 |

