



What impact has the governing body had during 2015 - 2016?



Statement of Governance

September 2016

The governing body is responsible for the strategic direction of the school. We hold the headteacher to account for how well the school is doing and we make sure that our budget is well spent. The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school.

Here is our report of the impact we consider we have had over the last school year. It covers our responsibilities in monitoring both The School Improvement Plan (SIP) and our Statutory Duties (for instance safeguarding, attendance, financial control).

Knowing the school through monitoring the School Improvement Plan

We have systematically monitored the **School Improvement Plan** over the year through various focused activities alongside teachers.

For instance, we have followed through advice from our School Improvement Adviser, Linda Ross, that working walls can be used as a useful tool for teaching and learning. Governors have monitored the consistency of the working walls across the school and evaluated their impact. For instance, we found clear learning pathways, support for pupils' mathematical thinking and questions linked to assessment, in line with the aims of the school. Children talked about how they used their wall, for instance for reminding themselves of the method to use in their calculations and for identifying shapes.

- **SIP Priority 1 – to improve achievement in writing:** we have joined the literacy coordinator on learning walks to look at working walls; we have engaged in book scrutiny exercises; we have interviewed children from different classes talking about their writing. We have also examined writing in other areas of the curriculum, particularly RE. We have observed consistency in approaches across the school and seen some good marking which has included next steps to help pupils progress.
- **SIP Priority 2 – to secure accurate teacher assessment against the new National Standards:** we have attended staff moderation exercises and have invited presentations on assessment by the assessment coordinator to the governing body.
- **SIP Priority 3 – to strengthen further all levels of leadership across the school:** we have observed teachers in their leadership roles by accompanying the maths and literacy subject leaders on learning walks and book scrutinies, and we have been continuing to review the staffing structure in the school.

Actions in relation to Statutory Duties

Pupil Premium & Sports Premium

We found evidence that Sports Premium funding has made a significant impact on the quality of curriculum provision, extra-curricular activities, competitive opportunities and staff training in PE and sport.

The Teaching & Learning Committee has checked on the progress of pupils receiving pupil premium in their questioning of assessment data and in their discussions with the SENCO and Headteacher.

Through conversations with pupils we have evaluated the impact of music lessons on pupils' learning (in learning new skills, being creative, working with others, developing confidence and concentration).

Staff Recruitment

We have been involved in successfully **recruiting staff** - both permanent teachers and teachers to cover maternity leave. We are very pleased that high quality staff want to come and teach at Newtown. The headteacher and a number of governors are trained in Safer Recruiting to ensure that we appoint people who are suitable to work with children.

Monitoring Attendance

We have monitored attendance, receiving regular reports at meetings. Governors have liaised with the University of Exeter about some of their post-graduate students from abroad who arrive later in the academic year, requesting late entry for their children and sometimes requesting extra holidays.

Policies

We have updated policies at meetings, checking to ensure they are still fit for purpose.

Headteacher Appraisal

Three governors are appointed to be responsible for the Headteacher's Appraisal working with the Local Authority external adviser.

Our **Pay and performance** committee met regularly to review pay and approve progression up the pay-scale.

Safeguarding

We checked that the policy is being fully implemented in school and ensured that our governors receive regular training, including Prevent Training, to keep our children safe.

Securing grants and additional funding to support the work of the school

A grant from The Hele's Trust, which was secured on the advice of governors, has contributed to the significant progress which our children with English as an additional language have made.

One of our governors has been instrumental in winning another grant from the Community Budget for outdoor blinds in the Early Years area and indoor blinds in a key stage 2 classroom which have improved our facilities.

Growth of the school

We have budgeted for the changes we need to make so that our accommodation is suitable as the school grows to 210 children. We gave the pre-school plenty of time to find new premises so that we have enough space in the lower school buildings. We now have sufficient toilets to meet the children's needs as well as health and safety requirements.

We intend to keep close links to Newtown Pre-school so that the children get to know the school before they join us.

Future partnerships

You will know that the government wants all schools to become academies. The advice is that schools should not rush into any change but we should build and strengthen collaboration with other schools. We have set up **a working party of governors** who are researching the ways in which schools can work together to benefit children, staff and parents.

Parental engagement

We are aware that we need to ensure we communicate regularly with parents. The Chair of Governors has written to parents each term, and her contact details have been available to parents.

Three of our governors are parents.

When the KS2 classes were restructured, concerns were raised by the parents about the way the changes were communicated. The governors responded by calling a meeting for all parents to voice their views. Minutes were taken and made available and staff, parents and governors were able to exchange their views.

The governors decided that communication with parents would be a priority for the following year.

Challenge

The information we gather through monitoring enables us to know what the school is doing well and to **asking challenging questions of the senior leaders.**

We have focused particularly on improving our **questioning skills** as governors, asking questions about the data, trying to ensure we have an accurate picture of the school by looking at the detail in reports and assessment data.

We exercise diligence in Resources Committee meetings when we are presented with financial reports and are working to ensure we have more governors on that committee with the financial knowledge to monitor the spending.

Priorities for the future

1. Future partnerships
2. Communication and parental engagement
3. Developing our lead governor roles to monitor the statutory areas
4. Further developing how we evaluate what we find through monitoring so that we ask the right questions to help the school move forward.