



Ditton Infant School

## DITTON INFANT SCHOOL

### Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body 2017-18

#### Governance Overview

In accordance with the Government's requirements for all governing body, the three core strategic functions of the School Governing Body are:

- *Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction*
- *Holding the Senior Leadership Team to account for the educational performance and achievement of the school and all its pupils*
- *Overseeing the financial management of the school and making sure that its money is effectively and appropriately spent*

The Governors are fully supportive of Ditton Infant School's ethos of '**caring, sharing, learning and achieving within an inclusive environment**', which is underpinned by the 6 Golden Rules all the children are taught as part of becoming valued members of the school community:-

- We are gentle
- We are kind and helpful
- We listen
- We are honest
- We work hard
- We look after property

All the adults associated with the school work hard to ensure that each child has a high sense of wellbeing, and are rightly proud of the dedicated 'Wellbeing Room' where children in need of additional support can benefit from small group or one-to-one interventions in an inspiring area. The school believes that a happy child is able to learn more effectively, with the ultimate aim that each individual maximises their potential and moves on at the end of KS1 as a confident and resilient members of the community with a thirst for learning.

## Governing Body Constitution

The Governing Body of Ditton Infant School is made up of a maximum of 11 full members who give their time for the benefit of the children at the school. The Governing body comprises the following:-

- ❖ 1 Headteacher
- ❖ 1 Staff Governor
- ❖ 2 Partnership Governors
- ❖ 3 Co-Opted Governors
- ❖ 1 Local Authority Governors
- ❖ 3 Parent Governors

The governing body is further supported by a Clerk. There was a change in this position year as Debbie Stryzyk from the Clerking Service replaced the School's Office Manager, Trish Gordon.

Governors are appointed for a 4 year term of office.

Following the resignation at the end of the previous academic year of John Adams and Chris Green, together with a pre-existing vacancy there were initially 3 vacancies on the governing body (1 no. partnership and 2 no. co-opted).

At the beginning of the academic year Paul Staines was voted on as a Co-opted Governor to strengthen the Financial Acumen of the governing body following the resignations.

In May 2018 Richard Kidd (Parent Governor) stepped down following the completion of his term of office and following an election by parents Kelly White was appointed as a new Parent Governor.

It was considered that the other candidate in the Parent Governor election, Nikki Cole, who has a Financial and Data background would provide additional strength to the Governing Body and was duly elected at the Term 5 Full Governing Body as an Associate Member. With two further Parent Governor vacancies coming up in the next academic year it was considered this would be a useful period for Mrs Cole to understand the process of governance so that she could determine whether to stand for election at that time.

At the start of the 2018-19 Academic Year there remain 2 no. vacancies on the Governing Body (1 no. Partnership Governor and 1 No. Co-opted Governor) and action in terms of filling these vacancies will be considered further once the annual Skills Audit has been completed and with a view to there being 2 Parent Governor vacancies during the course of the academic year.

Details of individual governors' period of office are included on the school website.

The Governing Body operates on a Circle Model, meeting six times a year. In addition there are separate Committees who meet in respect of Finance and Headteacher Appraisal, and the Chair of these Sub Committees report back to the other Governors at the next Full Governing Body Meeting

## Attendance Record of Governors

Details of governor's attendance at meetings can be viewed on the school website by clicking on the name of the individual governors, where you will also find details of their terms of office and any declared business interests. <http://www.ditton-inf.kent.sch.uk/the-staff/>

## Governance Arrangements

Increasingly the focus is ensuring the right blend of skills is available to effectively discharge the Governing Body's duties and to assist with future recruitment. To assist with this we undertake an annual skills audit using the template provided by the National Governance Association (NGA) to assess if there are any gaps in terms of knowledge and experience to enable the Governing Body to recruit appropriately skilled people.

In addition, the Chair undertook a further round of one-to-one conversations with each of the governors to review any training requirements and get a general overview of potential ideas and concerns for discussion with the Full Governing Body.

The Skills Audit identifies potential areas where governors could benefit from additional training, and all governors are encouraged to take advantage of the series of courses operated by Kent County Council (KCC), to improve the overall skills base.

Governors have been divided into monitoring pairs, linked to key priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) to provide consistent monitoring of the school priorities.

The Governors also have selected governors with specific areas of responsibility, as follows:-

- |                          |   |                   |
|--------------------------|---|-------------------|
| • EYFS                   | - | Mr James Milligan |
| • Safeguarding           | - | Mr Kevin Long     |
| • SEN                    | - | Dr Celia James    |
| • Training & Development | - | Mr John Sellick   |
| • Health & Safety        | - | Mr John Sellick   |

Governors undertaking monitoring visits complete a Monitoring Report following their visit, based upon the KCC standard template, which identifies what had been observed and any potential actions for either Senior Leadership Team or Governors. These reports are issued with the papers for the next Full Governing Body Meeting for review and discussion.

Minutes of Full Governing Body Meeting are public documents and are available on request from the school office.

## Actions by Governors during 2017-18 Academic Year

Governors continued to play an active role in the development of the school. The key activities undertaken during the course of the academic year included:-

- ✓ Providing support to the Headteacher as she sought to develop a new Senior Leadership Team including a new Deputy Headteacher and KS1 Leader embedded existing good practice and sought to introduce new initiatives, in particular strengthening the school's ties with the main feeder pre-schools and the linked Junior School in order to improve transition arrangements.
- ✓ Successfully transition following election of a new Chair of Governors at the end of the previous Academic Year
- ✓ Ongoing self-evaluation with the introduction of one-to-one reviews between the Chair and all the governors
- ✓ Updating knowledge, understanding and competence through training. Particular regard was given to ensuring all governors have completed on line training in PREVENT and encouraged to undertake additional training in respect of safeguarding
- ✓ Reviewing, challenging and assessing the impact of school priorities from the School Improvement Plan (SIP), in particular with regard to:-
  - Increase staff experience in EYFS
  - Developing outdoor learning and environments
  - Improving outcomes for specific groups of children with a focus on more able girls in maths, Year 2 phonic retakes and Year 2 boy writers
  - Improve assessment and its use in KS1 ○ Strengthen leadership at all levels
- ✓ Reviewing and approving updated and additional school policies.
- ✓ Supporting the school in terms of links with the local community by attending events such as New Parent Workshops, visits by Special Guests, i.e. visit by Brian May to talk about the importance of protecting hedgehogs as part of the new Wildlife Garden, and by a couple of Commonwealth Gymnasts and helping out at the PTFA Christmas and Summer Fairs and attending Parent Forum and School Council Workshops.

## Assessment of Impact

The impact of the work undertaken by the Governing Body is that:-

- Governors have actively strengthened their skillset to ensure effective governance and have improved their position with regards to ongoing succession planning.
- Support provided to the Headteacher to make links in the wider community to enable her to fund the development of the outdoor environment and develop opportunities for local visitors who can reinforce elements of the curriculum. Continue to develop links with local pre-schools and linked Junior School to ensure a smooth transition for children both entering and leaving the school.

- Supporting the Headteacher to make budgetary decisions in response to cuts in funding to ensure that positive outcomes for children remain the priority.
- Provided an appropriate level of challenge to the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team as evidenced from the Monitoring Reports and Minutes of Governor Meetings, in particular with regards establishing the impact of initiatives aimed at addressing the school's priorities.
- Governors have raised their profile with parents and staff and strengthened links with the PTFA.

### Plans for 2018-19 Academic Year

The Governors are always looking improve and for the forthcoming academic year we will focus on the following:-

- 🌱 Continue to drive the school forward so as to maintain the school's current "Outstanding" OfSTED judgement (2008).
- 🌱 Work with the Headteacher to develop more links within the Community, i.e. local British Legion.
- 🌱 Support the Headteacher as she embeds a new inexperienced Senior Leadership Team, with a new SENCO and KS1 Leader (maternity cover).
- 🌱 Develop mutually beneficial links at Governor level with other Governing Bodies within the Mosaic and Malling collaborations as a means of sharing best practice and conclude arrangements for Joint Complaints Panel.
- 🌱 Develop the role of the new Governors and undertake process for election of 2 no. new Parent Governors following the completion of the current governors' Term of Office
- 🌱 Continue to monitor school priorities against the School Improvement Plan (SIP), in particular:-
  - ❖ Embed new tracking and assessment systems to help inform pupil progress and curriculum provision
  - ❖ Induction of new governors
  - ❖ Continue to develop outdoor learning
  - ❖ Improve outcomes for groups of children in writing and maths in EYFS and KS1
  - ❖ Re-organise the delivery of speech and language activities in Year R
- 🌱 Ongoing review of governor training and skills to establish any gaps which need addressing when considering filling governor vacancies, and securing re-election or replacement of governors coming to end of their term of office.

### Contacting the Governing Body

We always welcome suggestions, feedback (it is always nice to hear positive feedback as well as what we could do better), ideas and support from all our stakeholders. Please contact the Chair of Governors – Mr James Milligan via the school office.