

Annual Governance Statement 2020

White Bridge Primary School, Loughton

In accordance with the Government's requirements for all governing bodies, the 3 core strategic functions of White Bridge Primary School 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.

Following the creation of the Epping Forest Multi-Academy Trust, school governance within the Trust has changed in a number of ways to accommodate the requirements of the MAT. The key change is that we are now known as the Local Governing Body (LGB), and report into the Trust governance structure. This gives Heads and Trustees of the MAT the opportunity to review feedback and monitoring information coming from each of the schools, and has also generated some standardisation across the Trust, whereby, for example, certain aspects of governance become areas of focus at certain times of the school year.

The governing body of White Bridge Primary School during the academic year 2019 – 2020 was made up of 9 governors comprising: 2 Staff Governors (including the Headteacher), 1 elected Parent Governors, and 6 Trust Governors. Trust Governors are appointed by the LGB and are people who, in the opinion of the governing body, have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. A term of office is 4 years.

The LGB body generally meets twice each term to consider various aspects of the school in detail. In previous years, we have operated sub-committees to carry out certain monitoring activities for reporting back into the main governing body, but during the last academic year, it has been more productive to operate only the LGB, which considers all matters within the remit of school governance, with individual governors covering specific areas (eg Safeguarding, SEN and Finance) completing their monitoring as appropriate, and reporting back into LGB periodically.

Governors are expected to attend all LGB meetings across the academic year, in addition to carrying out any monitoring required by their specific portfolio responsibilities, and participating in the annual Governor Day, which is held on-site during the school day.

Meeting attendance during the last year has been excellent, and this has enabled full discussion of the matters in consideration at all meetings. The Clerk to the LGB ensures that all meetings are accurately recorded and governors are updated on the latest policies relating to their responsibilities.

LGB delegates the day-to-day running of White Bridge Primary School to the Headteacher and Leadership Team. Since the school was amalgamated from separate Infant and Junior schools, there has been no OFSTED inspection, but the inspection of the Infant School in

2011 rated the school as 'Good'. Although, due to the current suspension of full OFSTED visits as a consequence of COVID-19 restrictions, it is unclear exactly when White Bridge Primary School will receive its first inspection, due to the strong day to day management of the school, together with actions put in place after an advisory visit in 2018, the school will go into any future inspections with confidence.

White Bridge will have 510 places in 17 classes in September 2020, as the school continues its expansion to full 3 form entry throughout the school, supported by the additional classroom space, the successful construction of which has been overseen at all points by the governors. This space provides a modern learning environment which can be used by all pupils, without detrimental impact to the existing character of the school buildings.

Governors use the School Development Plan to monitor the school's objectives on an annual basis. The key areas of the School Development Plan were:

- Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment
- Outcomes for Pupils
- Effectiveness of Asset Management

Throughout the academic year, Governors monitor pupil progress data to ensure that attainment is reaching expected levels, and also monitor the implementation of appropriate interventions that are put in place to raise attainment for any groups of pupils where it is felt necessary.

Due to the unprecedented nature of the early conclusion to the normal academic year in 2020, no Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 tests were carried out in the summer term 2020. This was particularly unfortunate for the children and teachers who had worked hard throughout the year to ensure that the school would continue to show the strong performance in all areas that ongoing monitoring of progress had suggested would be the outcome of the tests, had they been held as normal.

The impact of COVID-19 on the school has been profound, and Governors worked closely with the school leadership team during the summer term to develop a robust risk assessment, that would ensure that all appropriate measures were in place to facilitate the safe opening of the school to some pupils towards the end of the term.

Additionally, the Governors worked together with the Trust to complete a competitive recruitment process for the appointment of Mrs Grisley as Headteacher, following the retirement of Mrs Witteridge, who departs White Bridge after many years of distinguished service.

Over and above academic achievements, White Bridge continues to offer pupils a wide and enriching range of school trips, extra-curricular activities and after school clubs, although these were understandably impacted by COVID-19 in the latter part of the academic year, including the unfortunate cancellation of the annual Kingswood trip so enjoyed by Year 6. The continued success of the boys and girls of White Bridge across diverse sports and in all age groups continues to be a great source of pride, particularly when coupled with the admirable sportsmanship and high standard of behaviour displayed by pupils competing at local, district and indeed county events.

Finally, Governors and staff alike have continued to enjoy the benefits of participating in the conversion to Academy Status and forming and being part of the Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust. In the view of the LGB, the Trust has so far been successful in allowing White Bridge to maintain its unique character, while also facilitating the collaboration and opportunity to share best practice that the Trust provides. 2020 saw all governors across the MAT, and separately the Chairs of Governors, come together to discuss the aims and vision of the MAT, and also to share experiences so far, creating a genuine ethos of a supportive wider local community that places the welfare and progress of the pupil at the centre of school life. These meetings have been extremely beneficial, and will continue (virtually where necessary) throughout 2021, as we look to consolidate and build on everything that has been achieved so far.

We always welcome suggestions, ideas and feedback from parents. The Chair of Governors Ben Joyce and Clerk to the Governing Body, Sherron Alexander-Bedingfield can be contacted via the school office.