



Annual Governance Statement

Rainow Primary School's Governing Body is committed to being transparent and accountable to parents and stakeholders. This Annual Governance Statement summarises the work undertaken by the Governing Body during the academic year 2017-2018 and the impact of this work.

The core strategic functions of the Governing Body are to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school;
- Oversee the financial performance of the school, ensuring value for money;
- Promote the highest possible standards for Safeguarding.

This is all done in accord with the school's core values of 'Caring, Learning & Achieving'.

The following report is structured around these strategic functions.

The Governing Body

Details of the Governing Body Membership can be found on the school's website on the main 'Governor' page. Our Governing Body has had relatively stable membership for a number of years with several of the serving Governors having agreed to extend their service which has acted to provide valuable continuity during the school leadership transition. As we come to the end of the 2017/18 academic year, a number of our Governors are now reaching the end of their terms of service and with the school leadership team established, we look forward to welcoming three new Governors to the team in September: Parent Governors Dean Grice and Peter Grogan as well as Co-opted Governor Paul Riordan.

We have been working hard to manage the transition smoothly: the new Governors have joined us for introductory sessions this academic year; the departing Governors have agreed to offer support into the Autumn term to complete handovers; and some of our more experienced Governors are taking on the responsibility of new leadership roles. Our thanks go to the departing Governors: Helen Griffin (Chair of our Teaching and Learning Committee), Paul Mellings (Chair of our Pay Committee) and Ruth Worth (Governor Safeguarding Lead) for the skills, energy and commitment they have devoted to the school over the past few years.



How We Work

As a Governing Body, we are committed to our strategic functions whilst being acutely aware that, as Governors, we are not responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. The Governing Body delegates specific work to a number of sub-committees which meet regularly and share information at the full Governing Body meetings held each term. Ad hoc sub-committees are set up as-and-when required. As well as attending Governing Body and committee meetings, Governors visit the school frequently, for example to attend meetings with Local Authority advisers and the School Improvement Partner, to inspect the fabric of the school, to meet with subject leaders and to assist with recruitment.

Ensure Clarity of Vision, Ethos and Strategic Direction

At the beginning of each academic year, the Headteacher and teaching staff develop a School Strategic Development Plan (SSDP) in conjunction with the Governing Body. This is a statement of the school's forward plan for the coming year and vision and aspirations for the following two years and can be found on the school website. The Governors challenge our school leaders to ensure that the SSDP sets out ambitious but achievable medium-term and longer-term objectives that will benefit the teaching and learning experience of the children at Rainow School.

The Strategic Plan is developed based on the following key inputs:

- input from the leadership and full staff team
- feedback from parents and pupils (e.g. from survey data)
- guidance from our School Improvement Partner
- performance data

Progress against the agreed objectives is reviewed and challenged throughout the year at termly Teaching and Learning Committee meetings. This year's SSDP had the following key priorities:

1. Pupil Outcomes:
 - a. To increase the pupil outcomes in **writing** across the school and to improve standards in **spelling**



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- b. To ensure that all pupils have systematic opportunities to apply their **mathematical** knowledge in a range of **reasoning** and **problem-solving** activities.
2. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:
- a. To continue to develop and improve our **outdoor teaching and learning** provision.
 - b. To begin to develop an **effective assessment system for foundation subjects*** that will contribute to raising standards following changes to national assessment methods.
3. Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare:
- a. To **embed the new school learning values** across the school and communicate with all stakeholders.
 - b. To ensure high quality learning in **Physical Education**.
4. Effectiveness of Leadership and Management:
- a. To improve the **quantity / quality of information** parents receive about their **children's social and academic progress**.
 - b. **To develop the new staffing structure** so that all staff members work effectively in their new roles and responsibilities.

* Foundation subjects include all subjects except maths and literacy.

As mentioned above, the results of the parental survey are one input into the priorities within the SSDP. For instance, parent feedback was a key influence on objective 4a. In addition, an extra-curricular arts club for infants has been added to the school offering and feedback on the school toilets has instigated a planned refurbishment for which funding has recently been secured (see *Other Activities and Achievements*).

From a longer-term strategic perspective, we are continuing to actively monitor and assess the pros and cons of new models of school organisation (e.g. converting to academy status), although we have no immediate plans for change.

Hold the Headteacher to Account for Educational Performance

The Governing Body expects high standards from the school, as we want to see every pupil achieve their full potential. At the end of the school year, we receive reports from the various teachers setting out the overall attainment of pupils in the school. We compare data to national averages and equivalent schools to assist in evaluation; utilising



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information from a range of independent external sources including the Department for Education, Cheshire East and Ofsted.

We ensure that the school tracks, identifies and addresses any significant differences in achievement and progress for any particular groups of children. Where attainment or progress targets are set within the SSDP, we receive regular updates on progress against these targets. Whilst a number of the Governors work within the education sector, the Governing Body also employs a School Improvement Partner to provide independent analysis of the school's performance to the Governing Body and to assist the Headteacher's Performance Management Committee with annual appraisal and objective setting. This year we opted to secure the services of a new Strategic Improvement Partner to provide a fresh perspective to support the school's onward development.

Oversee the Financial Performance of the School

A key role of the Governing Body is to ensure school funds are managed efficiently and effectively for the benefit of pupils, and in accordance with Department of Education and Local Authority guidelines, with the aim of ensuring all children reach their full potential and succeed in adult life. Financial management responsibilities are overseen by the Finance Committee, which includes Governors with substantial financial management expertise.

As in previous years, the Governing Body has agreed a three-year financial plan for the school. The plan has been prepared on a prudent basis and is aligned with the objectives in the SSDP, is consistent with the financial resources available to our school and is realistic with regards to estimates of income and expenditure. An annual review is conducted with the school Bursar to provide assurance that the school is securing value for money and acting with financial integrity. Results are submitted in an annual Statement of Financial Value Standards for 2017-18 to Cheshire East. This contains the detailed results of our assessment to satisfy ourselves and Cheshire East that we have secure financial management in place.

As you will have noted from the school newsletters and wider media, the new National Fairer Funding Formula is being introduced for all schools. It is the Department of Education's



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intention that school budgets should be set on the basis of a single, national formula, however they are allowing a longer transition to provide stability for schools. Local authorities are continuing to set a local formula, as they do now, for determining individual schools' budgets in 2018-19 and 2019-20. We are confident this will provide some stability for the next two years due to a minimum funding guarantee with the major impact therefore likely to be in 2020-2021. There is forecast to be a reduction in funding in 2020-21 which affects many schools and we are working closely with Cheshire East to manage this potential change and minimise the impact on the school. This will include assessing where cost savings can be made as well as making best use of any funds available to us. This is one of our key priorities over the next year.

Promote the Highest Possible Standards for Safeguarding

Safeguarding is an umbrella term, which covers the welfare, safety and well-being of pupils and recognises the importance of a preventative agenda. All staff and Governors adhere to the school's Safeguarding Policy, which is developed in accordance with Government guidance. This statutory policy is updated annually to reflect any new legislation and is approved by the Governing Body.

Several other school policies are associated with the Safeguarding Policy. During the year 2017-2018, each of these has been reviewed where necessary, checked, cross referenced, and linked together on the policy database. This ensures that any amendments or updates to individual and relevant policies and procedures maintain their link back to the Safeguarding Policy.

All staff are required to attend suitable safeguarding training, and this is updated when necessary. The Safeguarding Governor (appointed by the Governing Body) and a couple of other Governing Body members have also completed safeguarding training to ensure they have sufficient insight to assess the school's implementation.

Throughout the year, any safeguarding updates or implications are brought to the attention of Governors at meetings. This process helps to ensure that the school's safeguarding procedures are robust.



Other Activities and Achievements

The Governing Body is committed to protecting the health, safety and well-being of employees, pupils and others affected by the school's activities including visitors and contractors. In line with our statutory requirements and with recognition of the Local Authority partnership, the Health and Safety policy has been reviewed and approved to provide the necessary authority and support for staff in their contributions to health and safety.

The school continues to carry out projects to improve the interior and exterior of the building. This year, the staff room and upper-floor of the building have been refurbished to provide a larger and more efficient working space for teachers, teaching assistants and our Special Educational Needs Coordinator to work in. In addition, the hall and storage areas have undergone improvements to enhance the organisation and working environment of the school.

A three-year plan has been devised to highlight and prioritise an ongoing programme for the repair, maintenance and improvement of the school building and facilities. Funding has been secured to support improvement of the children's toilet facilities and this work is due to be delivered in the near future. As you will be aware, there is also ongoing fund-raising for a new play-area at the top of the school bank which will provide additional physical challenge for pupils during playtimes and be a facility the children can access year-round during break times.

Final Comments

While we continue to target a well-rounded education for the Rainow children, it is pleasing to see that academic results remain strong and consistently above national standards. Our thanks go to all the staff members, pupils and our ever-supportive parents for the efforts they have made in securing these results and the wider progress of the school.

We look forward to reviewing parent survey input and working with the Rainow staff and new Governors to develop the 2018-2019 strategic plan early in the Autumn term to start the next stage of the journey in the school's development.