

Ninelands Primary School Governing Body Effectiveness Statement 2019/2020

From the Chair of Governors

Little did we know what the year would present us with when we started in the Autumn term of 2019. We got off to a normal start conducting our business of preparing for the year looking at items such as School Improvement Priorities, continuing to monitor the state of the budget and work with the Senior Leadership Team in school to move forward with initiatives such as bringing in-house the extended services provision and managing the preparations to work in line with changes to the Ofsted framework. Governors joined with staff to receive training on this. Governors also had additional training around Child Protection.

During this year we have appointed a new governor and reappointed two others

The normality was short lived. Once the pandemic hit, school staff had to completely change focus and the governing body had to adapt as well. That said the governor's role of providing scrutiny was maintained, all be it being via virtual meetings instead of being present in school. The whole governing body joined in with ensuring the school was able to continue providing care for children in a safe way and support children who were required to stay at home for a prolonged period.

I would like to add that I am extremely grateful for the calibre of the members of our governing body; their skills and expertise has been invaluable to the school over this time. I also would like to record my admiration for all the staff at Ninelands Primary School who have continued to work tirelessly. The efforts of some have been particularly heroic working none-stop through weekends and holidays to keep the school doing what it should. As a governing body we have done our best to try support their efforts. Some of this has included cancelling, moving and changing the format of meetings to assist staff with their time management. We have also provided scrutiny of items such as the ever changing risk assessments.

At this point I would normally abridge, where necessary, the statements from each of the sub committees. On this occasion, I feel that it is appropriate to see what they have prepared in full as, even though they are themselves a summary of the actions, I think it is important to record the significant amount of work that has still been covered by these teams over a very different year.

Resources Overview

For the academic year 2019/20 Priority 1 on the School Improvement Plan was 'To ensure that the school moves away from a predicted deficit budget position in April 2020 whilst delivering the best education possible for its pupils.' A new School Business Manager was also due to be appointed. We knew it was going to be a busy year for this committee, and with the additional complication of COVID19, it proved to be just that.

The academic year got off to a positive start when following a rigorous recruitment procedure Helen Manners-Vaughan was appointed at School Business Manager. Helen had previously worked at Ninelands and lives in Garforth. Having served her notice she officially joined the Ninelands team on 2/12/2019

This year the Resources Committee have been responsible for maintaining a strategic overview of a variety of areas including:

School Policies

Staff Capability, Work and Families, Data Protection, Health & Safety, Freedom of Information, Charging and Remissions, Governor Expenses, Staff Capability, Phased Retirement/Flexible Working up to Retirement Policy/Procedure, Managing Attendance Policy.

Premises Issues

Major projects have included continued work on the window replacement programme and the development of the nursery play area using the grant funding from LNER.

COVID19

The impact of the pandemic on running the school has been considerable and additional responsibilities deal with by this committee have included keeping up to date with rapidly changing risk assessments, and overview of how additional staffing and health and safety costs have impacted on the school budget.

Financial Management

The budget is approved by the full governing body following recommendations from this subcommittee. The committee regularly monitors financial status against the planned budget. Best value reviews and benchmarking were carried out on ICT support and catering provision. Consideration was held of charging for lettings, school meals and music lessons.

In line with the school priority of dealing with the predicted deficit budget the committee has worked closely with the Senior Leadership Team(SLT) to consider a range of possibilities. Considerable research and development was carried out by the SLT before a proposal around Extended Services was brought for governor consideration. This proposal not only dealt with the budget situation but plotted a positive improvement and development journey for the school over coming years. After careful scrutiny governors approved this proposal.

Extended Services

Despite the constraints of moving such a big project forward during the pandemic, school staff with the backing and support of governors have rolled out a major new venture for Ninelands by taking childcare services in-house from September 2020. This is the first phase of the proposed Extended

Services development agreed by governors. Already the impact on the school has been positive, and not only in mitigating the projected budget deficit.

Regular Agenda Items Have Included

Accident analysis, staff attendance data, staffing and recruitment, school visits

Monitoring Visits

COVID19 meant that the format of monitoring visits changed to being online meetings, but governors with specific responsibilities such as Pupil Premium, and PE Grant Funding have held discussions with the appropriate members of staff and where possible reviewed documentary evidence before reporting back to the committee. All spend has been found to be appropriate and no significant areas of concern reported.

Governors responsible for the pay and appraisals met with the Head Teacher virtually to confirm that fair and robust process was followed. Some changes were made to the process mid-cycle in line with government and Leeds City Council guidance due to the impact of the pandemic on the ways staff were working in school. Governors have agreed to review sample documentation when it is appropriate to visit school again.

The annual Schools Financial Value Standard return was completed. Governors responsible for the SFVS were able to review a range of supporting evidence to ensure that the self-assessment was a true and fair reflection.

Teaching and Learning

The teaching and learning sub-committee, and other members of the full governing body, met in October 2019 to consider the new Ofsted framework and formulate the priorities for the strategic planning for teaching and learning for 2019/20 in light of the new framework. Identified priorities included evaluating the existing curriculum and investing in developing subject leaders, a review of assessment and marking and feedback procedures in light of the new framework but with staff wellbeing and work life balance as an identified priority. Governors also attended the whole school Ofsted training session, alongside school staff in Feb 2020.

At the February meeting the T&L sub-committee received updates against the identified priorities, including on the new assessment framework, the development of subject leaders and the curriculum review. Alongside this governors reviewed the progress data against targets as is normal practise throughout the academic year.

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that a whole new set of priorities emerged in terms of teaching and learning and the sub committee move into the 2020-21 academic year monitoring the curriculum offer, the new assessment regime and also the remote learning offer.

1) Monitoring Visits

Jan 2020- Teaching and learning SIP review

2) Data monitoring

Governors regularly review targets and progress towards those targets across all Key stages.

Pupil Support Committee

During the 2019-20 academic year, the Pupil Support Committee considered several issues pertinent to the effective running of the school. This included: monitoring of attendance, behaviour and attitudes of pupils; reviewing and approving the school's Behaviour Policy; reviewing and approving the school's Attendance Policy; reviewing and approving the school's Safeguarding Policy; reviewing and approving the school's Complaints Policy and reviewing and approving the school's Food Policy. The Committee also considered relevant issues to the School Improvement Plan, including: monitoring SEND provision; reviewing and monitoring pupil wellbeing practices in school, including the school's achievement of Health Schools and MindMate accreditation; and reviewing feedback from stakeholder engagement, including staff and parents. The Committee also considered and monitored an ongoing issue regarding toilet training in the Nursery provision, successfully resolved by being clearer about expectations with parents prior to starting. At the Committee's meeting in February 2020, it also heard about the school's response to Coronavirus and how the Head and Senior Leadership Team were responding to rapidly changing DfE and Public Health England Guidance. At this stage, we did not know what was to come, with schools closed in a National Lockdown in March 2020. As a consequence, the Committee did not meet again before the end of the academic year.