

Clarendon Governing Body Annual Report 2019 – 20

This document provides a brief summary of the work of the Governing Body over the last school year. The governors are a group of volunteers, with a range of skills and experience, who give up their time to get to know the school well and to both support the staff and monitor the quality of its work through a series of meetings, committees and, in ideal circumstances, visits. We all undertake training to ensure that we are properly equipped for our roles and also, once established in our roles, take on a special area of interest as link governors. As a group we work with the headteacher and school leadership team and we have overall responsibility for the following three areas:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction at Clarendon;
- Holding the headteacher and senior leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and for the effective and efficient performance management of staff;
- Overseeing the financial performance of Clarendon and making sure its money is well spent.

Meetings

It has proved to be another busy year for governors, but a very different one with the impact of the Covid Pandemic and the necessity for the school and the governing body to change their ways of working at very short notice. This inevitably affected the development plans that were in place. However, although many special schools closed entirely and the average national attendance reaching only 20% by the end of July Clarendon, by comparison remained open to some pupils throughout the Spring and Summer terms, very quickly provided a combination of home packs and online learning to support pupils not in school and by the end of the summer term had been able to offer places to all families wanting one with attendance at 70%. This was a real testament to our dedicated staff team with whom it is a real privilege to work.

Over this year there have been some changes to the governing body. At the end of the year there were two retirements. We said goodbye to Yvonne Coney, our teacher governor and also Bob Harvey, Chair of the finance Committee and who has been a valued member of the Board for more than 20 years. We are grateful to them both for their contributions. In 2020 we have welcomed three new governors to the board and look forward to working with them. James Straker-Nesbitt has started to learn the ropes on the finance committee, Nick Travers is serving on the Pay and Personnel Committee and Nandita Sinha has volunteered to fill our parent governor vacancy and has joined our pupil focussed committee.

Planning for the new year started with a strategy meeting involving both school leaders and governors which fed into a school development plan. Priorities included further development of the curriculum and planning for wider resources and provision for pupils and their learning, improving staff wellbeing and the building of stronger community links now we are settled into our new buildings. While some work has progressed on these initial improvement plans they were rather overtaken by the global pandemic. Governor visits to the school were halted with lockdown and all meetings moved online. Governors also formed an extra Covid Working Party that has met fortnightly with the Headteacher to provide a sounding board, discuss changing guidance, scrutinise risk registers and monitor pupil engagement and

learning as well as staff wellbeing. They also arranged letters thanking staff for their outstanding dedication and hard work under very difficult circumstances. Towards the end of the summer term they supported the headteacher in the planning towards full opening in the new school year, alongside the contingency planning necessitated by the current circumstances. Throughout the safety and wellbeing of both pupils and staff has been the highest priority for all of us involved.

Committees

Pay and Personnel

Members of this committee has been actively involved in contributing to and scrutinising the large raft of Trust HR policies and then monitoring their implementation within school. A new administrative post at the Gateway was agreed and recruited to this year and quickly proved an invaluable addition to the staff team. The governors recognise that a skilled and effective staff team is invaluable in ensuring that our offer to pupils is outstanding and it is the Pay and Personnel Committee that monitor staff attendance and wellbeing; the teaching observations and wider appraisal process and the provision for training that happens both within school and externally. There has been a gradual increase in specialist posts at both school and trust level that are benefitting pupils but also providing opportunities for staff development.

In this most unusual of years there has been an adjustment to a mix of home and school working for staff as well as the adjustment to a significant level of remote and online learning and the committee has enquired about the monitoring of this and the support being provided to staff throughout this time. Staff recruitment processes also changed through this period and, with additional safeguards in place, interviewing for vacant posts had to move online. Some governors were involved in these online panels including the successful appointment to the new secondary assistant head post.

Pupil Achievement and Wellbeing

This year the two pupil committees were amalgamated. It is hoped that this will provide a more holistic view for governors of the offer to pupils both academically and pastorally. Academically this committee looks in detail at pupil targets, results and the programmes of interventions put in place to give pupils extra support where it is needed. This includes monitoring the effectiveness of special government funding like the Pupil Premium Grant to support pupils who might be disadvantaged. The aim is to ensure that the school continues to set and achieve challenging targets and to ensure that all pupils reach their potential. This committee also looks at the curriculum in its broadest sense (academic, pastoral and extra-curricular) to ensure that it is well tailored for the actual pupil cohorts at any one time and that pupils are supported in being able and ready to learn.

While the changes resulting from the pandemic both in and out of school have been difficult for everyone the needs of Clarendon and Gateway pupils mean that many of them have particular difficulties adjusting to such significant change. Staff across the Clarendon provisions have gone out of their way to ensure at least weekly contact with all pupils to monitor and support well-being. Practical support such as the loan of chrome books or providing paper-based home learning packs has been made where necessary and pupil need has been a major factor in the offer of places in school whenever there has been capacity. As always governors have been impressed by how well staff know the pupils and are able to tailor what is offered to their often very individual needs.

In school we are all aware that conditions over much of this school year will inevitably have had an impact on pupil progress and learning and plans have already been made to implement baseline assessments in the Autumn term and space made in the timetabling and staffing arrangements to ensure the capacity for a wide range of catch-up interventions as required.

Finance

In the current difficult financial climate for schools and extra financial responsibilities for schools that used to be met by central government this committee carefully scrutinises the school's funding; looks for areas where savings might be made and ensures that our spending is wisely and carefully targeted. They also examine the financial checks and balances, ensuring that they are all in place as set out in the finance policy. Under and overspending against the planned budget is scrutinised at each meeting. The committee also measures our spending against that of other similar schools as an external check of the efficiency of our systems. An extra necessary but un-budgeted expense this year has been the extra cleaning protocols that have had to be implemented. Forward planning for the year ahead is always complicated by the late confirmation of new pupil places which remains out of our control.

Premises Health, and Safety

This committee has continued its oversight of the risk assessments, snagging and minor remodelling at all the school sites. However, walk arounds and much onsite work has been curtailed through the Covid Pandemic. There have been supplemental Covid risk assessments needing scrutiny as a result of the pandemic. The committee has particularly focussed on the arrangements for PPE, hand-washing, sanitising and cleaning across the sites.

Conclusion

The Clarendon commitment to pupils, their learning and wellbeing has been exemplified by the staff response to the changes imposed by the pandemic and the very rapid pivot to provide alternative means of learning both in school and at home. Their exceptionally hard work has been appreciated within the local authority as well as by parents and governors.

Our ongoing commitment as a governing body is to continue to support and challenge our colleagues within school to aspire to the Clarendon aim to be a centre of excellence where all pupils are supported and challenged in all circumstances to:

- Achieve their full potential in their academic, social, creative, personal, physical and moral development
- Grow in confidence and become as independent as possible
- Make a positive contribution to the school and the wider community, in which they are valued as individuals

The Clarendon Governing Body

Primesh Kalia, Keith Tysoe, Yvonne Coney, Jo Dixon, Robert Harvey, John Kipps, Lindsay Patience, Greg Ross-Sampson, Nandita Sinha & Nick Travers

Below is a summary table of the responsibilities taken on, training undertaken as well as visits and attendance for all Clarendon governors over the last year. It should be noted that from March governor visits to the school were halted by the pandemic and there was similarly an impact on the availability of training courses to governors with many cancelled and only a limited online offer.

Governors	Term Expires	Committees (Chairs in Bold)	Link Roles	Visits	Training	Main Meeting Attendance **	Committee Attendance
Parent							
Nandita Sinha (Joined November 2019)	27/11/2023	Pupil Achievement & Wellbeing				50%	100%
Greg Ross Sampson	21/01/2023	Premises, Health & Safety Pay & Personnel	School Council Primary Centre Secondary Centre	1	Getting to Grips with Governance (Intensive) Performance Management of the Headteacher Leading in Governance	100%	75%
LEA							
Prem Kalia	30/11/2023	Premises, Health & Safety	Premises, Health & Safety			75%	33%

(Co-Chair)		Pay & Personnel Pupil Achievement & Wellbeing	Safeguarding				
Staff							
John Kipps (Headteacher)		Pay & Personnel Finance Premises, Health & Safety Pupil Achievement & Wellbeing				100%	100%
Yvonne Coney (Resigned July 2020)	17/10/2022	Pay and Personnel Pupil Achievement & Wellbeing			What do Inspectors Look for on Inspection & Implications on Governance	75%	60%
Co-Opted							
Jo Dixon (Vice Chair)	26/01/2021	Pay & Personnel Pupil Achievement & Wellbeing	Pay & Personnel	4	Asking Challenging & Constructive Questions on Key Ofsted Judgements Kingston & Richmond Joint Governors Partnership Meeting	100%	100%

Robert Harvey (Resigned July 2020)	26/01/2021	Finance Pupil Achievement & Wellbeing	Finance Inc. Administration	1		100%	40%
Keith Tysoe (Co-Chair)	31/07/2023	Pupil Achievement & Wellbeing	PPG Monitoring Pupil Achievement & Wellbeing		Kingston & Richmond Joint Governors Partnership Meeting	100%	50%
Nick Travers (Joined December 2019)	16/12/2023	Pay & Personnel				100%	50%
Lindsay Patience	21/01/2023	Finance	Gateway			75%	100%
Associate Members							
Jayne Gray (Gateway)	16/10/2021	Pupil Achievement & Wellbeing		N/A		N/A	
Andrea Oliver (Resigned July 2020)	01/09/2020	Finance Pay & Personnel Premises, Health & Safety		N/A		N/A	

Angela Mason	16/10/2021	Finance Pupil Achievement & Wellbeing		N/A		N/A	
Rosemary Clarke	16/10/2021	Pupil Achievement & Wellbeing		N/A		N/A	
Jamie Straker- Nesbit (Joined December 2019)	16/12/2023	Finance		N/A		N/A	

**** Includes Strategy Day and all Full GB meetings**