



Annual statement of governance, July 2020

Dear staff, pupils, parents, carers and wider Worplesdon Primary School community,

I wrote to you at the end of January 2020, on behalf of the Board, with an 'interim statement of governance'. While it certainly was possible, even likely, for Ofsted to visit before the end of the Academic Year, and reports of epidemics in more than one country were growing, I did not foresee that we would move in such quick succession from one to the other. Like many of you, I am sure, I could not have completely understood the impact of worldwide events on our children, families and loved ones.

It is therefore under somewhat different circumstances that I am writing to you now, as promised, with our annual statement of governance. Despite the challenges, however, our fundamental principles at Worplesdon have remained unchanged, and the delivery of education to these principles by staff and leadership has not faltered.

Worplesdon Primary School wants the best possible education for each and every child at our school. **Our mission is to develop a love of learning and life**, which we will achieve through building resilience, inspiring curiosity, developing teamwork and independence, and instilling empathy in our pupils.

In this context, and in line with statutory guidance, the Board is responsible in helping to achieve this by:

- Ensuring the clarity of our vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the school's leadership to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of our staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Before talking further about the specifics of governance during this year, there are two main items that demand special mention. The first is of course the Ofsted visit on the 28th January. Always accompanied by a certain degree of nervous apprehension given the very public nature of the external review, this year we have additionally seen the introduction of a new 'framework' on which schools are judged. The Board of course had high confidence and trust in leadership and staff, and so we were absolutely delighted when the report was published. "Learning excites pupils." read the opening paragraph. "Leaders' work to ensure that pupils have the best possible school experience is appreciated by parents and carers. There is a special atmosphere of care and respect. Staff feel well supported by leaders. They are proud to be part of the team."

There was so much to celebrate in the report's findings, and of course some indications of where we can strive to be better still. To thank all staff, governors planned and organised an "Evening of Celebration" for everyone. We assigned catering detail between us, arranged music for entertainment, and on the week of the event, sadly and with heavy heart made the only possible decision to indefinitely postpone – due to Covid-19.

Since that time the school has remained open to both vulnerable children and children of Key Workers. Systems of education have been reinvented on a weekly basis, and I have written to you separately regarding the school's response, and risk assessments, regarding the pandemic. The school remained open during Easter, and made arrangements during the May half term. Right up to the last day of term the school, its leaders and staff, have driven every ounce of nerve and sinew to continue to deliver the best possible education to our community, and for that they deserve more respect and appreciation than the Board could ever convey in a letter. We are truly indebted to the teaching profession up and down the country, but especially so here at Worplesdon Primary School.



I know parents and carers feel the same. The recent parental survey was overwhelmingly positive regarding the schooling experiences, even during such a challenging time. I would like to convey my thanks to all parents and carers, for all of your support with home schooling and in supporting the school. Even where our decisions on a return to school have not included all children, as we would all like, I believe we have taken the right decisions to return as many, as safely, as possible.

Operating a school in the context of Covid-19 has of course had a huge impact on governance. We were immediately advised to stop visits to school, and for governance meetings to work from a reduced agenda, focussing on business pertaining to covid-19 only. While recognising the intent behind the advice, governance has continued largely unchanged. We already had the technology in place to support virtual meetings, and our processes regarding many aspects such as financial probity could be discharged online. School visits were of course stopped and it was no longer possible to 'see' the process of education occurring in the same way. As learning moved online, so too did some governor activity; we were happy to try to put faces and personality to the Board so that all could get to know us a little better by recording stories for both Key Stage 1 and 2, with the Gruffalo and Dr Seuss. Do have a look on Google Classroom if you missed it, it might give you a laugh.

Fun activities aside, this year has seen a marked change on the governing Board itself, and I would like to finally thank the new and existing Board members. As volunteers, governors have given up a huge amount of time to provide **critical** advice and guidance to school leadership and strategy, and it is this team spirit that we see reflected throughout the organisation as a whole. I am proud to be part of that team that has stepped up even while their own employment and family circumstances have impacted them greatly.

This leads me on to our accountability as a Board. We set out what we were planning to achieve and the steps we were taking to achieve them. It was only during the last term that priorities changed to support the Government's response to the pandemic. I am therefore keeping this annual statement consistent with our plan for the first two terms, but deviating to explain our activities during the final term:

- 1 The annual objectives of Governance as agreed in the SDP, what we have achieved to date, and the impact of any actions taken
- 2 A review of Key Performance Indicators that we are using to judge our own effectiveness in 2019/2020
- 3 Planned objectives for the start of the 2020/2021 Academic Year

It is important to note that governors, and the school, will be starting next year with a 'bridging plan'. This plan will not follow our usual three-year cycle, but will be specifically designed to support the full reopening of school, a focus on pupil wellbeing, and identification of how curriculum plans and learning need to adapt as the assessment of learning over the past three months becomes clear. Once the school has more clarity on the continued impacts of the pandemic, it will complete the planning in a multiyear cycle for the future.

If I have not already made the point strongly enough, this has been quite an exceptional year. The Board is proud of our entire community from Mrs O'Brien, through the leadership team and **all** staff, and through them the superb relationships with parents and the community. The Board was bitterly disappointed to see the wind stolen from the



sails of celebration for staff on a superb Ofsted report due to the timing of Covid-19, but we remain committed to delivering this as soon as it can be enjoyed in the manner it deserves.

On behalf of the Board I wish you all an incredibly well-deserved break with family and friends, in whatever manner you are able to spend it. I look forward to a rejuvenated start to 2020/2021!

If you have any questions regarding this statement, or Governance at Worplesdon Primary School in general please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Matthew Woodruff
Chair of Governors

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1 The annual objectives of Governance as agreed in the SDP, what we have achieved to date, and the impact of any actions taken			
#	Objective	Action taken	Impact
1	Revise Governance structures, Board Meetings, Focus Groups and working practices to ensure best practice nationally and effective discharge of statutory duties.	<p><u>Autumn Term:</u> New structures have been introduced based on separately chaired 'Working groups' working outside of meetings in the areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources (Finance, Staffing and Facilities) Pupils, Families and the Community Curriculum and Assessment <p>National best practice has been leveraged through attendance at regional (West Midlands) Department for Education conferences, as well as Surrey based training and events.</p> <p><u>Spring Term:</u> All focus groups contributed to the new annual plan of work that specific the groups deliverables and activity during the year. Governors training log provides evidence of appropriate training courses attended.</p> <p><u>Summer Term:</u> The planned self-assessment on the new structure effectiveness and impact and take forward recommendations for 2020/2021 has not occurred. However, the Board had an exemplary response to moving meetings online and not only discharging a full set of duties, but increased the participation in focus group and meetings relating to specific Covid responses. Production, with the school, of the Covid-19 Risk Assessment, and ensuring compliance with Governmental guidance.</p>	<p>Board meetings are operationally effective leaving more time focussing on strategic matters and those directly impacting pupil outcomes.</p> <p>Roles are clearer which ensures that no statutory duty is overlooked.</p>



2	<p>Implement succession planning, annual self-review, skills audit and training and induction to ensure both capacity and capability within the GB.</p>	<p><u>Autumn Term:</u> We have reformed the Board to include not only Chair and Vice Chair, but three additional Chairs of specific focus areas. Succession planning is actively discussed, and forms part of the new annual self-review. All governors have completed a new, online, self-review framework based on best practice from the National Governors Association (NGA). A repeatable, online, skills audit has been built and completed by all, with output available for training needs analysis. A new Induction process has been written and is now available to new governors appointed this term. A new training log process has been established online, and access to high quality training from both Surrey's 'Better Governor' and the NGA online is now provided, in addition to in person training options by Simply4S Governor Services.</p> <p><u>Spring Term:</u> Board delighted to have welcomed James Faulkner as a co-opted governor. James brings marketing and brand management experience from Apple and other international brands.</p> <p><u>Summer Term:</u> The Board completed governor self-assessment and Chairs 360 review processes as planned, and shall use these for CPD and roles and responsibilities planning in September for the 2020/21 academic year. 12-month review following external 2019 Governance review has been planned with external advisors, subject to Resource group approval for September. Governance succession policy written and ratified.</p>	<p>Skills audit has already led to the targeting of advertising for new governors successfully with skills in data, and experienced headship. Governor induction and training plans can now help new and existing governors to further develop their required skill set.</p>
3	<p>Implement an annual plan of work, including the strategic monitoring and assessment of the SDP, school visits and policy implementation ensure the school's performance is fully supported and held to account against Ofsted criteria and financial benchmarks.</p>	<p><u>Autumn Term:</u> Both the 'Resources' and 'Pupils, Families & Community' focus groups have contributed their annual plan of work. Monitoring of the SDP has started with governor school visits on Behaviour and Attitudes. The termly Safeguarding governance visit has taken place. The implementation of policies according to schedule has been verified – through school visits and interviews with relevant staff. Financial Monitoring has been conducted both at Board meetings and via attendance in school.</p> <p><u>Spring Term:</u> Completed the SDP monitoring baseline visits for Quality of Education, Personal Development, Leadership and Management, and EYFS monitoring. Finalised all new working group objectives. All policy reviews completed and ratified.</p> <p><u>Summer Term:</u></p>	<p>Confidence that the schools financial planning is robust, and framework is in place to ensure value for money. Policy review demonstrates compliance in implementation. SDP monitoring confirms progress against SDP success criteria.</p>



		<p>The final SDP monitoring visits across all sections of the SDP were not able to be completed due to Covid-19. Safeguarding monitoring visits were, however, completed and documented.</p> <p>Policy implementation review was completed according to schedule online, however, this related to reviews of policy identified in the Covid-19 risk assessment.</p>	
4	<p>Implement mechanisms for transparency, accountability and continuous improvement of impact of Governance through (bi)annual statement, key performance indicators and 360 review.</p>	<p><u>Autumn Term:</u> A new 360-degree review for the Chair of Governors has been established and trailed. It is based on best practice from the National Governors Association. Key performance indicators have been defined for monitoring both the schools progress and governance continuous improvement. Governance development targets have been included in the School Development Plan.</p> <p><u>Spring Term:</u> The first bi-annual statement of governance was issued and progress was monitored against key performance indicators.</p> <p><u>Summer Term:</u> External review of actions completed since 2019 review and next steps has not yet been completed but the Board has engaged with the external advisors to plan the activity and further to implement specific coaching and mentoring in September. Published Annual Statement of Governance (this document). Online 'governor reach out' with the production of two story-telling videos for children in KS1 and 2.</p>	<p>Leadership in governance is better understood and more distributive / shared leading to better integration with school monitoring. Parents and the wider community will understand better the role and impact of governance.</p>

2 A review of Key Performance Indicators to judge effectiveness in 2019/2020			
	Category	Indicators / Evidence	Current Status
1	SDP Objectives for Governance	<p>Effective structures, Capacity and Capability, Plan of work, Accountability & External review</p> <p>360 degree review of governance evidence.</p> <p>Ofsted inspection "Governors have firm ambitions for the school. They know what the school does well and where improvements are needed. The chair of governors has ensured that, as a team, the governing body is purposeful in its work"</p>	Green
2	Quality of Education	<p>Teaching & Learning observations, End of Year Expectations met & external audits. Ofsted inspection and report. Covid-19 disruption in summer term, spring internal data suggests targets could be met, further 'bridge planning' required Autumn Term as per National picture.</p>	Green



3	Behaviour and Attitudes	Observed behaviour, Attendance & Persistent Absence. External safeguarding audit. External Pupil Premium Audit. Ofsted Inspection report and verbatim comment to leadership.	Green
4	Personal Development	Parental questionnaire & External audit. Ofsted Inspection report. School Improvement Partner scrutiny.	Green
5	Leadership and Management	Accurate SEF, collaborative SDP, Staff workload and wellbeing. Parental survey feedback and Head Teacher 360 degree feedback.	Green

Key: Green –objective is achieved, with evidence Amber – progress made but not all targets have been met Red –objective not achieved

3 Planned objectives for the start of the 2020/2021 Academic Year

#	Objective	Planned Action
1	Plan and deliver governance support and critique for the school 'Bridge Plan' ensuring it is clear, measurable and delivers its stated outcomes.	<u>Autumn Term:</u> Participate over two days in school Inset for governance kick off and 'Bridge' planning. Review during Full Governing Board meetings when Bridge plan finalised.
2	Maintain and embed changes to governance structures and practice, including focus groups. Further enhance distributive leadership.	<u>Autumn Term:</u> September review of governor self-review and re-appointment of focus group chairs and roles and responsibilities. Identify and grow leadership through coaching.
3	Further develop the annual plan of work to ensure the school's performance is held to account against Ofsted criteria and financial benchmarks.	<u>Autumn Term:</u> Consolidate focus group activity into a single annual plan. Define success criteria and new Key Performance Indicators, especially in light of continuing Covid-19 situation.
4	Develop 'outward facing schools' agenda through school/ governance outreach and participation in national events.	<u>Autumn Term:</u> Identify and outreach to local schools to share governance practice. Plan engagement of governors in national best practice events.