

Governors Impact Statement 2019/20

The Governing Body of Shalford Infant and Nursery School is required to publish details of its activities over the school year. This statement is an opportunity for Governors to share with the wider community how our decisions and discussions benefit the vision and strategic direction of the school; in this case, over the academic year 2019/20.

During the course of this year, the School became a full member of the Athena Schools Trust. Although our Governing Body maintains a high level of strategic responsibility it has altered our duties and scope; details of how Governance works within the Trust can be found [here](#).

Shalford's Governing Body at full capacity has 10 members. During 2019/20 it consisted of:

- Headteacher Governor Mrs Dutton
- 1 Staff governor Miss Beswick
- 2 Parent governors Henrietta Stock (Vice-chair);
Charles Maguire (Resigned Oct 2019)
Karen Brooks (November 2019)
- 6 Community Governors Sarah Hardcastle (Chair)
Andrew Gumbiti-Zimuto
David Gleadhill
Ian Springett
Rev Sarah Lloyd (September 2019)
Vacancy
- Clerk to the Governing Body Helen Evison

For Governor attendance records please see table on the Governor's page on the School's website.

Exceptional circumstances in 2020

For the first six months of this academic year the Governing Body worked to fulfil its statutory functions (referenced below) until March 2020. Covid 19 brought challenges unforeseen by any of us and in the space of just a few weeks meant leaders in education had to deal with enormous amounts of extra guidance and activity to maintain the safety of our children and the quality of education.

As a Governing Body we took advice from Surrey County Council, Athena Schools Trust and the Department of Education to understand how best to support Mrs Dutton and her staff team during this period.

The Chair of Governors and Mrs Dutton held regular meetings throughout; full Governing Body meetings have been held virtually and continued to give all Governors the opportunity to understand how the well-being of children and staff as well as educational offer was being maintained without face to face contact.

Our role was also to work alongside the school to ensure the School's risk register and health and safety guidance were regularly updated and adhered to. The Governor responsible for monitoring health and safety has been continually involved in this role.

The Governing Body was assured by the thorough, detailed and clear communication which came from Mrs Dutton to the entire community throughout this period.

During a 'normal' academic year, we meet as a Full Governing Body four times and also have two sub committees; the Learning and Pupil Welfare Committee and the Finance and Resources Committee.

Our statutory core functions are:

1. Setting vision, ethos and strategic direction

Our vision, "Enjoying Learning Together" is the golden thread running through everything we do at Shalford Infant and Nursery School and the Governors along with the staff, are passionate about this. We constantly review our strategic goals and look for ways to ensure the best learning experiences for children attending our school now and in the years ahead.

At the start of this academic year, the Governing Body's strategic focus was ensuring the School became a full member of the Athena Schools Trust joining the other four founding schools; Guildford County School, Pirbright Village Primary School, Northmead Junior School and Stoughton Infant School. This was successfully achieved and our focus became supporting the smooth transition for the staff and children.

This for the first time, included Acorn Class, which became our fourth year group at Shalford as we took on the nursery. This again was the realisation of a strategic vision to offer nursery education with Shalford's ethos and values to the local community.

2. Holding the Headteacher to account

An ongoing priority for Governors is fulfilling our statutory role to monitor and evaluate the progress the school is making and act as a source of challenge and support to Mrs Dutton and her team.

The Chair and the Headteacher meet regularly and continue to work closely throughout the initial period of 2019-20 and during the school closures as a result of Covid-19. This results in effective communication between leadership roles and a clear understanding of responsibilities; the operational one of the Headteacher and the strategic one of the governors. They have a very good working relationship; one that is open, honest, mutually respectful with a shared passion for education and the success of the school.

Through the full governing body meetings and the smaller committee meetings all Governors work to support and strengthen the school's leadership by holding the headteacher to account for the day-to-day running of our school, including for example, budget management and the performance management of staff.

Governors who conduct the annual Headteacher's Appraisal and Review in the first term of the year are fully trained to ensure effective performance management. All objectives are linked to the School Development Plan and the Headteacher does the same in the objectives she then sets for her team.

At each Full Governing Body meeting this year, the Headteacher reported to governors on all aspects of the school's work. From March onwards, she was managing incredibly complicated and very fast changing guidelines from the Department for Education as to how to respond to the Covid crisis. In their statutory capacity, Governors question the details and data thereby effectively holding the Headteacher to account, in normal times, for improving pupil and staff performance and after March

this year offering support to Mrs Dutton and her staff and the wider Trust community of schools in their effective implementation of the guidelines and provision of educational offer for the children.

The main responsibility for this sits with the Learning and Pupil Welfare Committee and their activities are detailed below.

3. Learning and Pupil Welfare Committee

The LPW committee last year was made up of five governors including Mrs Dutton and Miss Beswick. It met once in each term to discuss, question and monitor a range of issues relating to the childrens' learning and welfare.

The Terms of Reference are reviewed and re-established at the start of the year – allowing us to reconsider whether they are still relevant to the wider aims and ambitions of the school set out in the School Development Plan and with the anticipated change to academy status.

Our prime responsibility is to monitor standards and progress in all areas of the school's work relating to the children and their learning. This includes analysing all performance data and target setting and reviewing the curriculum, social and personal development of every child. Our responsibility is not to set or influence how that curriculum is structure or delivered, our role is to question the success of the delivery and to make sure the appropriate policies and structures are in place and applied to enable it to happen in the most creative, exciting and safe environment for the children.

In the first LPW meeting of the year (November 2019) Governor's analyse a data dashboard allowing us to compare the previous Year 2 cohort's results in relation to previous year groups at Shalford and against national outcomes. Governors question the results for all groups of children including SEND, those in receipt of Pupil Premium and those who were expected to reach greater depth. The responsibility of the committee members is to question all areas to ensure outcomes for the children are as the school predicted. We look for any trends in the data and discuss actions taken to resolve issues for individual children and discuss provision for children where needed and staffing arrangements and implications.

We were very pleased to minute in the meeting that the results were well above national average. Governors acknowledged results for children needing support showed real progress and were a good reflection of targeted support put in place by the school ensured each child made progress.

The Committee also reviewed reports prepared for Governors by Shalford's subject leaders. These reports set out the focus for the implementation of the curriculum across the school and how its impact will be assessed and monitored. These reports allow Governors to hold the school to account to question the effectiveness of operational decisions and ensure the staff have the necessary support and resources in place to fulfil their ambitions for the children's learning.

Our responsibilities also covered pupil welfare in terms of attendance and safeguarding. Through termly safeguarding newsletters from the headteacher and updates at LPW we are able to ensure that we are up to date with the latest DfE safeguarding guidance and requirements.

4. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

The Finance and Resources sub-committee meets twice a term with Mrs Dutton and Mrs Banks, the School Business Manager. We work together to ensure the school is using its funding in the most efficient way. At each meeting, one of the main activities we undertake is to review the spend-to-date against the annual budget. In November each year we review a draft budget for the following financial year then review it in more detail ahead of approval in April. In April we also review the budget for the next 3 years in order to put each year in context of where we see the school heading in the future, linked to the school development plan.

One of the challenges during this academic year was for the School to undertake a successful transition to the financial structure of AST. This was reported back to the committee and Governors had regular opportunity to ensure Mrs Dutton and Mrs Banks were well supported by the operations team at AST. It also meant Governors had to learn the new reporting processes and systems. The transition for staff and the school has been a success and Governors now have to ensure Shalford gets the best value for money out of its relationship with the Athena Schools Trust.

Another area of focus for the committee up until Covid-19 was the successful addition of the Nursery and to carefully monitor the financial position. This required the School Business Manager to give full and detailed reports to each committee meeting for Governors to analyse the financial commitments of incorporating Acorn class into the school against raising funds through maintaining and increasing numbers of children attending.

A further area of scrutiny this year has been the financial impact of Covid-19 and the unexpected effect on the school's budget. At the time of writing, this doesn't appear to be as significant as originally anticipated and full analysis will only be possible at the beginning of the next academic year.

We also take care of Premises and maintain a Premises Plan to track work required and conduct regular Health & Safety and premises walk arounds.

Other key activities conducted by the Governing Body:

Monitoring

At the start of each academic year, Governors review their roles and responsibilities. As a result each governor is allocated an area of the school's procedures or curriculum to monitor progress throughout the year. They meet with the relevant staff leader as part of this monitoring role. They also visit the school to observe and gather evidence. They talk to teachers, support staff, the leadership team as well as the pupils and report back to the relevant committee.

Although these meetings continued as planned until March 2020, at that time all in school monitoring ended. Governors were well supported during this time by emergency planning meetings held by Surrey County Council. These meetings laid out expectations of Governors during the pandemic and emphasised the value of good Governance at this stage was to support the headteacher and staff in any way requested as the senior leadership team managed the closure of school and provisions of learning for our young children in their home settings.

Training & self-evaluation

All governors receive induction training when they start. In line with our ethos of “Enjoying Learning Together” we continue to learn and train to ensure we are qualified to conduct our roles effectively. AST provide Governors with a full schedule of training throughout the academic year. The Governing Body decided at the beginning of the year that each Governor is expected to attend at least two training sessions per year. Training continued via zoom after March.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors will also be carrying out annual self-evaluation assessments with each member of the Governing Body to assess their impact and establish personal targets for the next year.

Policies

Governors review all relevant policies on a programmed basis to ensure that all guidance is current and up to date. Policies are all available on the school website. The Governing Body’s responsibility to reviewing policies has altered slightly since becoming a member of the Trust. The definition of these responsibilities can be found on the AST website.

Attendance

We have an extremely supportive and dedicated Governing Body with an excellent attendance record. We have never had to cancel meetings because we have not been ‘quorate’ (the minimum number of Governors needed in attendance so that legal decisions can be made). An attendance record can be seen on the school website.