

## Governors Impact Statement September 2020 – July 21

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 2020/21.

During the course of this year, the School continued to work within 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); (Resigned May 2021)  
Karen Brooks (Vice-Chair from May 2021)  
Dominique Vincent (Appointed June 2021)
- 6 Community Governors Sarah Hardcastle (Chair)  
Andrew Gumbiti-Zimuto (Resigned July 2021 to become Associate Member)  
David Gleadhill (Term of office ended July 2021)  
Ian Springett  
Rev Sarah Lloyd (September 2019)  
Natalie Preston (Resigned July 2021)  
David Semple (Associate Member resigned March 2021)
- 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 throughout 2020-2021

Throughout this academic year the school's normal procedures were severely disrupted by Covid 19.

As a Governing Body we continued to take 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 and committee 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 as the community managed the changes from face to face to online learning.

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.

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

We have met as a Full Governing Body four times in our scheduled meetings and for a number of extraordinary meetings in relation to the proposed merger between AST and GEP. We also have two sub committees; the Learning and Pupil Welfare Committee which meets once a term and the Finance and Resources Committee which meets twice each term.

**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 regularly 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.

Throughout this year the focus of the Governing Body has been to support the school leadership and staff as they managed the challenges of Covid 19 and worked tirelessly to maintain our children’s learning and well-being throughout.

We have also continued to focus on the inclusion and development of Acorn Class, which became our fourth-year group at Shalford in 2019. Taking on what was Shalford pre-school was the realisation of a strategic vision to offer nursery education with Shalford’s ethos and values to the local community. Embedding Acorn Class as part of the school has been a challenge during Covid 19 and it will continue to be a strategic priority in the next few years.

Another strategic focus throughout this academic year has been to investigate the possibility of merging Athena Schools Trust (AST) with the Guilford Education Partnership (GEP). A number of Governors, Headteachers and Trustees from AST worked together to investigate the educational, financial and strategic potential of the merger. Our Governors were informed throughout the investigations and engaged in the consultation process to represent the interests of our community at Shalford. The merger was approved and following wider public consultation to March 2021 it was announced the two Trusts would formally merge from September 2021. You can see more information [here](#).

## **2. Holding the Headteacher to account**

The Governing Body’s 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 has been a significant challenge throughout this year.

Regular access to the school to meet with the children and monitor the priorities on the School Development Plan were restricted by Covid-19, however particular roles in the Governing Body such as the Safeguarding Governor and Health and Safety Governor have fulfilled their statutory role throughout and completed school visits where necessary largely out of school hours until the Summer term when the Safeguarding Governor visited with some of the children as part of her data gathering.

The Chair and the Headteacher continued to meet regularly virtually throughout the academic year and in school when Government restrictions allowed. It’s been essential for this to have been a supportive relationship with effective communication 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 safety and success of the school and its children and the well-being of staff during this particularly challenging year.

Through the full governing body meetings and the smaller committee meetings Governors have worked to 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 in this year to offer support in the management of staff who have had to stay separated in bubbles for much of the time.

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

The Headteacher reports to the Governors at each termly meeting updating the Governing Body on all school developments including curriculum and outcomes for the children. Further analysis of the educational provision is carried out in the Learning and Pupil Welfare Committee and their activities are detailed below:

### **3. Learning and Pupil Welfare Committee**

The LPW committee is 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. In a 'normal' year 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.

Additionally, this year the committee focused on the remote learning plan which Mrs Dutton and the staff had to have in place in the first term. The role was to support but continue to monitor the curriculum being offered and consider all stakeholders feedback. All assessments this academic year were cancelled by the DfE due to Covid so there were no officially recorded pupil assessments for the committee to review. However, when pupils returned to school in March 2021 internal assessments carried out and analysed at the April meeting.

The committee monitors the pupil premium expenditure and this year the Covid-19 premium given as a catch-up fund for children affected by the disruption to their education. The impact of this spend will continue to be a focus over the next academic year as Governors and the School assess its longer-term effectiveness.

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.

An area of scrutiny this year has been the financial implications of the proposed AST/GEP merger and the potential changes to the school's annual budget. The committee also focused and closely monitored the financial impact of Covid-19 and the possible effect on the school's budget.

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. The monitoring in our normal format of visits haven't been possible in school this year. Subject leaders' reports have been reviewed at LPW.

Monitoring normally involves meeting 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. This will be started again at the earliest possible opportunity.

### **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 throughout the year.

### **Policies**

Governors review all relevant policies on a programmed basis to ensure that all guidance is current and up to date. Mandatory School 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.

### **Membership & Attendance**

The Governing Body has had an unusual high turnover of members throughout this year. Retention of Governor’s has been a reported challenge experienced nationally put down to the restrictions and pressures of Covid-19. Mrs Dutton and the Chair of Governors work hard to advertise vacancies through local social platforms and national Governor websites. The challenge remains and vacancies will be filled as soon as possible.

Despite the challenges of living and fulfilling a voluntary role during Covid-19 the members we have are extremely supportive and a 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.