

Governors Impact Statement September 2022 – July 2023

The Governing Body of Shalford Infant and Nursery School publishes details of its activities over each school year. The statement is an opportunity for us 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 2022/23.

Shalford's Governing Body at full capacity has 10 members. During 2022/23 it consisted of:

- Headteacher Governor Mrs Dutton
- 1 Staff governor Miss Beswick
- 2 Parent governors Karen Brooks (Vice-Chair)
 Dominique Vincent (switched to Community Gov July 2022)
 Carrie Masson (resigned March 2023)
 Laura Crossley
- 6 Community Governors Sarah Hardcastle (Chair)
 Rev Sarah Lloyd
 Arbaaz Nayeem
 Claire Constant (resigned July 2023)
 Sarah Burchard
 Andrew Gumbiti-Zimuto (Associate Member – resigned July 2023)
- Clerk to the Governing Body: Natasha Brown (from June 2023)

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

All members of our Governing Body are volunteers; staff and parent Governors are elected to their roles while community Governors go through a selection process to comply with best practice, and all Governors undergo safeguarding checks.

Summary academic year 2022-2023

As a member of [Learning Partners Academy Trust](#) the Governors at Shalford are part of the wider governance structure of the organisation. You can find details of how governance works across the Trust [here](#). Each of the 14 Trust schools have a Local Governing Body (LGB) which fulfil activities and responsibilities set out in the Trust's [Scheme of Delegation](#). We are a committee of the Trust but maintain a high level of strategic responsibility for Shalford's future direction and work collaboratively with the leadership and staff at Shalford to provide the best possible educational experience and outcomes for your children.

The core purpose of a Governing Body is threefold:

1. Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school
2. Hold school leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
3. Oversee the school's financial performance of the organisation and make sure its money is well spent

Ensure Clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction:

The focus of the Governing Body during this academic year was supporting Mrs Dutton and her staff to continue the application of the new curriculum. Reviewing best practice and implementation of the national curriculum is obviously an ongoing task and one of the strengths of Shalford. As Governors it's our job to understand the aims and content set out for all subjects and support and monitor the impact on the children's learning. Another focus this year was the embedding of staff changes across the school especially in Nursery which has been a strategic focus since it became part of Shalford in 2019.

As in all schools, we were also very consciously anticipating an Ofsted inspection which we had been expecting for some time. That call came on 6th February and the school was visited by two Ofsted inspectors for the next two days. During the course of their visit, Governors are invited to meet with them and explain how Governance works at the School and to show how effectively we support and monitor the school's priorities.

As you'll be aware, the inspectors judged the school as 'good' in all areas under the new, more rigorous framework. The Trust, Shalford Governors, Mrs Dutton and the staff all believe this was a fair and realistic assessment of where the school was at the time of inspection according to the latest Ofsted criteria. The report is more streamlined than in previous inspections and you can find the details [here](#).

The Inspectors recognised that 'the school values shine through like a golden thread. Pupils and staff hold these values at the heart of their learning and behaviour'. Shalford values underpin all aspects of school life, the inspectors were very impressed with the children's understanding of the focus value at the time; tolerance. They were able to see how staff and children cared and supported each other well.

The Governors would like to thank again Mrs Dutton and all the staff who continue to work so hard to develop the nurturing, creative and challenging learning environment for all our children so successfully and for the time and energy they put into the Ofsted inspection.

Hold school leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff

The Governing Body acts as a source of challenge and support to Mrs Dutton and her team to monitor and evaluate the progress the school is making. We do this as a collective group in the full Governing body meetings and as individuals visiting school regularly to talk to staff and the children about all aspects of school life.

Mrs Dutton and the Chair of Governors meet regularly throughout the year to discuss developments in school life. This is 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. It's a very good working relationship; one that is open, honest, mutually respectful with a shared passion for education; the safety and success of the school and its children and the well-being of staff.

We hold termly full Governing Body meetings with all Governors in attendance and smaller committee meetings with particular focus (Learning and Pupil Welfare and Finance and Premises). At these meetings, Governors work to strengthen the school's leadership by holding the headteacher to account for the day-to-day running of our school. Mrs Dutton also reports to the Governors at each termly meeting updating the Governing Body on all school matters 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.

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 the Trust's priorities and are linked to the School Development Plan and the Headteacher does the same in the objectives she then sets for her team.

Part of our role is to be aware of the wellbeing of all the school staff and to this end we carried out a wellbeing survey towards the end of the year. The response was very good and any queries or issues raised were picked up by the Chair of Governors.

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 children's' 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.

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.

Last year we began inviting teaching staff to present to the committee on the subject they lead. The presentations have been very informative and give us a deeper understanding of the curriculum intent and delivery.

Last academic year (21-22) saw a return to formal assessments for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began. We reviewed the final assessments at the beginning of this year and monitored progress and target setting for the current year.

The committee monitors the pupil premium expenditure to assess how this benefits pupils. 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.

Finance and Resources Committee

The Finance and Resources Committee at Shalford for the 2022-2023 year was comprised of 4 Governors (including the Head teacher) and the School Business Manager. The Committee has three key areas of responsibility including finance, premises and staffing, and meets twice per term. In the following section we illustrate some of the key areas of support to the school in ensuring value of money and the efficient utilisation of school resources:

- Regular review of expenditures and progress against annual budget projections with the School Business Manager at the Committee Meetings. This included scrutiny of items on the financial reports that had deviated from the annual budget projections and identifying remedial actions to manage expenditure in line with expectations. This also included support with the school in identifying suitable measures for realignment of budget items and maintain a balanced budget for the year. Together with the School Business Manager (SBM) and the Head Teacher, the Finance and Resources (F&R) Committee thoroughly examined the school budget. During this process, they questioned assumptions, deliberated on contingencies and risks within the budget, and assessed the reserve levels. The Committee officially endorsed the budget approval. Additionally, the governors regularly received and assessed Financial Monitoring Reports on a monthly basis. This ongoing review helps us comprehend the budget's role in supporting each child and the operational dynamics of the school.
- Support and scrutiny of the proposed school budget for FY23-26. The work of the Committee this year included a review of the proposed school budget for the next three school years. The Committee aimed to support the School Business Manager and the Head Teacher in ensuring an ambitious and implementable (for school reserves projects), conservative and balanced (ensuring that we do not spend beyond our means), risk-managed and fair (given current economic conditions).
- Delivering value for money for reserves projects. The Committee reviewed various capital and reserves projects for the year. This included improvements to the Nursery Facilities and the Nursery Resources. Total capital expenditure from school reserves were limited during the year due to increased pressure on school budget from increased utility bills and building maintenance works. Key principles of value for money, assessment of alternate options, competitive tendering and procurement, were scrutinised by the Committee during the year for budget items. Total projects spend amounted to approximately 5.35% of total expenditure for the year. This rate of spend is expected to reduce significantly in the upcoming budget periods as the school aims to maintain minimum reserve levels to off-set operational risks.
- Regular review of the premises conditions including monitoring visits, and school health and safety walkarounds. The Committee also reviewed the School Development Plan linked to Facilities and Staffing, as well as a review of the Accessibility Action Plan.

The Committee has continued to work energetically throughout the last year to ensure that we continue to monitor the management and delivery of the School's financial budgets, deliver best value for money, manage medium and long-term financial stability, and support the School in continuing to enjoy learning together.

Other key activities conducted by the Governing Body:

Monitoring

At the start of each academic year, Governors decide on their roles, responsibilities and membership of the two committees. These are primarily self-appointed ensuring we are playing to the broad strengths and skillset of the Governors we have here at Shalford.

We have statutory roles such as SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disability) Governor and Safeguarding Governor. These are very specific responsibilities to focus on the school's actions in these areas and to question its compliance with expected standards through regular meetings with the SENCO and Mrs Dutton.

This year Governors monitored the curriculum in year groups, meeting with the teacher to focus on a particular area of the curriculum or School Development Plan, talking to the children or looking at their work to see how the action plans for all the subjects are implemented in class. They observe and gather evidence and report back to the relevant committee.

Monitoring is a crucial part of our Governors' responsibilities and gives us the opportunity to see the school in action, the children's activities in and outside of the classroom, their enthusiasm for their learning and their understanding of our values.

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. Learning Partners provide Governors with a full schedule of training throughout the academic year. Each Governor is expected to attend at least three training sessions per year. Training is also available online through specialist educational sites.

In addition, the Learning Partners Trust have introduced an annual Governance Conference which is open to Governors from across all the schools in the Trust. The conference offers specialist training for areas such as SEND and Safeguarding and offers a great opportunity for networking for Governors to learn best practice and models of Governance from different schools.

Every year the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors carry out a self-evaluation exercise amongst the Governing Body. We meet with each Governor to discuss their contribution during the year and any ideas or issues they may have for the following academic 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. Governors use these policies to hold the school to account during their monitoring of relevant subjects and issues. 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 [Trust website](#).

Membership & Attendance

The Governing Body has settled more over this academic year following a period of unusually high turnover of members in recent years. Retention of Governors had been a reported challenge experienced nationally put down to the restrictions and pressures post Covid-19. However, we worked hard to advertise vacancies amongst the local community and are pleased that during the course of the year we were able to fill them all and begin introducing new Governors to their roles.

Governors at Shalford are an extremely supportive and dedicated group 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.

I would like to thank all the Governors for their time commitment and enthusiasm for Shalford. We are lucky to have such a range of skills to bring to our discussions and I am personally very grateful for their work.

Sarah Hardcastle
Chair of Governors

Karen Brooks
Vice-chair of Governors

Arbaaz Nayeem
Chair of F&R

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