

Ashley Primary School

Governors Annual Statement (2020-21)

The impact of Covid on schools and pupils cannot be understated. As the incidents of covid increased across the country the Government announced that all schools would be closed to all pupils other than those with a parent who was an essential (key) worker.

Following the lockdown (March-July 2020) schools were re-opened for the Autumn term beginning September 2020 for all pupils. The school continues to be a popular school, consequently we are always at, or very close to, our maximum number of pupils across each year group.

Following advice from the LEA it was agreed between the Head Teacher and Chair that all governors' full board meetings and sub-committee meetings would be held online until further notice.

Throughout the 2020/21 academic year **all** governors' meetings have been online. Consequently, we held 3 Termly Governing Board meetings and 9 sub-committee meetings: all online and well attended. Similarly, the weekly meetings between the Head Teacher would be less frequent and they too were held online. Governors, however, have not been able to attend school to undertake their link role because of all the disruption and keeping contact with their link proved difficult.

At termly meetings various policy updates were considered and approved as too were amendments to school documentation e.g., the School Development Plan.

At the well-attended **Autumn** termly Governor's meeting held 15 October 2020, the Head Teacher reported that there were currently 405 full-time pupils on the school roll, of which 28% were eligible for free school meals. Additionally, there were 41 children in nursery (part-time) and 10 children in the AC/DC centre. Overall, there were 107 children (26%) across the school on the SEND register.

At the Autumn meeting the Head Teacher reported that several Covid related safeguarding changes had been introduced:

- Staggered start and finish times
- One way system in operation at drop off/pick up times
- Year group bubbles
- A full-time cleaner – to ensure hygiene standards maintained.

Another significant move was the Remote Learning Policy was being used to support those children who were self-isolating. In addition, the school undertook an IT survey to ascertain how many households had IT: 148 families reported back. The school sought extra IT equipment, that could be loaned to families without IT, from various sources with some success.

The school made changes to the curriculum being taught to provide children with an opportunity to 'Catch Up' on course content missed through lockdown: inevitably this was hindered because of ongoing Covid and other absences. The school also utilised various on-line CPD programmes to enable in-school and home learning. The 'Catch Up' initiative was to be under ongoing review and governors would receive further updates.

At the **Spring** termly meeting held on 11th March 2021 Governors were told that there were 472 pupils on roll currently of which 413 were full-time. The Autumn termly attendance had been 96.4%.

Governors were advised that the school had undertaken a whole school survey to determine what further interventions, if any, were required to further enable 'Catch-Up': the aim being to identify those individual pupils who needed targeted support. It was anticipated that this data would be available at Easter to enable interventions being initiated.

The Head Teacher explained to governors that the remote learning initiative had had mixed outcomes with some children finding it more amenable to their learning than others. The school was currently processing the data to enable staff to target the level/extent/method of support required.

To an extent the school had to concentrate on supporting pupils' anxieties and emotional needs and had planned activities that would be supportive in delivering the curriculum.

At the **Summer** termly meeting (24.06.21) the Head Teacher reported that of the 481 children on roll that 144 (35%) were eligible for free school meals and that approximately 52% of all the children took a school meal.

The Head Teacher informed governors that since returning after Easter that the school had continued with the Covid related changes referred to above. One particularly reassuring note was that no bubbles had been out because of Covid since the Easter break.

Governors considered a report item that identified that all the staff had made a determined effort to get the children into the right frame of mind to move forward with their programme of learning. Changes to the methods and systems used in teaching/learning Maths and English from September 21 were identified.

The Head Teacher provided a broad overview of the support being offered to 2 Looked After Children. Also discussed was attendance intervention: regrettably there a few children who have regular poor attendance.

SEND data was included in the heads report and governors noted the narrative supplied.

To sum up: following the very turbulent time we had last year (2020/21) I can only hope that 2021/22 is a much better year all-round.

Finally, a huge thanks to the Head Teacher; teachers; classroom support, office and ancillary staff; pupils and parents for their support and assistance throughout.

Thank you: Terry Haram, Chair of Governors.