

Great Wishford School

Annual Governors' Statement 2016

AIMS AND PURPOSE

The governing body at Great Wishford School has three core functions:

- To ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school
- To oversee the financial performance of the school, and ensure that it provides good value for money
- To hold the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils

VISION, ETHOS AND STRATEGY

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils. We aim to create an ethos of care and concern expressed in the relationships within the school.

Throughout the year, staff have worked as a cohesive team to provide stability and raise aspiration, and we have been pleased to support them, meeting with them and with parents and providing feedback. This has been a challenging year for all schools, working with a new curriculum and new systems for assessment, and we are confident that staff training and collaboration within school and with the other schools in our cluster have contributed to a solid base on which we can continue to build next year.

This year we have worked together as a governing body with the Head Teacher and staff to improve outcomes for all pupils. The school has taken part in the Wiltshire Improving Schools Programme, which has provided valuable support and guidance, and ensured that governance has been of a high quality.

We have helped to develop, monitor and evaluate a rigorous School Improvement Plan, to produce both short term and long term impact, especially in the areas of Teaching and Learning and Pupil Outcomes. We have continued to encourage opportunities for leadership and management at all levels within the school, and are proud of the range and depth of skills and experience that our staff can offer.

As governors, we have continued to develop our own skills through a variety of training opportunities, and constantly seek to improve our effectiveness.

Our Strategic Committee has met regularly to prepare for future challenge and opportunity, and our Foundation Governors have focused on the provision of a Christian-based education which seeks the best for all of God's children.

OVERSEEING FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Governors approve the School Budget, scrutinise Income and Expenditure Reports and agree major purchasing decisions. They ensure value for money and that funds are spent on our strategic priorities.

With stable pupil numbers, and working on a four class system, we have been able this year to focus on improvements to our facilities. In early 2016 we applied for a grant from the diocese to replace the conservatory roof and convert it into a flexible space to be used for a variety of purposes such as music lessons, break-outs and small meetings. In March of this year we were informed that we had been successful and as a result this work is due to be carried out in the summer holidays. During the year we were also successful in obtaining a Lottery Grant for the new 'tyre trail' in the grounds. The school and governors wanted to update the IT facilities and during the year the governors authorised the purchase of 25 new laptops and 3 new whiteboards to assist staff improve teaching throughout the school.

We have also supported the school in its decision to purchase Maths Whizz, which has proved a highly successful tool in raising attainment and has been well received by parents and pupils.

HOLDING THE HEAD TEACHER TO ACCOUNT

Through our programme of scheduled meetings we continually support and challenge the Head Teacher to ensure the best provision that we can offer. Minutes of meetings and supporting documents indicate this role, and provide a record of decisions made and impact measured. Individually, and in sub-committees, we are in regular, less formal contact with the Head Teacher and Business Manager, working together to provide, monitor and evaluate all aspects of school provision.

The Head Teacher and Chair of Governors hold regular meetings to discuss current issues, agree actions and ensure deadlines are met; and the Strategic Committee, with the Head Teacher, look to the future, to help prepare the school for the years ahead.

Governors also conduct, with the assistance of a School Improvement Partner, the Head Teacher's performance management, setting targets for the year, monitoring progress and reviewing outcomes.

Other actions of the governing body:

This year we have reviewed our roles within the governing body, and made adjustments to best fit skills to responsibilities, making the most of governor experience.

We have provided a comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation throughout the year, talking with children and staff, making classroom visits, looking at examples of work and providing support and challenge.

We place a high value on ensuring the safety and security of all pupils. Our Safeguarding governor has led training for staff and prepared a schedule of meetings and training sessions for the coming year. The Chair of Governors has attended school training on Restorative Justice and monitored its use in school.

Our members have attended training on an array of issues and topics which have informed them and enabled them to disseminate information to others within the school community.

Members of the governing body have led Collective Worship, attended various school events, and visited school to talk to teachers, teaching assistants, parents and pupils. We have been active in supporting all aspects of school life.

Significant challenges faced:

When we elected to take part in the Wiltshire Improving Schools Programme we signed up to significant challenges in terms of commitment and hard work, designed to improve all aspects of our leadership and management, teaching and learning, monitoring and assessment and communication. The governors were fully involved in the process, which we believe has been extremely valuable in supporting and directing improvement. We would like to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the Head Teacher and all staff in this continuing process.

This year, the introduction of a new curriculum and the implementation of a new and untested form of assessment have been significant challenges facing all schools. With so much change, it is not easy accurately to gauge success; workloads have increased and there is an unremitting cycle of review and improvement. We are proud of the commitment shown by all staff to raising the aspiration and performance of all pupils, and we have supported them, for example through discussion, pupil conferencing, sharing of data, classroom visits and recognition of their hard work.

REMIT OF THE FULL GOVERNING BOARD AND COMMITTEES

Full Governing Board – Overall effectiveness

The Full Governing Board oversees the provision and management of the school, supporting and challenging the school leadership in the promotion of the best possible provision for our children.

Strategic Committee – providing for the future

The Strategic Committee approves key policies for the school and monitors the effectiveness of the governing body through the Governor Action Plan. The committee makes key decisions with regard to leadership and management, and also acts as the Head Teacher's Performance Management Panel.

Finance and Premises Committee – ensuring value for money

The Finance and Premises committee proposes the annual budget with the School Business Manager and Head teacher before presenting it for approval to the Full Governing Body. This committee prioritises actions to be taken from the building maintenance plan and approves and monitors spending to ensure an appropriately resourced and safe learning environment is created and maintained for our children and staff.

Staffing Committee

The Staffing Committee ensures that all legal employment requirements are met. It monitors Pay and Appraisal policies and agrees pay awards. It oversees the staff professional development and training programme, and is a point of contact for staff, ensuring that well-being issues are addressed. This committee is also responsible for recruitment, interview processes and appointments.

Curriculum Committee – monitoring standards

The Curriculum Committee works in close liaison with Head Teacher and Senior Management team to monitor the achievement and progress of all pupils, and strives with the school to provide the best possible curriculum opportunities and outcomes for all. It scrutinises achievement and progress targets, and monitors initiatives throughout the year.