



GREAT WISHFORD C.E. (V.A.) PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Dear Parents,

Attached is the Annual Governance Report for the school year 2016-17.

It has been a busy year, and governors have worked hard to face challenges with the school and shared in celebration of achievements and successes. Not least of those challenges has been coming to the decision to join a Multi Academy Trust and preparing for the future under *new leadership*.

We are all sad to be saying goodbye to Mrs. Jenkins. Throughout her twenty years at the school she has given dedicated service and Christian leadership, and she will be very much missed. She has been a very big part of the identity of Great Wishford School, and we hope that her legacy of love and care will be taken into the future by the whole school community.

Our interim Head from September is Mr. Stuart Porter, who comes from leading The Avenue School in Warminster, where he is Head Teacher, to successful performance. We are delighted that he will be guiding us until we are able to appoint a permanent Head Teacher, and are confident of a strong and stable partnership. He will be in touch with you all early in September, when we also hope to be able to tell you more about the academisation process.

On behalf of the governing body, may I wish all our families a happy and sunny August, with time to rest and play.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sue Bale'.

Sue Bale
Chair of Governors

Great Wishford School

Annual Governance Statement 2017

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 a high 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.

The governing body has supported staff throughout the year in building upon the work of the previous year with the new curriculum and assessment system. Staff have worked with local cluster schools and with specialists to monitor and improve delivery of the curriculum and tracking of pupil progress and attainment. Governors have worked closely with staff to ensure that appropriate training opportunities are met and recommendations are taken up. All staff have contributed to a culture of greater aspiration for all.

Governors maintain a close relationship with the school through their presence in school both for formal meetings and to attend parents' evenings, events, assemblies and collective worship. The governing body works in partnership with school leaders. Leadership and Management are at the heart of all school improvements, and we are delighted that staff continue to take up opportunities to develop skills and capabilities and take on leadership roles at all levels.

As governors, we have continued to develop our own skills through a variety of training opportunities, and constantly seek to improve our effectiveness. New governors have all attended initial training, and members of the governing body have taken all available opportunities to inform themselves of the changing education landscape through meetings, information sessions and presentations.

This year the work of the Strategic Committee has focused on the long term future of the school. We value highly the role of the school in the village community and its long history and traditions but, like other small rural schools, we find our capacity increasingly stretched as we seek to fulfil all the demands of our mission to provide a high quality education for all pupils. We are very conscious of changes in the national education landscape, the decline in local authority provision, and the increasing demands on school budgets. In January 2017 we began to accelerate our investigations into the benefits of joining a Multi-Academy Trust to secure our future and retain the integrity and Christian purpose of the school and, after comprehensive study of the range of alternatives open to us we agreed, in June, to apply to join Acorn Education Trust, based at Kingdown School in Warminster. At the time of writing, we are awaiting acceptance of our application from the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Diocese.

Our decision to join a MAT has coincided with the resignation of Ali Jenkins, our Headteacher, after twenty happy and productive years at the school. She is moving on to other things, and we wish her every success and happiness in the future. We know that Great Wishford School will feel her loss, and we will work together to retain the character of the school and provide a strong leadership and staff team. We are fortunate to have secured the services of an interim headteacher from Acorn Education Trust who will work closely with all staff to maintain all aspects of provision and give support and guidance.

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. Despite national cuts in funding and widespread constraints on finance, we have been able to maintain provision and keep spending within our budget.

We have been able to undertake some modest improvements to the facilities this year.

During the summer holidays, using a grant from the Diocese, work was undertaken to the conservatory roof and floor, making it a more usable space. Although it still gets warm in the summer months, it has become a much more serviceable space and is currently frequently used for music lessons and break-outs.

At the same time new gates were fitted at the roadside making a safer environment for the children by preventing lorries using the drive when making deliveries.

Similarly a bollard was installed to stop high vehicles damaging the guttering, something which was happening frequently.

During the forthcoming summer holidays, work will be undertaken repairing the tarmac, between the school and the pre-school, which has become unstable and will only deteriorate further if not repaired. Once again, the funds have been provided by means of a grant from the Diocese.

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. Governors have conducted a programme of monitoring and evaluation for all elements of the School Improvement Plan, through classroom visits and discussions with staff, regular monitoring of data, informal discussions with pupils, receipt and interrogation of reports. 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 the Head Teacher's Performance Management, with the assistance of a School Improvement Advisor, setting targets for the year, monitoring progress and reviewing outcomes.

A major focus has been pupil outcomes, which we have strived to improve this year. We have worked with the Head Teacher to provide a wide-ranging programme of training, mentoring, monitoring and moderation to raise standards. This will continue to be a high priority area, and our interim Head is already working with staff in preparation for the year ahead.

Other actions of the governing body:

Throughout this year we have continued to provide a comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation, talking with children and staff, making classroom visits, looking at examples of work and providing support and challenge. This is a considerable commitment on the part of governors, but we believe the value has outweighed the work involved.

We place a high value on ensuring the safety and security of all pupils. Our Safeguarding governor has continued her programme of training for staff, conducted the annual audit and made regular monitoring visits. She has talked to pupils and advised staff. We have continued to monitor the use of Restorative Justice in the school, and the introduction of a system of reparation.

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, helped to invigilate SATS tests and visited school to talk to teachers, teaching assistants, parents and pupils. It is a pleasure to see pupils engaged in a rich curriculum and a wide variety of after-school activities, and we are proud of the richness of experience that the school offers.

Significant challenges faced:

This year, staff and governors alike have all felt the pressure to improve standards for all pupils, faced with the considerable changes to curriculum and assessment of the previous two years and continuing uncertainty across the country over the measurement of pupil performance. The Head Teacher has worked closely with specialists and advisors to provide the high quality training, advice and moderation which are vital to raising standards. We are happy to say that pupil performance this year shows a firm foundation in EYFS and a healthy improvement in Key Stage 1, but with work still to be done at Key Stage 2 it is our dedicated aim to build on improvements and target weaknesses in the coming year. Governors have supported staff throughout the year, through visits, discussions, and the approval of a range of training opportunities, and are proud of the way in which members of staff have stepped up to the challenge and worked together towards raising attainment.

It has been another challenging year in terms of staff changes. In a small school, the loss of staff can make a big difference. Head Teacher and governors have worked hard to provide continuity and consistency across staff changes. We are confident that we have a strong team to take us into the new academic year, led by an experienced Head Teacher.

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.