

Chalkwell Hall Infant School Governance Statement 2020/21

Our vision and values

Our Vision:

to be an outstanding school where children are happy and safe, staff feel valued, parents are engaged and the community is proud.

Our Values:

Our vision is underpinned by the our five key REACH values of Respect, Enjoy, Achieve, Care and Healthy.

Annual Governance Statement

This Annual Governance Statement provides a brief summary of the work undertaken by the Governing Board during the 2020-2021 academic year, and the impact that the governors have had on the school.

The main functions of our Governing Board are;

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

Whilst Governors are committed to the core strategic functions, we are not responsible for the operational management of the school.

Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

The last year has provided the perfect stress test for our vision. If it can survive the disruption that we've experienced, there's a good chance it's broadly fit for purpose.

The happiness and safety of the children has never been more important. During lockdown we requested and were provided with regular, anonymised safeguarding updates of the efforts being made with our most vulnerable children and any children where we were struggling to make contact. Happiness is a more difficult area to measure, but at all GB meetings we request from the Headteacher (HT) and Deputy Headteacher (DHT) an update on the measure they have put in place to ensure the children's happiness. Whether that be the measures such as changes to the start of the school day to settle the children or the feedback from the Headteacher hangout,

we challenge our school leaders on delivering these fundamentals and the feedback suggests they are delivering spectacular results.

Parental engagement levels have also never been higher judging by the feedback on our Facebook site and the responses to our pulse surveys. The phenomenon of 'home schooling' has clearly contributed to this, but it needs to be two way and our teachers have stepped up to the mark to keep those engagement levels with parents high.

Staff feeling valued can come in many shapes and sizes, but we request results of all staff feedback surveys to help us take the temperature of the staff throughout the year and we have also been provided with a presentation by the mental health lead for the school on the results of that survey and the action plan to address any findings. We will continue to monitor this area particularly closely.

Our strategy is made up of five strategic pillars. These are reviewed each year and have also stood up the challenges of this year's disruption. We monitor strategic progress via a number of Key Performance Indicators that are reviewed on a termly basis by the Governing Board

The document that makes all this real is the School Development Plan (SDP) and for the 2020-21 SIP, both the Chair and Vice Chair again joined the two day offsite to put this critical document together with the members of the school's Senior Leadership Team. It has been pleasing to note that this key focus areas have been fairly consistent over the last couple of years suggesting that our long-term planning has been in the right areas and we haven't needed to continually course correct.

Hold the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school

The Headteacher reports to the Governing Board each term through a comprehensive report which governors review and seek clarifications on during our Governing Board meetings. The Governors can then triangulate this information with the school visits, albeit virtual visits at the moment. Increasing the quantity of our visits has been a development area for the GB this year and I am pleased to say that despite the challenges of switching to virtual, we have performed more visits than ever before.

Historically we have always linked the visits to the SDP outcomes, but this year we have also tried to look at some more ad hoc, but as important areas. These have included a review of the temporary classrooms, being an Newly Qualified Teacher at Chalkwell and, of course, the remote learning offer. By mixing up our strategic visits with some more tactical visits, we believe we can get a much broader picture of the school.

To monitor the progress of the SDP we also receive a termly status report from the HT which RAGs progress against each of the SDP outcomes, in addition to highlighting any key risks the school faces independent or related to those outcomes. This high level review of the SDP allows the Governors to avoid straying into operational areas, but still allows questioning and challenge of educational performance.

Data, where we have it, is provided and scrutinised by the Governing Board. The last 12 months have seen us actively move away from a fixation on data and quantitative targets to more qualitative targets. Whilst these are often harder to measure, what's important to us is valuing what matters rather than valuing what we can measure and this is even more important in the current environment.

The Governing Board also instructs a School Improvement Partner who is an external education adviser to provide independent analysis of the school's performance to the Governing Board and to assist the Headteacher's performance management committee with its annual appraisal and the setting of future objectives. This independent assessment of teaching has consistently demonstrated the excellent quality of teaching within the school.

Oversee the financial performance of the school

As we are required to each year, the Governing Board agreed a three year financial plan for the school. We are also required to submit a School's Financial Value Statement (SFVS) to the Local Authority. The SFVS goes through a rigorous review process first by the Governor responsible for Finance and then at the Governing Board meeting. Any amber or red items are examined individually and a suitable explanation is required for each.

Prudent financial management by the Finance Manager, actively supported by the Governor responsible for Finance and the Governing Board, has ensured an in-year balanced budget and funding. Forecasting has been challenging given the impact of the income streams most sensitive to school closure (such as catering, PTA and wraparound care), but the school is financially sound and for the first time any of us can remember is showing a predicted profit for all three years of the three year plan

Other activities and achievements

Supporting the Headteacher and school as they developed their plans and risk assessments regarding the pandemic. The Governing body reviewed the plans regarding the return to school continued to monitor the risk assessment throughout the year

Leading the school through the amalgamation process. The Governing Board were unanimously in favour of taking the school through the amalgamation process and worked hard with the Local Authority to make that process as accessible as possible for the school community. When it became clear that the LA were prepared to publish misleading statements to kill the process, the GB used the machinations of the local government governance process to publicly challenge all those statements. As a GB we still believe the education outcomes of the children would be best served by a single all through primary school, but we look forward to working with the new Headteacher of the Junior school and will hopefully welcome him onto our board for the 2021-22 academic year.

The GB also worked with the Local Authority on the reduction of the Pupil Admission Numbers (PAN) for the academic year 2022-23. Whilst we have no control over admission, we believed it was in the school's best interest to accept the reduction now, in order that we could create some certainty for the school. The likelihood was that this would have been done to us regardless and with the birth rate continuing to collapse in the area, we believed that dealing with it now would stand us in best stead for the future. This will undoubtedly bring us some challenges, but it will also give us some opportunities given the school site is fit to burst at its current capacity of 360 children

Final mention must go to the building project. Whilst this is being run on a day-to-day basis by the HT and Business Manager, the Governors have been challenging the school on both the plans and financing of the build, as well as the temporary arrangements that have had to be put in place whilst work is being completed and what this means for the start of the academic term 2021-22. As a GB this is the most exciting and positive thing to happen for the school in years, but it's incumbent on us to find that balance between getting it delivered and the long-term improvements it will bring to the school, whilst not negatively impacting the children, staff and community who are dealing with the challenges as we get there. We will continue to monitor this closely into the new academic year.

Key Issues to be addressed by the Governing Board in 2021/22

- Strengthen our relationship with the Junior School and their new Headteacher
- Prepare for the reduction in the school PAN to 90 pupils
- Continue to monitor any temporary measures necessary to deliver the new build
- Formalise a relationship with Governing Boards from the other 'Engagement Group' schools
- Evaluate whether being a local authority maintained school remains the best set-up for delivering on our school's vision and the educational outcomes of the children.
- Embed our significant number of new Governors into the GB whilst still maintaining the high standards we demand of ourselves

How you can contact the Governing Board

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents – please contact the Chair of Governors, via the school office or via email james.isaacs@chalkwellhallinfants.co.uk

CHALKWELL HALL INFANT SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD

Name	Category of Governor	Term of Office ends	Responsibilities
Jamie Isaacs – Chair	Co-opted	22.04.23	Headteacher Performance Committee Pay Committee Safeguarding
Kirsty Trim – Vice Chair	Co-opted	21.07.21	Headteacher Performance Committee Pay Committee Data Protection Finance SEN
Stuart Judd	Co-opted	06.11.21	
Kathy Morey	Co-opted	04.02.24	Health & Safety
Lital Goldberg	Parent	21.07.21	
Kate Crawford	Parent	23.10.21	Extended Services Committee
Christine Webster	Co-opted	21.07.21	Pupil Premium
Cathy Dean	Local Authority	14.04.25	
Emma Howe	Staff	21.04.21	Extended Services Committee
Sarah Clements	Ex Officio	N/A	
Joe Milbank	Associate (non voting)	16.10.22	

Governors who have left in the past 12 months

Macdonald Neife	Co-opted	15.10.20	
Jennifer Clifford	Local Authority	13.10.20	

**CHALKWELL HALL INFANT SCHOOL
GOVERNING BOARD ATTENDANCE RECORD 2020-21**

NB - All meetings were held virtually via Google Meet

	Extended Schools	Pay 14.10.20	FGB As- sets 14.10.20	FGB Standards 18.11.20	FGB Standards 03.02.21	Extended Schools 16.03.21	FGB As- sets 17.03.21	FGB As- sets 12.05.21	Extended Schools 29.06.21	FGB Standards 07.07.21
Sarah Clements	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Kate Crawford	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	P	P
Cathy Dean (wef 12.05.21)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A	-	P
Lital Goldberg	P	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	R	P
Emma Howe	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	P	P
James Isaacs	-	P	P	P	P	-	P	P	-	P
Stuart Judd	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	-	P
Kathy Moray	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	-	P
Kirsty Trim	-	P	P	P	P	-	P	P	-	P
Christine Webster	-	P	P	P	P	-	P	P	-	P
Joanne Milbank (non-voting)	-	-	P	P	P	-	P	P	-	P

P – Present; A – Apologies Accepted; X – Apologies not received/ accepted; R - Resigned