



Governors Annual Statement and Impact Report 2023/2024

The role of the Board of Governors is an intrinsic part of the leadership of the school, this annual impact statement is one of the ways in which the Board attempts to demonstrate its role in school leadership and show the impact of its policies and procedures on school improvement. It is also the means of ensuring governor transparency.

The Governor Handbook published by the DfE clearly sets out the three core functions of the Board of Governors:

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff

Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

The work of the Board of Governors is focused on meeting the requirements of these functions. The Board knows the school well, is confident that all statutory and legal requirements are met and ensures that issues within school are addressed in a timely and effective manner. The Board also contributes to the Raising Standards Plan to ensure the long-term effectiveness of the school.

To achieve their objectives, governors have an annual Governing Board Improvement Plan which is on the agenda at each meeting and reviewed at the end of each academic year.

This ensures that there is a continual process of evaluation and review of governor activity and outcomes.

This statement and report are part of that evaluation and review process.

Background and Context

The Board of Governors has supported the Headteacher and Senior Leadership throughout the year. Full Governing Board meetings are held termly and Governor Committee meetings are held every half term. Staff join these meetings to report to the governors on curriculum development and innovation. Regular reports on pupil progress and also Safeguarding are presented at each governor meeting.

The Co-chairs evaluated the Headteacher's Performance Management targets from 2022/2023 in January 2024 with the support of our independent school adviser. As part of this process they were then able to set new and appropriate targets for the coming year and to discuss priority areas. The targets set for 2024 will be reviewed early in the next academic year and finally evaluated in December 2024.

The January 2024 Social Care Inspection of the school's residential provision found the overall experiences and progress of the children and young people to be Outstanding. The report said "the actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people"

Governor oversight and visits to residence aimed to ensure a high degree of independent scrutiny which in turn ensures compliance and drives progress.

Raising Standards Plan.

Governors have worked with the head teacher and Senior Leadership team to develop and monitor a new School Development Plan called Raising Standards Plan (RSP). This plan was based on priorities identified by the headteacher from data and school self-assessment which were needed to move the school forward. In the 2023/ 2024 academic year the RSP has provided clear direction and strategic objectives for the whole school.

The Pupil Wellbeing and Attainment Committee have continued to monitor and review the RSP at every half termly meeting. Members of staff and the headteacher have been invited to give details about the progress of certain sections of the plan and to respond to questions from the governors. The plan is continuously evaluated and RAG rated (Red not started, Amber in progress, Green completed) so that areas completed and those still in progress can be clearly seen.

RSP targets are based on four areas each with three clear strategic objectives or areas for development. These are.

Quality of Education

Behaviour and Attitudes

Personal Development

Leadership and Management.

These objectives are monitored termly by the headteacher and senior management and RAG rated accordingly. Progress from the plan is then presented to the Governor Committees. Feedback from the committee meetings is presented to the full Governing Board to allow governors the opportunity to question and challenge any issues raised. The Head teacher prepares a report prior to the meetings.

Governor visits

All governors have received Safeguarding training and have continued to visit the school regularly. Governors go into residence houses, classrooms and attend meetings and events as part of their monitoring programme. They have met regularly with staff and young people. These visits are a valuable and essential opportunity for governors to monitor aspects of the National Minimum Standards for residential schools. Governors also respond to the reports of the residence Independent Visitor. Visits to school enable governors to gain knowledge of the curriculum and standards of behaviour, and to observe staff and young people at work. A record of monitoring visits by the governors has been kept throughout the year to ensure all areas of school life have been covered. The documentation means that an accurate record of targets identified by these visits and their outcomes are available to all the governors for follow-up. Those governors with particular responsibilities have arranged more frequent visits with specific staff. Regular visits to monitor the robustness of safeguarding practice was noted by Ofsted.

The governor responsible for links with the deaf community has fed back on initiatives and events.

The Co-chairs have had regular meetings with the Headteacher, input from J Ward an independent school adviser and also updates from the Deputy Heads of Achievement, Care & Guidance and from the Company and Charity Secretary.

Data analysis

Presentations of data have been given to governors at both the Pupil Wellbeing and Attainment committee and at the Full Governing Board meetings. These have been followed by question-and-answer sessions with the Headteacher and individual members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Classroom Monitor is used across the curriculum giving governors the opportunity for a more accurate scrutiny of pupil progress across all ability groups. It has enabled staff to identify areas of pupil need and put in place necessary intervention.

The Aspire curriculum is firmly embedded and has been welcomed by governors as a means of assessing the emotional wellbeing and development of all pupils. The effective use and impact of both Pupil Premium and Sports Premium has been monitored by the governors. The governors have been involved in reviewing the Wellbeing Programme and the positive impact it has had on young people.

Policies

Governors have continued to work with the Senior Leadership Team to review all the relevant policies on a rolling program. Scrutiny of Policies ensures that all guidance is current and up to date and that the school complies with the Department of Education mandatory policy list.

Financial management

The Governors Finance & Resources Committee meets every half term in order to fulfil one of their core functions - ensuring that the budget is managed efficiently, and that reporting is effective and continuous. The governors have a wide variety of expertise and experience which has helped to ensure positive outcomes and continuous improvement. They have supported the Company and Charity Secretary in checking and monitoring the school financial systems. They have worked with the Trustees to ensure there is an effective long-term plan for premises maintenance and upgrade. Ensuring the effective deployment of staff and resources is also part of their remit.

The chair of the Finance and Resources Committee attends the Trustees meetings to both contribute to and understand the financial and planning decisions made by the Trustees.

Staff recruitment

The Headteacher and the governors ensure that all recruitment practices are safe and effective. Several of the governors are now trained in Safe and Effective Recruitment. Governors have been involved in the shortlisting and interviewing of staff at all levels within the school and across all departments

Governor participation in interview panels has ensured that high quality, skilled staff, who share the school's ethos and aims, are appointed.

Governor Meeting Attendance

All meetings in this academic year have been quorate and mostly in person but on-line attendance has been used occasionally. Although hybrid meetings do have occasional problems the potential for developing the governing board is high. Parent and carers of pupils from any Local Authority can now have the opportunity to contribute to the governance of the school.

All documentation can be accessed on-line by Governors for comments and scrutiny. The annual programme of sub-committee meetings has been maintained 3 Resources, 3 Finance, 6 Pupil Wellbeing and Attainment meetings.

The co-chairs of the governors have continued to work effectively together and the mutual support and shared responsibility have ensured quality school governance. The Governing Board has welcome Martin Thacker as a co-opted member of the board he has a wealth of experience which is proving very useful. Our newly appointed parent governor however found she was not able to commit the time needed to serve on the board. We would like to thank Shirley Hewitt who was as a member of the board for many years and has now stood down.

Next year we will welcome Sarah Charles from Derby University as a new member of the Board and we will be actively seeking a new parent governor.

Governing Board Improvement Plan 2023/2024

This plan enabled the governing Board to demonstrate its focus on its three core strategic functions: ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding the headteacher to account for educational performance of the school and its young people; overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

The 2023/2024 Governing Board Improvement Plan aligned the governors' focus with the school RSP and the Governor Competencies in order to co-ordinate the school vision its values and ambition and see clear development planning and school improvement outcomes. An evaluation of the Improvement Plan demonstrated the following;

The governors recognised the strategic leadership from the headteacher and SLT and an improvement in the quality of education backed by a rigorous analysis of data.

The Trustees working with the governors and the Company and Charity Secretary ensured the financial health of the school and the efficient use of staff and resources.

The Governing Board continued to be an effective team with all members taking responsibility for training and upgrading their skills for their particular role.

The school is increasingly an outward facing resource for deaf education with an outstanding reputation.

Governor Annual Report and Impact Statement Evaluation

The Governing Board, Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and all members of staff are constantly striving to improve and develop the school and to fulfil the school's vision for all the children and young people at RSDD.

The Governing Board Improvement Plan has helped to contribute towards this by ensuring that the school is an environment in which children and young people are given the tools and skills to achieve their potential and where they feel safe and happy and able to express their views in their preferred means of communication.

The Governors are continually monitoring the work of the school and have promoted the school's values encouraging children and young people to enjoy their education and to thrive in a school which is well managed and rich in culture, languages and experiences.

The governor role as critical friend & support has been invaluable and good relationships with the Senior Leadership Team have continued.

A detailed review of the Governing Board Improvement Plan, the minutes of Governor meetings and governor monitoring feedback, all form part of Ofsted inspection reports.

Janet Hall and Heather Flockton July 2024
Joint Chair of Governors

