



## **GOVERNOR ANNUAL STATEMENT AND IMPACT REPORT 2021-22**

### **Introduction**

The Full Governing Body (FGB) has an important role in the work of Brookfields School and the annual impact statement reflects on and summarises that role. The work of the FGB includes ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the School and its pupils; the management of staff and oversight of the financial performance of the School along with making sure money is well spent.

During the 2021-22 academic year, when the school was still experiencing the impact of Covid, the FGB continued to meet, mainly, on Teams with one final meeting faced to face, managing health and safety oversight, along with its other ongoing work through regular contact with the Leadership Team.

During 2021-22, the Headteacher announced his intention to retire and the FGB carried out due process to recruit a new Headteacher. Following a national search, followed by an intensive interview process, organised through an independent consultant, the FGB are delighted to appoint the current Deputy Headteacher to the role of Headteacher from September 2022. Sadly, however, this meant we had to say goodbye to the current Headteacher who retired at the end of August.

The Governors also contributed to the School's Development Plan. A Governor worked on this document with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team. Each Governor has linked responsibilities for areas of the School's work such as safeguarding, health and safety, teaching and learning, curriculum development, finance and staff training and wellbeing.

All scheduled meetings of the Governing Body took place between September 2021 and July 2022. Continuing restrictions caused by the long term effects of Covid, meant that Governors could not physically attend all meetings or visit the school on many occasions. The FGB, Finance meetings and the Standards Committees, took place by Teams webinars. Governors and senior leaders met online to discuss key teaching and other operational matters. Safeguarding and health and safety reviews took place in 2021-22 and thanks to the expert knowledge of one of our Governors, safeguarding training of staff and Governors also took place. Webinar meetings were also held with senior staff responsible for all areas of the school, including staffing, training and wellbeing.

During the year, the FGB joint Chair arrangement changed, following the resignation of one of the joint chairs and the FGB now operates on the basis of one chair and one vice chair.

### **Background and context**

A small group of Governors carried out the Headteacher's appraisal in September 2021, seeking advice from the School's Improvement Officer and reflecting the fact that Covid had significantly impacted on the work of the Headteacher in 2020-21. Targets were set for the Headteacher for the 2021-22 year, reflecting line management and training and long-term financial sustainability for the School.

Governors are aware of how children are performing and receive regular reports from the Headteacher and Senior Leaders about key developments. Information is regularly presented to FGB about progress of pupils since the School introduced a new curriculum and was inspected in September 2019. The information presented and discussed during 2021-2022 was more limited in nature due to the demands on the SLT during the year of transition out of Covid restrictions and the processes around this, though discussion continued to be held on safeguarding, learning outcomes and impacts on children.

The Governors regularly monitor pupil attendance, use of pupil premium and sports premium and safeguarding which are reported in the regular Headteacher's report to the FGB.

The Governing Body regularly reviews School policies. During 2021-22, the FGB reviewed and approved the following policies:

- Safeguarding
- Teachers pay
- Capability
- Careers guidance
- Behaviour
- Conduct
- Grievance
- Whistleblowing
- Charging and remissions
- Governors' allowances
- PSHE
- Looked After Children
- RSE
- Accessibility
- SEND
- Complaints
- Early Career Teachers
- Early Years
- Data protection
- Health and Safety
- Premises management

### **School Development Plan**

Governors discussed the School Development Plan (SDP) at Governor meetings, and a Governor is also assigned to specifically work with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team to monitor, review and update the SDP as necessary.

It was planned that Middle leaders would be included in the creation of area-specific targets for the SDP this year, in an effort to drive change throughout the school more inclusively. This was discussed with the SLT and Governors, although the work was somewhat limited due to continuing restrictions and the absence of the Headteacher due to illness. Discussions were, however, held about making certain targets more specific and measurable for future years, as the broader team get more familiar with being involved in the school development plan progress.

Covid-19 continued to impact the priorities of the school and therefore progress against the SDP, as well as the Governing Board's ability to meet the teaching staff involved in updating the plan as they needed to prioritise their limited time dealing with the changing landscape. The targets have, however, been reviewed and discussions took place about how targets were met in different ways, how they became key themes and what might be carried over to future years and longer-term change. Also discussed was what must be deprioritised to focus on more relevant targets in a post-Covid landscape, in particular around building staff's resilience and adaptability. Financial planning, audit and finance improvements were followed-up within the finance committee.

### **Governor attendance, visits and training**

Attendance at Governor meetings was good and was improved when using webinars. There were 6 FGB meetings, all of which were virtual via Microsoft Teams. Attendance was as follows:

<b>Governor</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>
Sam Jacob	5/6
Anne Murdoch	6/6
Brandon Mills	6/6
Richard Clarke (Left the Board in May 22)	4/4
Tom Loucas	5/6
Lucy Manners	5/6
Claire Reeves (Left the Board in September 21)	1/1
Megan Brown	4/5
Shaun Polley	5/5
Dawn Spencer	3/4
Christine McLean	2/4

There were limited governor visits during the academic year, primarily due to continuing Covid-19 restrictions.

Training:

Anne Murdoch	Safeguarding online training.
Charlotte Wilshire (Clerk)	West Berks clerking webinars SWALLS Clerking in special schools
Shaun Polley	New to governance 1 & 2
Megan Brown	New to governance 1 & 2
Christine McLean	New to governance 1 & 2
Dawn Spencer	New to governance 1

### **Reporting:**

The following performance reports were received during the year:

Quarterly Headteacher reports in September 2021, January 2022, May 2022 and July 2022

West Berkshire audit financial report in September 2021

Schools Financial Value Statement (SFVS) in March 2022

### **Financial management**

A small group of Governors are members of the Finance committee which meets regularly to review the financial health of the school, and to make financial decisions where appropriate. Meetings have focused not only on the position and forecast of the current financial year, but also on future years and specifically the 2-3 year financial outlook. Updates have then been provided at FGB meetings, during which wider discussion of specific issues and approval of more material decisions are taken.

The Governing Body, this year, has had to focus on supporting the Senior Leadership Team in making continuing budget cuts to try to ensure the short-term and long-term financial viability of the school. Governors reviewed and specifically discussed with the SLT their decision to set an in-year deficit budget, a key reason for such strict budget cuts having to be made. In addition to this, conversations have also focused on ways in which funding can be increased, and how governors can support the school in lobbying, where appropriate.

Covid continued to materially impact the financial performance of the school during the 2021-2022 year, and themes and similarities and differences with other schools were also discussed as part of the meetings this year.

### **Clerking**

The Clerk has been in post for 3 years and is continuing her development via courses, networking events and online studies.

Activities and support to the FGB has been required during the year due to the inclusion of additional meetings (for example the Keeping In Touch "KIT" meetings) and needing to coordinate remote events and meetings.

### **Governor Impact statement and improvement plan**

The Governing Body, Headteacher and staff, all strive to improve and develop the School and to fulfil the vision and mission. The improvement plan ensures that the School is a place where all pupils are able to fulfil their potential and where they are happy and safe.

Governors monitor the work of the School regularly. The minutes of Governor meetings, which evidence support and challenge for School leaders and the Headteacher are available on the website. Governors are well qualified professionals in their own right and bring good and relevant skills to their role. There is a good dynamic amongst the Governing Body and they support and challenge each other in meetings.

The key objectives for the 2022-23 improvement plan for the Governing body are, as in the previous year:

1. Improve Governors knowledge of pupil progress
2. Improve Governors understanding of the legal and financial position of the School
3. Ensure measures are in place to enhance the financial sustainability of the School
4. Support the new Headteacher in her post.

Objectives 1 and 2 will be achieved via training of Governors and objective 3 via investigation of options for the School in the long term. Objective 4 will be achieved through discussion with the Headteacher about her specific personal and development needs.

Sam Jacob – Chair

Anne Murdoch – Vice-Chair

On behalf of the Governing Board

September 2022