

## **Greenfields Community Primary School Governing Board Governance Impact Statement 2019/20**

### **1. Governing Board**

In 2019/20, following reconstitution, Greenfields had a Governing Board of 12 governors, comprising:

- Parent Governors x 2
- Foundation Governors x 2
- Co-opted Governors x 5
- Headteacher Governor
- Staff Governor
- Local Authority Governor

These governors bring a wide range of experience and skills. At our most recent Ofsted monitoring visit in June 2017, HMI found that:

*“Governors are committed to the ongoing success of the school. They show a willingness to review their own performance and develop further expertise. They willingly took part in a review of governance in 2014. As a result, roles have been clarified and systems to check progress have been intensified. The chair makes new governors clearly aware of the demands of the role, such as the need to be present at key school occasions, for example enquiry learning reflection weeks. Appropriate committee structures are in place to monitor standards and finance. The headteacher provides governors with detailed but accessible half-termly updates on pupils’ progress. They explore this progress information in detail and use the expertise of local authority partners to check the accuracy of the information they receive. Governors have defined roles for key areas such as safeguarding and they carry out their responsibilities diligently.”*

The GB operates with a chair and two vice-chairs. The vice-chairs each chair one of the two main committees. Other governors take on the committee vice-chair and clerking roles, as part of our approach to building the capacity of the GB.

We have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- a. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- b. Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- c. Overseeing the school’s finances to make sure money is well spent.

In order to carry out this work we:

- work closely with the school staff team
- have six full Governing Board meetings a year; two in each term. Three of these are full business meetings and three are topic-based meetings. These were agreed as part of our Governance Action Plan (GAP). The topic based meetings will allow governors to focus on specific pieces of work, in greater depth. Governors also participate in school self-evaluation meetings with staff.
- work on committees to which the Governing Board has delegated key areas of responsibility. These meet on a regular basis and report in writing to the full Governing Board.
- visit the school
- engage in appropriate training

## 2. Activity & Impact in 2019/20

2019/20 has been a very difficult year for all connected with the school. The impact of Covid-19 has been felt by all schools, especially with closure to all but vulnerable and priority children for the best part of three months and restricted opening for the remainder of the summer term. There was a strong, positive response from school leaders and staff.

Governors played a full role in supporting that crucial work. They quickly adapted to make full use of technology to facilitate virtual meetings, so that they continued to govern in the best interests of our school community. This included appropriate challenge to ensure the integrity of the school 'offer'; the approach to health, safety and risk assessment; supporting senior leaders to support staff. During the summer term, again using remote facilities, the board appointed a new temporary Deputy Headteacher to take up the role from September 2020 and two existing members of staff to lead on the Covid exit strategy and the curriculum recovery plan.

Even before the onset of Covid, governors responded to two significant challenges. During the Autumn Term, we welcomed four new governors to ensure that the newly constituted board had all of its positions filled. All four immediately got involved and play a full and active part. When the Headteacher advised, in December, that she intended to retire at the end of the academic year, the board was engaged in a recruitment process during the Spring Term. Three of our four new governors were part of the panel and were fully and effectively engaged.

As chair, I believe that the skill set and commitment levels across the board are strong but we always review any vacancies against any areas on which we wish to focus. Following two mid-year resignations, as colleagues move on to other things, we have the opportunity to assess our needs and to strengthen further.

Activity	Outcomes/Impact
We have taken part in whole school priority setting with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and all staff	Governors help to ensure that the school focuses on key improvement priorities and bring another perspective to the discussions. They then feel greater ownership of these shared priorities and can feel confident discussing them with stakeholders and partners.
We have fulfilled all of our safeguarding duties	All statutory checks have been diligently carried out – including the Single Central Record and the annual Local Authority Safeguarding Audit. Governors have engaged in both whole-school training and specific governor sessions. The Child Protection Policy is fully up to date. The Safeguarding Governor had termly meetings with the Headteacher, in her role as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, until the interruption of Covid-19.

Activity	Outcomes/Impact
We have reviewed the GB to ensure continued fitness for purpose	The Governance Action Plan (GAP) has been monitored throughout the year. It was obviously affected by the unprecedented challenges posed by Covid-19 and we will be looking to re-establish a 'normal' plan for 2020/21
We have further developed our Governor Handbook	This guides how we work and defines our strategic role to complement the operational/management role of the SLT
We have developed our new full GB approach to focus on key issues	In 2019/20, we took a detailed look at the key data for the school and our approach to reading, which we identified as an area for development
We have prepared and delivered joint reports, with key staff, covering key areas such as Safeguarding; SEN; Pupil Premium; and PE Funding	These areas are evaluated for impact, to ensure that these resources are being effectively targeted and help pupils to progress and achieve
We have taken part in staff recruitment. Governors are involved across the range of staff appointments, as we believe that <b>all</b> staff are integral to the success of the school.	This activity is covered in the narrative above this table.
We have sought to improve stakeholder engagement.	This was seriously impacted by Covid-19 and governors are looking at new ways to improve engagement in the 2020/21 GAP. The main role during the summer term was to review and support the communications being sent out by school leaders, which have been very well received by our community.
We have attended key assemblies such as the Remembrance Assembly; Star Achievers assemblies and Greenfields' University Graduations	Governors help school to celebrate key achievements; mark important events; and have the opportunity to engage with members of our wider community.
We have set and monitored challenging targets for the Headteacher	Three governors, working with the School Development Partner, set the performance objectives and then monitor/support during the year. Objectives are always linked to the school's priorities and designed to drive improvement. Governors continue to increase their effectiveness in carrying out the 'critical friend'/challenge role.

Activity	Outcomes/Impact
We have undertaken moderation, observation activities	These include involvement in Quality Assurance sessions and meetings with the School Development Partner – both at GB meetings and other sessions. This was obviously curtailed from the end of the Spring term.
We have taken part in sessions to understand more about the 'daily life' of the school	This includes activities such as National Poetry Day; National Story Telling week; Reflection Weeks; Smart Weeks; The North Tyneside Dance Festival.
We have taken part in regional conferences	We involve ourselves in Schools NorthEast events, as well as those organised by the NGA and the Local Authority. These events help to improve our skills and knowledge. The networking opportunities allow us to access and learn from best practice, outside of our immediate school. We took full advantage of online conferences during the summer term.

### 3. Budget Management

Governors have helped to ensure that the school budget balanced in 2019/20, whilst maximising resources available for the provision. In most years, there is a small surplus that governors ensure is spent to the benefit of our pupils.

We established new systems and payment mechanisms to increase the efficiency of our Out of Hours provision.

Each year, the GB submits a document to the Local Authority by 31 January, showing that we meet the Schools Financial Values Standard (SFVS). This involves a process of self-assessment to ensure that all spending and budgeting decisions are based on prudent and careful housekeeping. It also assists us to ensure our resources are targeted on our identified priorities. In 2019/20, our SFVS submission was accepted without the need for revision or further information.

### 4. Governance Improvement Priorities for 2020/21

Following a disrupted summer term, governors will review and establish a tailored GAP for 2020/21 during the Autumn Term and will publish its intentions via the school website

**Harry Corlett**

**Chair of Governing Board**

**September 2020**