



Governors' Annual Report 2023-24

Introduction

The Governors of Ferndale Primary School oversee the work of the school from a strategic perspective seeking assurance that the day to day activities reflect the commitments of the school. Governors have a variety of skills and experience and it is important to acknowledge and thank them for the time they give so freely in the role.

A major aspect of the Governors' role is to ensure that pupils progress well during their time with us, and appreciate that for this to happen, all pupils must be supported by a well led, professional and motivated team, all working together to provide a stimulating learning environment for pupils.

Governors also appreciate the requirements of children's parents and carers, and their need to be satisfied about the overall leadership and management of the school, and how it affects safety, learning and the enjoyment of their children.

To achieve their objectives, Governors too must continually evaluate the role they have played within the life of the school, and publish relevant information to all interested parties. This statement to parents is part of that evaluation and publication process.

This statement will focus on the successes during the year and the progress made.

What have we achieved this year?

This was the year in which everyone got chance to change the school motto! Belong, believe, achieve became part of our school and we thank everyone that was part of this consultation- staff, children, parents and governors all had their say!

School has again achieved the Music Mark and has been working towards other awards that should come to fruition in 2024/25. We were Regional winners in the National Reading Challenge.

The new method to support staff's CPD (Continued professional development) has developed further into work with local school across Sandwell and Walsall called 'Teach Like a Champion' and will form part of our School Improvement Plan for 2024/25. Governors acknowledge the significant level of effort by pupils, parents, carers, teachers, and others to ensure school life at Ferndale continues to thrive.

We would also like to think that the changes in leadership team have been seamless and school's communication is improving.

Through the year, we have:

- Continued to work co-operatively with the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team to monitor progress with the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP). This considers feedback from staff, parents, children and other agencies. The plan then sets out the priorities for the school in the forthcoming year.

- The 2023/24 SIP was based on priorities identified from data, school self-evaluation and our OFSTED priorities. The SIP was set out with clear aims, the key tasks which will be completed in order to achieve these aims, and success criteria in order to measure progress towards priorities based on our Curriculum drivers- Inspiration, Aspiration and Inclusion. The SIP is monitored and reviewed at termly governors' meetings and through termly School Improvement Advisor visits, using a traffic light system to evaluate progress. The SIP was underpinned throughout by well-being and equality for all stakeholders. The plan focused on how Ferndale uses data to support all to achieve their potential- through their groups, IT, support and the Ferndale 50. Our top priorities reflect the needs of our school, in terms of our environment, inclusion for all and ultimately, the quality education we want for our pupils. We are extremely proud of the well-being and personal development offer we provide and this is at the heart of all we do.



- This has led us to the next stage of our SIP for 24/25, where we want all children to Thrive, Learn and Protect.

Governance

The Governors nominate a Chair and two Vice-Chairs. The Chair leads the Full Governing Body Meetings and the Vice-Chairs each take the lead on either Quality of Education Committee or Finance and Wellbeing Committee.

The Quality of Education Committee focuses on the educational Quality of Education of pupils against targets, how Pupil Premium and Sports Premium is spent against targets. The application of curriculum is also reviewed. Given the focus of this Committee, all Governors are invited to attend.

The Finance and Wellbeing Committee focuses on Health and Safety, the resources of the school, for example the budgets, the physical environment, wellbeing, personal development, and the deployment of staff. It links with Quality of Education Committee to make sure school is using all of its resources in the best way possible to advance our children's learning.

Governors also provide oversight in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Leadership and Management and the Equality Duty.

The Full Governing Board meetings include all governors and considers all strategic matters as well as matters escalated by the Quality of Education and Finance and Wellbeing Committees. The focus of the full governing body includes:

- Agreeing the values, aims and objectives of the school,
- Setting challenging targets for school leadership,
- Agreeing the school improvement plan and approving policies to inform the basis of day to day decisions.
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy, which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure.

Meetings have been held virtually in order to comply with Government guidance and to support the work life balance for members. From 23/24 at least 2 meetings a year are in person. This has also supported Governors to walk around school in addition to their specific visits.

Governors visit the school as part of their monitoring of the School Improvement Plan; named governors had a responsibility for reporting on the progress of specific priorities in the SIP. Some of these meetings have again been held virtually.

The areas Governors reported back on for 2023/24 were:

- English
- Humanities
- Pupil Premium
- Sports Premium
- Premises, Health & Safety
- SEN
- Science
- Maths
- IT
- SMSC
- EAL
- ECT (Early career teachers)
- EYFS
- The Chair and Vice-Chairs have regular meetings with the Headteacher, which are at least termly, and Governors with specific curriculum responsibilities meet with lead teaching staff and leadership team, at least twice a year.

Governor link feedback examples from minutes:

Science - CW

CW explained that she had met leaders and that they had discussed baseline development since last year and the development of practical resource. Challenge cards had been implemented and enquiry cards introduced.

One leader highlighted that a challenge had been balancing IT as the previous Ofsted inspection had expressed that there was a very high emphasis on online safety but the school wanted to ensure that there remained a balance.

CW informed the committee that IT remained a focus in terms of E-safety by discussions and activities, the information was received well. It was hoped that some devices would be updated. In relation to science, there was a science week planned that would have experiments and further development of the practical side. The “Grow your own” was also commencing and the HT explained that this linked to Health for Life

Humanities – DL

DL had met leader and had discussed the changes that had been made since the Ofsted inspection and in particular for History this was following pupil voice and a review of the chronology for consistency.

With regards to Geography there would be a further focus on looking at surroundings whether this is national or international, consolidating knowledge, looking at environments, populations. Recently the school had introduced the use of Grammarsaurus.

Maths – PG

PG informed the committee there was a new approach to Maths post Ofsted in particular with a focus on maths mastery. There had been an introduction to learning by questioning with a five-area approach. The White Rose scheme was being used to support planning.

EYFS – CP

CP informed the committee that he had taken a walk around the whole school and noted that the early years setting was very positive, and rooms were calm and very well laid out, the Nursery setting would be up to capacity in January. There were some pupils that required one to one support and this support was in place and the support was a credit to all staff.

A visit was also taken to Year 6 Maths which was also very positive.

CP informed the committee that he had received very positive feedback from a member of the community on the school’s music provision.

SEN& ECT - JL

JL informed the committee that she had visited the new zone and the main zone with staff and pupils present.

Staff were said to be very enthusiastic and were willing to discuss ideas.

A list of ECT’s were provided and two had been met with and a meeting would be arranged with the remaining staff.

SMSC- GH

GH added that she had met with leader as the named governor for SMSC, she highlighted that it had been a joy to meet with her and that the enthusiasm was very reassuring. GH explained that she went through the criteria and had specifically looked at the silver criteria.

EAL – JM

JM had circulated a copy of her visit notes ahead of the meeting, she explained the following from her notes.

JM explained that the lead for EAL had created a spreadsheet using case studies and that this had helped to support strategies, it was said to be very impressive in supporting this area. Books had been made available across all proficiencies.

JM had stated that any trends to behavioural issues could be linked back to the language barrier and that this could be explored. CPD was discussed and the various platforms available. In addition, a wish list was discussed, this included English learning for Adults as this could support pupils at home also.

Data Analysis

In 2023/24 statutory assessments continued and predicted data and current assessment data was monitored, analysed and discussed as an agenda item at Governor Meetings. Governors have previously received training in analysing performance data. In this way, Governors are able to benchmark their data against similar schools, the Local Authority and schools nationally to ensure the school's standards and expectations are high and are able to be closely scrutinised to ensure good progress is made. It is this level of data analysis, which informs and leads school improvement planning and spending.

Governors particularly scrutinise pupil progress across all ability groups, including vulnerable groups, and the effective use of pupil premium. This year has shown a particular focus to support children who are EAL (English as an Additional Language) to address an area picked up by OFSTED.

It continues to be the governors' view that school data systems are strong, school leadership and teaching staff know their cohorts and individual student's data, using it effectively for interventions. Regular discussion takes place between governors and staff on the data. As the data has been collected over a sustained period, Governors are now able to review trends and consider if changes to operations have had a good impact on improvements to children's development.

Policies

Governors review all relevant policies on a programmed basis, to ensure that all guidance is current and up to date. Policies which are required to be published publicly can be found on the school website.

Specific attention is paid to ensure that the school complies with the Department for Education mandatory policy list.

Attention was also paid to the Attendance policy, given the national push in this area that continues into 24/25. School considered the way curriculum and subject knowledge impacts on outcomes for children and how this then is translated into pupil outcomes.

Financial Management

Our Governing Body contains Governors with significant expertise in financial management. Working with the Finance and Wellbeing Committee, they drive the financial management of the school. In recent years, the Governors have worked with school staff on an annual basis to achieve the School's Financial Value Standard (SFVS).

The impact of the Governors' role in school ensures that the school's budget is managed well; improvements are effective and contribute to pupil Quality of Education. The School's finances are scrutinised, and an audit report is provided to the governors on a termly basis. The Governor responsible for finances undertakes regular meetings with the School Business Manager including viewing in year transactions.

Staff

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers, School Business Manager, Chair and Vice Chair are trained in 'Safer Recruitment'. Governors are involved in the recruitment and selection of all teaching staff and use the appointment process to ensure that high quality staff, who share the school's ethos and aims, are appointed.

Governors are confident in the leadership team and the governors undertake the Headteacher's appraisal using external advice in the form of a School Improvement Advisor.

Governors have ensured that staffing is deployed effectively and for children's needs by measuring the impact of interventions linked to Quality of Education.

School Performance

Governors ensure school leaders are accountable for Quality of Education for all children. Since school was inspected by Ofsted in June 2022, leaders have continued to work tirelessly to improve and maintain Quality of Education for all children across school resulting from the improved inspection grade of **Good** from Ofsted (Report on our website [here](#)). The last set of data for 2024 results took a dip at KS2 in Maths, affecting the combined results. The School Improvement Plan for 2024-2025 takes steps to address this and work on TLAC is predicted to improve outcomes for all.

Governor Meeting Attendance

Governor attendance has continued to be monitored, with all absences being fully explained, accepted and approved by the Governing Body. Below are details of all Governing Body Meetings held in 2023/24.

- Three Full Governing Body Meetings
- Three Finance and Wellbeing Committee Meetings
- Three Quality of Education Committee Meetings
- One Annual Pay Committee Meeting
- One Headteacher Appraisal Meeting

These meetings are complimented by informal school visits with school leads, meetings on specific topics/issues and attending school meetings such as the school improvement advisor visits. Some of these have also been held virtually.

Complaints

We have duty to report to parents about complaints made to the school. In 2023-24 there were no formal complaints made to the Governing Body. Any other complaints were dealt with according to policy and made to school staff.

Governor Training

Governors undertake mandatory and optional training both online and in person. This may include safeguarding, Prevent Duty, induction, cyber security, understanding school finances, effective governance. Records of training are kept by school and regularly checked to make sure no gaps are evident. 1:1 meetings have taken place with Governors, along with changes in some responsibilities and an updated vision that has included stakeholder input. This work will continue in 24/25.

Transparency

Governors have listened to parents/carers and have ensured that the school offers high quality, timely information through its school website, and that communication is improved, e.g. SLT presence on the gates in the mornings, SIMS app and the online parent portal. We want to further enhance this by a new school website in 24/25.

We would urge parents/carers to make sure they are actively receiving communications from school and that they take every opportunity to engage in two way communication as this feedback will help school in making positive change for the children.

Governors are working hard to ensure that Pupil Premium funding is deployed effectively, the pupil premium plan and reports can be found on the website [here](#). Equally information about Sports Premium can be found [here](#).

Future & Continuous Improvement

The Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team are constantly striving to improve and develop the school. The priority areas for 2024-25 (below) allow further development of our Good with Outstanding features Ofsted grade aspiring for Outstanding in all areas.



Thank you for taking time to read this statement. As always should there are any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Governing Body or the Chair of Governors, Mr Sparkes, via the School Office. Should you wish to see more details on the targets and achievements of school, then the school website has many documents, some of which I have linked to in this report.

Mr S. Sparkes
Chair of Governors
Autumn 2024