

# The Meadows School

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Headteacher: Mr James Horspool



25<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Parent(s) and/or Carer(s),

## Governors' Annual Report to Parents

2023 – 2024

I am delighted to share with you how our school continues to excel and how as governors we have been hands on, working closely with the senior leadership team to ensure we are delivering the high standard of education your child deserves.

We know that The Meadows comes with unique challenges but we're all about finding creative solutions. Whether it's fine-tuning our teaching methods or adapting our curriculum to suit the differing individual needs of our student population, we've been pushing on all fronts. I am very pleased to report that there has been tremendous progress this year and we should all take this moment to celebrate the strides we are making as a school community.

The outcomes we've achieved including; 100% achievement of student encounters and Gatsby Benchmarks, receiving the Rights Respecting School Award (Bronze), and the successful completion of a Duke of Edinburgh 'expedition' do not occur by accident; they are as a result of the relentless efforts of our incredibly dedicated and conscientious team, who have the very best regards for every student in their care. The dedication and commitment they bring to the table, despite an increasingly challenging educational climate, is truly commendable. Our team continually rise to the occasion, putting the success of our students at the forefront, even when faced with external pressures and resource constraints.

**Pastoral Care:** At the heart of our collective achievement is a commitment to pastoral care, and we continue to focus our time on the 'whole child' so that every student, no matter their need, feels valued and heard. However, none of our achievements would be possible without the steadfast support from you, our wonderful parents and carers. Whether it is attending reviews, working alongside our specialists, or advocating your child's needs, your involvement has been crucial to the progress we've made.

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**Leadership and Growth:** A special mention must go to our new Head Teacher, who, in just a short time, has become the driving force behind a number of improvements. Navigating the complexities of running a special school isn't for the faint-hearted but Mr Horspool has shown true leadership, ably supported by his senior team, to tackle evolving priorities head-on.

In short, it's been a year to remember. We've made real progress across all areas of school life—teaching, learning, attendance, behaviour, and well-being. With your continued support, we'll keep striving to make this the best possible environment for your child to flourish.

**Curriculum and Teaching:** Tailoring education to meet the individual needs of our students is no small feat, but our teaching staff have stepped up in a big way to ensure that students thrive in a safe environment and children are settled and learning. It has been a pleasure to see first-hand, as well as from our school advisor, that 'total communication' strategies are now a driver for continued progress and there is evidence that students' independence is starting to grow.

Teachers are continuing to adapt teaching methods and plans are already in place to further ensure that a more creative curriculum makes learning accessible, engaging, and effective for every child, regardless of their starting point. From sensory integration strategies to more personalised learning pathways, we're beginning to see impact.

**Attendance and Behaviour:** Attendance remains a critical focus. Quite simply, if students are not in school, they miss out on valuable learning opportunities. While our attendance rates exceeded the national average, we know there is still room for improvement. Every day a child is in school makes a difference, so we ask for your support in helping your child attend as regularly as possible.

Allow me to highlight some of our significant achievements and developments over the past academic year (2023-2024):

- Excellent outcomes for students across a range of accredited courses.
- Introduction and refinement of processes ensuring school compliance is meeting expectation, for example; the provision of end of year reports to parents.
- Development of staff and the introduction of new colleagues to maximise impact on student progress and opportunities to learn.
- Creation of new well-being strategies and the delivery of activities to improve positivity for students and staff.
- Positive destination outcomes for students who completed their journey at The Meadows School and moved on to the next stage of their development.

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## How did the Governors help the school to achieve its successes?

In everything we do as governors, we consider our 3 Core functions.

### 1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

There is a detailed and robust School Development Plan which clearly reflects the vision of the school.

It continues to be our ambition as governors to facilitate, through challenging and supporting staff, an improved educational journey; therefore, ensuring our students are well prepared for their next phase of education. We confidently believe that this is being achieved.

### 2. Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its students, and the performance management of staff

Clear objectives are established and agreed for the Head Teacher and all staff, relating to school improvement areas – primarily outcomes of the Ofsted inspection. Governors are aware of school strengths and areas for improvement and regularly challenge leaders about development areas.

Regular information sharing from the Headteacher, and Senior Leaders enables Governors to monitor standards and challenge areas that need improvement. This process enables the Governors to identify actions and monitor outcomes.

The Governors and school leaders agree and follow a monitoring cycle.

A Student and Curriculum Committee meeting takes place termly to quality assure progress and standards throughout the curriculum.

Governors are expected to come into school to check that what the Head Teacher and Senior Leaders are saying about the school is correct. We continue to monitor the performance of staff, look at lesson plans, observe lessons and review progress in students' work. We have challenged the leadership about standards and progress and continue to meet with leaders to evaluate the curriculum.

Governors are always very impressed with all that we see in and around school. The Headteacher, Senior Leadership and all the staff work hard to deliver a very stimulating and interesting curriculum. We see children who are happy, working hard and engaged in their learning.

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### 3. Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources

Governors have regularly met during the year with the Head Teacher, School Business Manager and Budget Officer to monitor the school budget and check that funds have been well spent. The Governors have ensured that budget setting has reflected the priorities in the school development plan and that funds have been spent appropriately to improve standards.

The school continues to invest in professional development and training. ECTs (Early Career Teachers) have been effectively supported and have benefitted from one-to-one mentoring. As a result, our new members of staff quickly know the school's way of working so that there is little disruption and children receive the highest standards of teaching as quickly as possible.

#### What is our focus for this year?

- Comprehensive development and sequencing of the curriculum and associated assessment strategies in all areas and across all year groups.
- Enhancement of our positive behaviour ethos, through upskilling staff, developing and maintaining consistent approaches and sharing information with key people.
- Expansion of our community engagement to introduce new opportunities for students to learn and enhance their real-world skills and experiences.
- Formation of plans with key stakeholders to ensure the long-term financial stability and growth of The Meadows School is achieved.

**And finally**, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to fellow Governors for their hard work and the dedication they bring to their roles at The Meadows. Serving in a voluntary capacity, they give their time generously, attending meetings, speaking with external providers and participating in interviews to name but a few roles. Their commitment is instrumental in ensuring that we maintain the high standards we all want for our children.

I hope this review of governance has provided valuable insights into the work we do behind the scenes to ensure our school continues to flourish.

On behalf of the governing body.

Yours sincerely,



Mr P Butcher

**Chair of Governors**

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