



***Believe to Achieve***

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## **GOVERNORS' REPORT**

### **BARROW HEDGES PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **2014/2015**

As we come to the end of the academic year we can report on another very busy and successful year. Over the past twelve months we have:

- welcomed a number of new teachers who have made a valuable contribution to the work of the school;
- been independently verified as a "good" school by Ofsted;
- introduced a new curriculum which both staff and children are enjoying and is having positive effects on children's learning;
- seen our children achieve high standards again in both their academic and extra-curricular activities;
- commenced a challenging building expansion that will see us finally reach three forms of entry;
- reviewed how we govern and manage the school so that we make best use of the time and money available to us.

As a local authority maintained Community School, we have requirements to meet for both Sutton Council and for the Department for Education and we need to discharge our legal responsibilities. However, the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team always maintain an overriding principle that we should be guided in all we do by *what is best for the children?* This report is intended to show how we have achieved that this year.

This is my first term as Chair of Governors having served the autumn and spring terms as Vice-Chair. Parents will be aware that this role became vacant on the resignation of the previous Chair, Alison Myerscough, who was battling with her long-term illness. Sadly, Alison lost her battle. The school benefitted hugely from Alison's involvement in the Governing Body over a number of years and she will undoubtedly be missed by very many both here at Barrow Hedges and in the wider local community. I should also like to express my personal thanks to Anna Bowman for stepping up to the role of Chair from Vice-Chair when Alison resigned and for her unstinting support to both me and the school as we have made the necessary changes to the governing body.

Finally, I would also like to express my gratitude to the whole of the Senior Leadership Team who have done an outstanding job in leading and managing the school over the past academic year.

Have an enjoyable and restful summer break and we look forward to welcoming new children, parents, teachers and other staff in September.

Mike Smith  
Chair, Barrow Hedges Governing Body

## EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

The Governing Body monitors educational standards through the new *Curriculum and Standards Committee* which meets at least once a term. We receive three kinds of reports. These are reports: on the quality of teaching in each subject area and each year group; on overall pupil achievement looking at test results and teacher assessments of children's levels; and on the progress pupils have made during their time in the school. As we reported last year, we are committed to accelerating the progress of all pupils. This is why, working with the Headteacher, we have set the vision of an aspirational Barrow Hedges progress target 33% above the national expectation and we use this target alongside the national expectation to assess the school's standards.

For more information on the data take a look at the School's own website: under curriculum, school performance data.

You may also find the following website interesting  
[www.dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk)

Reports on pupil progress show for each of the main curriculum areas how children in each year group are progressing. This enables us to identify whether there are particular groups of children who are doing better or worse than others and whether there are differences between particular subject areas. Our relentless focus has been on the progress reports as these give us sufficient early indications of any areas of concern which means we can address these in time before children sit their tests. It is important to us that we look at how well **all** children are doing irrespective of their starting points.

Over the year we have been pleased to see that the vast majority of children are at least progressing in line with national expectations and in very many cases children are making even better progress. There have been one or two areas of concern over the year and when we notice this we challenge the Senior



Leadership Team to explain what they propose to do to address those areas of concern. Through this process we have seen these areas of concern successfully addressed and a steady improvement in children's outcomes has been the result.

As I write, we have just received the results for Key Stage 1 & 2 and initial indications are that yet again children have done extremely well. Congratulations to all the staff and children involved and we wish the Year 6 children well as they move on to the next stage of their educational career.

Governors have continued to receive regular updates on the provision being made for pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium (based on free school meals). These reports have been refined this year so that we can see how successful this provision is in addressing the needs of such children. A similar approach is also being used in identifying the provision made for sporting activities funded through the Sports Grant. Parents can find out more about both of these on the school website: [www.barrowhedges.com](http://www.barrowhedges.com); then "our school" and scroll down to find the relevant attachment.

In last year's annual report we announced the appointment of the new Head of Inclusion. Mikey Lowes has substantially overhauled our approach to supporting children with SEN building on the work Louise Wood and Laura Smith did last year. The Governing Body now have improved information on the support provided to children with additional needs and we can see how this support is specifically tailored for each child. There is also a close monitoring programme which enables changes to be made to this provision so that we can benefit each child as they progress through the school.

The Governing Body relies heavily on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for information on the quality of teaching and the progress of children. However, we also receive assurance about quality through our own more detailed monitoring and through external review. We have appointed Link Governors for mathematics, English, information technology, early years, SEN, behaviour and attendance. These Link Governors meet periodically with relevant staff to go through various reports and case studies and they report back to the Governing Body. The SLT make very effective use of external advisers, many from the London Borough of Sutton and the governors receive these reports for information and as an independent source to verify quality of teaching. This year, of course, we have also had the Ofsted Inspection team in and it is a source of great satisfaction that we are now recognised as being a “good” school. Our next target will be to get to “outstanding” and our internal evaluation says we are well on the way towards this.

**ATTENDANCE:** Last year governors asked parents and carers to help us achieve our target of 97.3%. To further this aim, Louise Wood re-established the positive attendance strategies that had been in place before her maternity leave. Governors were pleased to hear that together these were successful and the target was met. In recognition of the fact that this is a very high level of attendance, the governors have agreed a target next year of 97.4%

## STAFFING

This year we welcomed a number of new teachers several of whom were newly qualified teachers (NQTs). We know a number of parents were concerned about the staff turnover last September. The Governing Body had complete confidence in the ability of Louise Wood and her team to make the right decisions on appointing new staff and that confidence has been entirely vindicated with the new teachers adding further to the strengths of our existing staff team. It is never easy for new staff to settle and supporting a large number of teachers in their first and second year of teaching is a challenge for our more experienced members of staff. That we have so successfully completed the academic year with further improvements to standards and a very happy and motivated pupil population is a credit to everyone involved.

Over the year we have also seen further strengthening of the team of teaching assistants. We recognise the valuable contribution made to the school of a strong TA team and the evidence is that the children are benefiting hugely from their work. The rigorous approach being taken by Mikey Lowes in the performance management for TAs means that we have a good understanding of their training and support needs and through addressing this we will have an even stronger team over the year ahead.

A focus for this year has been the development of a strong inclusion team under the leadership of Mikey Lowes. This has gradually taken shape and we are well placed to provide a strong offering to children in need of additional support.

Our staff team has been relatively stable this year but we have had a small number of leavers and we wish them well in their future roles. A special mention must go to Mrs Lorraine Knopek who has served the children of Barrow Hedges for many years and has now made the decision to retire. The children have benefitted enormously from Lorraine’s work both in teaching French and in running the Club Français. We wish Lorraine a happy and fulfilling retirement.

Many parents will be aware that there is now an acute shortage of teachers across the country and many Sutton schools have struggled to replace staff. It is therefore particularly pleasing to be able to say that Louise Wood and her team have yet again made a number of new appointments to the vacant permanent staff positions and we will have a full complement of staff for September. It is a measure of the ever increasing reputation of the school that teachers and other staff are so keen to apply to work with us.

This year has also seen a restructuring of the staff that provide administrative support to the school. There is now much more clarity in the roles each member of the team fulfils and we are grateful to them for the

positive way in which they have responded to the changes and look forward to ever more efficient working in the future.

## **OVERSEEING FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**

Last November the Governing Body decided to amalgamate the work of Finance, Personnel & Salaries and Premises Committees into a single Resources Committee which came into effect in the summer term.

The Resources Committee working closely with the Head Teacher and Bursar is responsible for ensuring effective financial management. That breaks down into two broad jobs: checking that the money is being spent on the right things and checking that it is being spent properly. Ensuring money is well spent comes in various forms. An example of this is we undertake a benchmarking exercise to demonstrate how our spend compares with other schools. Spending on the right things means developing a budget that delivers the best educational outcomes possible for the children with the resources we have and making sure plans, such as the School Improvement Plan, are delivered.

Most of our funding comes from the Local Authority as formula funding. There are supplements for example SEN for targeted pupils, Pupil Premium (supports children on free school meals) and Sports Grant. Our total funding plus income for the 2014/15 financial year totalled £2.4 million and the majority of expenditure, some £1.8 million, is staffing costs. A further £154,000 is premises related and £385,000 other costs i.e. learning resources equipment and consumables, ICT resources, insurance and catering.

This year we have worked with the Curriculum and Standards Committee in making judgements about the value for money we get from the Pupil Premium and sports funding by looking at costs against the impact on pupil attainment. Details of funding are included in the reports mentioned earlier in this annual report. We would like to take this opportunity to remind parents that the additional money for Pupil Premium is linked to entitlement to free school meals so even though all pupils in the infant range now receive a free meal we urge parents of infant pupils to still register for the free meals to ensure we receive the maximum grant for this element of the budget.

The Resources Committee receives and monitors income and expenditure reports on the major building work in progress to support the 3 form expansion. As a result of the build we have put on hold many of the items in the Asset Management Plan. On completion of the build we will then move forward to provide an outstanding learning environment and to prioritise and promote a love of learning within the school community as part of the commitment outlined in our mission statement.

The school and pupils have again benefited significantly from the various fund raising events organised by the PTA, which has provided the money for additional items and activities. The Governors would like to formally thank the PTA for their continual support. A thank you to the parents who contributed to the School Fund your donations, along with the PTA's hard work, has provided extras to enrich and enhance the curriculum.

At the end of the last financial year the school carried forward a small surplus and the school's finances remain in a healthy state. We are always aware there may be unforeseen expenditure and so ensure there is flexibility within the budget should any changes arise.

Looking to the future the Governing Body has recently approved a budget for 2015/16. We will continue to oversee the school's financial performance and challenge for value for money and efficiency.

## EXPANDED SCHOOL

This time last year we were at the planning stage and our aspirations still somewhat theoretical. In the last few weeks you will have seen significant activity being undertaken at the school by our contractor Lakehouse. We already have one new extra Infant classroom.

Now the particular focus is ground works cutting into the bank, the back of the hall, and removal of the roof above the old Year 5/6 corridor. Over the summer, with the school unoccupied, activity will be ramped up. The second storey above the Year 5/6 corridor and the extended hall should be substantially complete when we return to school in September.



The target is that the works will be complete by Christmas this year with a phased occupation of the new areas starting at October half-term.

We appreciate the patience of parents and residents in dealing with the potential disruption but so far the brunt of this has been dealt with by the Head and her team. The children have been fantastic in adapting to the constrained site and have shown great interest in the

works. We plan on holding a series of surgeries with the contractor to update all stakeholders. Regular communications will continue through Parent Mail and *Hedgelines*. We are all very much looking forward to making full use of our expanded school in 2016.

## SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION

***Ensuring the safety and welfare of our pupils is of the utmost importance.***

As a Governing Body we ensure that the School's policies, procedures and training are effective and comply with the law. We follow best practice by having a Child protection link governor as well as a deputy. Governors have reviewed and are satisfied with the school's child protection policy.

Mikey Lowes the Inclusion Manager is the Designated Lead for Safeguarding, taking over from Louise Wood who will now be the deputy Designated Lead.

All new teaching staff received safeguarding training from the London Borough of Sutton. Additional updates have been communicated through Inset days. For the pupils, Child-line gave a presentation as well as providing a workshop for year 5 pupils where content was delivered in an age appropriate manner.



This year there has been no new legislation but much of the advice and guidance has been reviewed. These reviews have focused on radicalisation, social media and new to industry Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks. Appropriate measures have been taken in the school to cover all of these.

Safeguarding within the school expansion programme has been a clear priority. Key site people have been DBS vetted and personnel who have not yet had their status confirmed are not permitted outside of the segregated fenced off building works area.

Fire drills have and will continue to be carried out. This is to ensure optimum exit routes from the building are tested and that the building works do not impede an exit in the event of an emergency.

The School has and continues to demonstrate to the Governing Body that safeguarding & child protection is embedded in its ethos as well as actively seeking new opportunities for improvement.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

There have been a number of changes in the school governance over the past year. In order to reflect latest guidance on effective governing bodies we have reconstituted and in the process reduced the number of governors to 14 with a larger proportion of co-opted governors. This approach has the double benefit of allowing us to recruit from a wider pool of potential governors and to ensure that we have the right spread of skills on the governing body. All governors complete an annual skills assessment which enables us to ensure they carry out roles that reflect their particular strengths and allows us to point them to training sessions that can extend their range of skills.

At the same time as reconstituting, we also changed our committee structure so that we reduce the amount of governor meetings and the associated demands on our SLT. As highlighted earlier in this report, we now have just two committees, a Curriculum and Standards Committee and a Resources Committee. The governing body has the power to set up working groups where there are particular aspects of work that require greater governor oversight. At present there is one such working group, the New Build Development Group.

The role of the school governors is to set the overall strategy for the school. The responsibility for day-to-day management of activities rests with the SLT. As we prepared for the Ofsted Inspection, it was important for the Governing Body to review our overall strategy to ensure it continues to reflect our aspirations for the school and to provide a framework for future planning. This was done in a meeting with the SLT and we published our updated vision and mission in the autumn 2014 (see right hand panel). This was sent to parents via *Hedgelines*.

### BELIEVE TO ACHIEVE

#### Our Vision

To be an outstanding primary school which is the school of choice for the local community producing well balanced, ambitious and principled children, primed for the challenges ahead.

#### Our Mission

At Barrow Hedges we believe that there is no limit to what our pupils can achieve. We nurture the potential talents of all our pupils. Through high achievement and a love of learning, our pupils leave us ready to make a valued contribution to society.

#### Our Core Values

Care  
Honesty  
Responsibility  
Respect

#### Our Guiding Principles

- To develop well balanced children who have a broad range of experiences, a thirst for learning and are well prepared for the next step of their journey.
- Our children will demonstrate resilience, adaptability and preparedness to take risks.
- Our children will have a strong moral compass with a positive attitude towards others.
- We will provide a high quality, coherent, broad and balanced curriculum for 3 to 11 year olds which is delivered and supported by outstanding teaching and wider opportunities.
- We have high aspirations for all of our children.
- We seek to be first class with excellent leadership, well qualified and knowledgeable staff who are committed to improvement.
- We strive to provide a stimulating, nurturing environment in which to learn, work and play safely.
- We see parents, carers and others in the local community as integral to the life of the school and will seek to involve them as much as possible in our work.
- We will ensure that our resources are managed efficiently and deployed where they give maximum benefit to the children.

A number of governors have left for various reasons and so we have done a considerable amount of recruitment. We have welcomed two new parent governors and a new co-opted staff governor. We expect two more co-opted governors before the end of the summer term.

To see a full list of governors and their current roles and to find out more about the work of the Governors and the Barrow Hedges Governing Body please see our page on the school website: [www.barrowhedges.com](http://www.barrowhedges.com) or the Department for Education Governors' handbook, at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and use the search function.

### **Governors' Training**

We place a lot of importance on training as it is important for our governors to understand their responsibilities and remain up to date. The school buys in to the governor training provided by the London Borough of Sutton. All governors have membership of the National Governors Association, which provides news and advice.

We hold a couple of Full Governing Body training sessions at school when we work with the senior management team. In November this included a review and update of your school vision, motto and guiding principles, which were shared with parents and in June discussed the changes to the assessment and replacing levels.

Governors have also spent time in school, including 2 Governors' Days in October and June. The highlight of these days is our "pupil voice" interviews with the children. They are always great ambassadors for the school and are enthusiastic to share their experiences and views with us.