



GOVERNORS' REPORT

BARROW HEDGES PRIMARY SCHOOL

2013/2014

The end of the academic year is a chance for the Governing Body to review their work over the last year and consider how they have fulfilled their responsibilities. This last year has been particularly important as it followed the Ofsted inspection. We have assessed how we work with and how we challenge the School and have reviewed the information we receive from Louise Wood, our Headteacher.

We have guidance to follow on the role and purpose of governance from the Department for Education as well as legal responsibilities, however as a Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team the overriding principle we return to is: *what is best for the children?* This is the foundation of everything we do.



The report has updates from our committees and working parties, highlighting the key issues and achievements of the last year.

The Governing Body have seen the hard work of Louise Wood, Laura Smith (Deputy Headteacher), the Senior Leadership Team, the teaching and support staff. The results of this are seen in the progress the children are making and the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

Every year brings a new set of issues and next year is no different, for 2014/2015 it will be overseeing the induction of our new teachers and the introduction of a new curriculum while continuing to focus on the progress of the children. The Governing Body will continue to challenge as well as support the School in the new academic year.

The Governing Body would like to send all best wishes to Alison Myerscough, Chair of Governors, for her recuperation from hip surgery, and look forward to her return in the Autumn Term.

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

Anna Bowman
Vice-Chair, Barrow Hedges Governing Body

EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

A revised cycle of monitoring and evaluation began in the Autumn Term. The Curriculum and Pupils Committee regularly receive reports of lesson observations carried out by the Senior Leadership Team, summarising the quality of teaching and quality of marking. We are pleased to have seen a rise in good and outstanding grades.

Another important role of the Committee is to receive analysis of attainment and progress, which the children had made in reading, writing and mathematics (see more detail in The Transformation of Progress Data, below). We receive data from *RAISEonline* for years 2 and 6 based on their SATs tests as well as the School's own data on all year groups. We are able to compare Barrow Hedges' results to the national averages, and compare different groups of children (e.g. SEN) against national averages and Barrow Hedges.

Governors regularly receive updates on the use of money received for Pupil Premium children (based on free school meals). It is important that the money is used effectively and resources are deployed within the school to enhance the progress of children. We also review the Sports grant expenditure. Parents can find out more about both of these on the school website: www.barrowhedges.com; then "our school" and scroll down to find the relevant attachment.

Louise Wood and Laura Smith have thoroughly reviewed our approach to SEN and the Governors are now much more confident that children's needs are being accurately assessed. The Governing Body receive information showing how pupils with SEN are progressing by comparison to all children in the year group. This is helping us to ensure the right level of support is given to these pupils to help them progress. Our new Head of Inclusion, who starts in September, will continue to refine how we work with SEN children.



Throughout the year there have been regular visits by the Link Governors for mathematics and literacy. They have observed lessons and spoken to the subject leaders about their responsibilities, their systems for monitoring and evaluation and specific areas for development. They report back to the Committee. You will have seen an update from our Mathematics Link Governor in Hedgelines.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF PROGRESS DATA

During the academic year 2013/14 Governors saw significant change in the provision and monitoring of progress data for all children. One change visible to parents is the termly reports they receive.

The Governors 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.

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

We have challenged the Headteacher on the visibility, detail and reporting of the progress pupils make so we can assess against our targets. We have aligned the timings of our meetings to match the School's assessment patterns and thus make our monitoring more efficient & timely.

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Local Authority have worked to significantly improve progress data, transforming this into meaningful reports. The impact of this

has been:

-  Governors now receive timely & sufficiently detailed reporting on the progress achieved by each year group in Reading, Writing and Maths. This data enables us to monitor, have discussion with and challenge the Headteacher termly on the progress achieved.
-  The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and teachers monitor at a class and pupil level. This information is used in many ways to identify successes or where additional support maybe required.

Governors are extremely pleased to see how the school has progressed and transformed its data into key management information.

OVERSEEING FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

One of the 3 core strategic functions of the Governing Body is to oversee the financial performance of the school, making sure its money is well spent. Working with the Headteacher, the School Bursar is instrumental in these aims as they review and prepare financial papers.

Overseeing financial performance starts with the budget so Governors can compare this against actual financial performance. The Governing Body approved the 2013/14 budget of just over £2 million in the summer term 2013 and since then Finance Committee have spent considerable time in reviewing, questioning & challenging the Headteacher on actual vs. budget performance. Most of our funding comes from the Local Education Authority and the majority of expenditure, some £1.6 million, is staffing costs, and a further £150,000 are premise related costs.

Ensuring money is well spent comes in various forms. A recent example of this is a benchmarking exercise conducted this year to demonstrate how our spend compares with other schools.

Pupil Premium funding is an important financial resource for the school and it directly helps those children who they receive it for. If you think your child may be eligible for free school meals or has been in the last 6 years please talk to the school for more advice.

During this year the School received additional funding the Sports Grant and Pupil Premium funding. We held the Headteacher to account in terms of the allocation of the funds, expected impact and it's monitoring. The plans for Pupil Premium and the Sports Grant are on the school's website.

With the tremendous ongoing support of parents and friends the PTA have contributed to key events such as Creativity Week Multicultural Day as well as purchasing new reading books and playground equipment among many other things.

Governors have reviewed the School's Standards for Financial Management as well as the Financial Risk and Controls summary. With the assistance of our own Responsible Officer and 3rd parties such as the London Borough of Sutton Internal Audit service, we have independent assurance that Barrow Hedges' internal controls & processes are fit for purpose.

Looking to the future:

- £ The 2014/15 budget was recently approved by the Full Governing Body.
- £ The Finance Committee has reviewed the School's financial plans to 2017 by which time the School will be fully 3 form.
- £ We will continue to oversee the School's financial performance and challenge for value for money and efficiency.

EXPANDED SCHOOL

For the last few months a working party of Governors, Headteacher and Bursar have been working hard to ensure that the School has the building capacity for three forms per year throughout the School. The new building (artist's impression shown below) needs to be complete by September 2015.

It is no easy task as we have been given a limited budget, a time deadline and have to work on a very restricted site whilst maintaining the operation of the School and minimising the impact on the children and staff. For these reasons we have taken time and carefully planned the works.

The good news is that planning permission for the project was granted on 25th June 2014 and we have had the budget signed off by the Local Authority.

Those parents and neighbours who came to the open evening at the end of last year will have seen the plans for the new building. As well as the requisite number of classrooms, the extended school will give us a bigger hall, new music and computing rooms and an improved entrance area.



There is hard work ahead of us so please bear with us over the next 12 months or so as there will be temporary changes to the School to accommodate the works. We will minimise the disruption to the School operations and provide regular updates through Hedgelines on the construction activity.

We hope you are excited as we are. Not only will it improve the school site and environment but it will be a valuable learning experience for the children. There will be more information available during the construction period for parents and children.

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION

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

The Headteacher is the Designated Lead for Safeguarding with the Deputy Headteacher as her second. Following best practice, the Governing Body have a Child protection Link Governor as well as a deputy. This year, to enhance the knowledge of the Governing Body 5 Governors have received safeguarding training.

As a Governing Body we ensure that the School's policies, procedures and training are effective and comply with the law. This changes year on year, for example new statutory guidance '[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)' was issued by the DfE earlier this year and it came into immediate effect.

The Curriculum and Pupils Committee reviews the Child Protection Policy. This year it made recommendations that were passed to the Local Authority who in turn are looking to adopt these recommendations for all schools in the Borough. The policy can be found on the School's website.



Safer recruitment is an important aspect to safeguarding, which the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Chair of Governors have been trained in. At least one will have been present in all of our recruitment & interview processes. Successful candidates will be checked via the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS, and previously CRB), which conducts criminal record checks. The results are held in the School and reviewed every 2 years. All new staff receive an induction pack which covers the Child Protection Policy and procedures.

You may have seen the recent introduction of the colour-coded lanyards for visitors to the School. Red identifies those who have not been cleared and therefore cannot be left unsupervised with children.

The School is in the process of completing its annual Schools Safeguarding Compliance Self-Assessment audit checklist. This is produced by Sutton's Local Safeguarding Children Board and is used to ensure all aspects of Safeguarding are complied with.

The School has and continues to demonstrate to the Governing Body that safeguarding & child protection are embedded in its ethos. We will be conducting a gap analysis for Safeguarding in the context of the new building works.

ATTENDANCE: Governors agree an attendance target annually. For 2013/14 this was 97.3% and 97.1% was achieved. All our year groups have improved their attendance compared to the previous year except year 3 who have remained about the same. We are pleased to see the improvements and ask parents and carers to help us achieve our target next year of 97.3%.

STAFFING

New pay and appraisal policies for teaching staff

A new performance related pay policy for teachers was introduced from September 2013, which parents may have seen or heard about in the press. Governors worked closely with Mrs Wood to develop a policy for Barrow Hedges. The new policy allows for outstanding teachers to receive an increase higher than they could have done under the previous policy and good teachers' increases will be on a par with the old policy. This allows the Headteacher and Governors to reward excellent performance.

The Headteacher and her senior leadership team are responsible for effectively managing all staff, and performance is monitored under a new appraisal policy introduced from Autumn 2013. The first pay increases under the new policies will be in September 2014. A new Governors' Pay Committee has been set up to audit the application of both the pay and appraisal policies and review and approve the recommendations of the Headteacher for all pay increases.

Under the old policy, Governors received a performance management report from the Headteacher in the Spring Term of 2014. The report enabled governors to understand the quality of teaching and how resources are deployed across the school to support learning.

Staffing structure and budget

Governors work with the Headteacher to regularly review the staffing structure making strategic decisions to ensure the progress of all children and the effective management of the School while remaining conscious of a limited budget.

In the last 6 months we have agreed the addition of an out of class Inclusion Manager and an Assistant Site Supervisor. Both positions reflect the demands of a growing school.

GOVERNORS' TRAINING

Governors' bring with them a great wealth and variety of experience, but it is important for them to understand the specific role of a governor and to be up to date with legislation and education.

In the last 12 months, we have run two whole Governing Body training sessions, which have covered: an update on the Ofsted framework; a review of performance and impact of the Governing Body; the new

primary curriculum. Additionally, many individual governors have attended external governor training courses.

In the last year there have been 2 Governors' Days when Governors visit the School. The increased emphasis on 'children's thirst for learning' in the revised Ofsted Evaluation Schedule was chosen as the focus for one day and the second was 'One year on from Ofsted – what do the children think?' These days are a wonderful opportunity to visit the classrooms, observe lessons, ask the staff questions and to have really interesting conversations with the children to find out their views. We found that the pupils were well informed, articulate and confident when sharing their views and expressing ideas for their School.

Who are the Governors?

Governors are a mix of the Headteacher, parents, staff, a local councillor and co-opted governors who are from the local community. Anyone can apply to be a co-opted governor and we look to have a wide range of skills and experience including: accountancy, school finance, education, HR, management, premises. Our annual skills audit helps to identify gaps and we use this when we are recruiting new governors.

We are fortunate that we usually have plenty of people interested in being a governor at Barrow Hedges and hold elections for parent governors and follow a recruitment process for co-opted governors.

Finally,

There will be some vacancies for parent governors next term as people complete their term of office. Please look out for the letters about the election and consider applying.

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 or the Department for Education Governors' handbook, at www.gov.uk and use the search function.