



Governors' Annual Report

2019-2020



In what proved to be a challenging end to the year, the Governors want to express thanks to the staff who worked tirelessly through the difficulties resulting from the COVID19 pandemic. So much care and attention were given to ensuring that the school was as safe as possible so that our children could continue coming to school. We know that was appreciated by many, notably the Local Authority recognised that the school had provided consistent education for our children throughout 'lockdown'.

The year 2019/20 brought challenges for the school and the whole community, resulting from the COVID19 pandemic. Governors were very appreciative of the demands placed on the headteacher and staff for the final 5 months of the year. The headteacher ensured that the Board was fully appraised of arrangements to keep pupils and staff safe and commended her and her staff for their hard work during this period.

The Governing Board continued to carry out its responsibilities with virtual meetings each month. Governors also took part in virtual governor training sessions. In the main, with regret, governor visits to school were curtailed at least until the end of the summer term.

Changes in personnel

During the year, two governors resigned. Patricia Holmes had been Vice Chair of Governors for two and a half years and had been Link Governor for SEND. Although she had to resign as a governor, we were very pleased that Patricia agreed to become an Associate Member, so not losing contact with the Board completely. Joyce Adjei had been a governor for a year but found it difficult to manage the demands of her work with her commitment to the Board. We thanked them both for their contribution to the work of the Board. After a very encouraging recruitment exercise the Board was delighted to welcome two new governors for the final meeting of the year. Martin Hammond was appointed as a Co-opted Governor, and Paul Oshisanya was appointed as our Local Authority Governor. Sadly, we were unable to recruit a second Parent Governor again during the year. In September 2019 David Laird was appointed as Clerk to the Governing Board.

Outcomes of projects initiated by the Local Authority in 2018-19

At the start of the year Willow Tree Nursery became part of Red Gates School. There were considerable problems for the first term accommodating the three-year-old nursery class as well as children new to Reception due to delays in delivery of the two new modular classrooms and separate outdoor play space. Governors were concerned about the impact of the delays, which meant that new Reception children were only able to attend part-time until January, and were grateful to the headteacher and staff who worked so hard to minimise the impact on the children. Governors were also concerned to hear that there was no positive outcome following completion of the Feasibility Study, because the Local Authority was undertaking an audit of its SEND provision across the borough. We hope that this will result in consultation in 2020-21, and lead to plans to improve the facilities for our children and staff.



Lorraine Slee
Headteacher
CROYDON COUNCIL

Statutory responsibilities for Safeguarding and Health and Safety

Governors have a statutory duty for Safeguarding. In September, governors were pleased to hear of the appointment to the staff of Karen Williams, as Designated Safeguarding lead and Family Liaison Officer. Lorraine Slee continued in her role as Designated Safeguarding Supervision Lead, to provide support to staff to enable them to work effectively in delivering safe, effective, and high-quality services to children and their families. The Safeguarding Governor, Barbara Alcaraz, delivered a termly report to governors about different aspects of safeguarding. An annual audit report on safeguarding was submitted to the Local Authority and shared with the Board. We also received regular reports on Health and Safety policy and practices, including the work of the Health and Safety Committee, which has membership including staff and the designated Governor (James Stremes).

Governor monitoring

The Head Teacher and her Senior Leadership Team identified priorities, planned and actioned developments for these, closely monitoring impact and outcomes. During the first half of the year the Governing Board monitored school improvement priorities through regular meetings and visits to school. The Pathway Leaders (Early Years, Sensory, ASD and Learning, Independence and Social Skills – LISS) made presentations about the curriculum in their Pathway, and Governors were able to spend time in classrooms to see the 'curriculum in action'. As a result of 'lockdown' the Governing Board continued to carry out its responsibilities with virtual meetings each month. Hopefully governor visits to school will be able to resume at some point in 2020-21.

Governor training and development

Governors have access to face-to-face training and on-line learning in order to develop their understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Board, and to ensure they are clear about what is expected of them as individuals. All new governors undertake Induction training. Many governors also took part in virtual governor training sessions provided during the second half of the year.

One of the roles of the Board is reviewing and agreeing policies. Governors reviewed and updated many policies during the year – these are available on the school website.

Governing Board's effectiveness and impact

What were the significant challenges for the Governing Board in 2019/2020

Following a meeting in July 2019, the Board agreed that the main points for our development in 2019/2020 were:

- To further develop Governors' strategic knowledge and understanding of the school, and manage the workload
- To find ways to become a more visible presence within the school community
- To increase governor understanding of development and change, initially with a focus on curriculum development and assessment
- To focus on succession planning for the strategic governing body, ensuring that we are able to fulfil our statutory responsibilities, and that the workload and experiences are shared.



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Lorraine Slee
Headteacher
CROYDON COUNCIL

How were the challenges met?

During the year, greater opportunities for robust challenge and support were provided through Link Governor visits (particularly Safeguarding, Health and Safety, SEND and Finance) and a newly formed Finance Committee. Link Governors and the Chair of the Finance Committee reported into full Governing Board meetings.

Some progress was made towards members of the Board becoming a more visible presence within the school community, although developing regular and meaningful contact with parents, staff and the wider community remains a challenge. Photographs of Governors were displayed in the school entrance hall, and a termly newsletter to parents was established (published on the school website). Many of our governors work full-time but some were able to visit during the school day, both for training sessions about aspects of the curriculum, led by staff members and to visit classrooms. Members of staff were also invited to attend a Board meeting to report or present on their particular area of responsibility. The Deputy Head, as an Associate Member, reported regularly to the board on curriculum development and assessment. The Board has also agreed an Open Meeting Protocol, by which individual parents, members of staff or the community may be invited or request to attend as observers.

During the year, the role of Induction Governor was established, and induction documents specific to our school were developed ready for September 2020. Through tracking of governor training records, it was clear that more governors were undertaking relevant training, either face to face or virtual training. Establishing a Finance Committee provided a new opportunity to Chair meetings, and other governors chaired or participated in Panel meetings. Some progress was made towards establishing an Annual Work Planner to inform the setting of agendas for meetings throughout the year, to ensure that all aspects of the Board's monitoring and evaluation of progress are covered effectively. The appointment of a professional Clerk provided guidance to the Board on a range of issues and ensured more effective management of documents and workload.

In the coming year (2020 -2021) our priorities are:

- To be rigorous in our financial oversight of the school's budget in both the short and longer term, ensuring that the budget is well spent, fulfilling the criteria of best value, so allowing us to implement the priorities set out in our School Improvement Plan, whilst also ensuring long-term financial stability;
- To develop, over the next two to three years, a staged plan which lays out ways in which we will increase the school's involvement with the local community, so that school and community may benefit from a deeper, mutually rewarding relationship;
- To champion mental health and wellbeing for the whole school, keeping mental health and wellbeing uppermost on our agendas, so that the mental health of children, staff, families, and governors is looked after in school.
- To continue with our own learning and development, as individuals and as a Board, to ensure we fulfil our statutory responsibilities, supporting and challenging the school's leadership to drive school improvement forward.

How you can contact the Governing Board

We would be delighted to hear your views and opinions of our school. The school sends out questionnaires, and you can also complete the questionnaire on line at Parent View at <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/> . If you would like to discuss something in particular, please contact the Chair, either by email (spowell32.306@lgflmail.org) or contact the school office and mark your letter 'for the attention of the Chair of Governors'.



Lorraine Slee
Headteacher
CROYDON COUNCIL