

Governors Annual Report and Annual Governance Statement (2021-2022 school year)

Following the easing of Covid-related restrictions during 2021, the Governors were delighted to see pupils return to the school premises to resume face-to-face education for the school year. Inevitably, despite dedicated school staff providing bespoke resources for home learning during the lockdown, the academic progress of many pupils was still disrupted by the pandemic. The Governors would therefore like to express their sincere thanks to all school staff, parents, carers and partners in the wider community for their hard work during the last year in helping pupils to transition back to classroom-based education and to catch up on missed opportunities.

Continuing the theme of transition, the Head teacher, Lorraine Slee, notified the Governors in Spring 2022 of her resignation with effect from the end of the school year. The Governors are immensely grateful for all of the leadership, industry and energy that Lorraine provided throughout her tenure at the school and wish her the best for her future career. As a result of Lorraine's resignation, the Governors considered a range of options for the future leadership of the school and were delighted to confirm that Melissa Hendry, the school's Deputy Headteacher, would take up the role of Acting Headteacher with effect from 1 September 2022. Vicky Woodgate, one of the school's Assistant Headteachers, was appointed as Acting Deputy Headteacher with effect from the same date to fill the vacancy left by Melissa's appointment. The Governors are looking forward to working closely with Melissa and Vicky in their new roles and are confident that they are well-placed to lead the school through this period of change. The Governing Board expects to confirm the permanent leadership arrangements going forward, following a planned review of the school's governance and operations during the 2022-2023 school year.

Changes in personnel

Following the expiry of Susan Powell's term as a governor at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, the Governors were delighted to appoint Anne-Marie Brown, a governor appointed by Croydon local authority, as Chair of the Governing Board for 2021-2022. The Governors were also delighted to appoint Danielle Wyatt as a co-opted governor with effect from September 2021, further strengthening the range and depth of expertise on the Governing Board.

Due to competing commitments, Etienne Becker resigned as a parent governor at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. The Governors would like to express their gratitude for all of Etienne's work as a governor since his appointment in September 2019. Sadly, due to the impact of the Covid pandemic, the Board was unable to find a second parent governor during the school year but has been engaging closely with school management to approach potential candidates and arrange elections for both parent governor vacancies for the 2022-2023 year.

As the Governors were unable to contact Diana Decoteau for the majority of the 2021-2022 year, the Board agreed to terminate her appointment as a co-opted governor with effect from September 2022.

The school's head teacher, Lorraine Slee, resigned during the year and left at the end of August 2022. The new Acting Headteacher, Melissa Hendry, was previously an associate (non-voting) member of the Board but will attend as a voting member from September 2022 by virtue of her role as Acting Headteacher. Vicky Woodgate, the new Acting Deputy Headteacher, will attend the Board as an associate member with effect from the same date.

Nicole Sowrey-Lewin was elected to act as staff governor with effect from June 2022. The Governors are looking forward to working with Nicole as she provides a vital link with the school's staff, and would also like to express their gratitude to Colette O'Brien for all her work as the staff governor in the preceding school year.

The clerking arrangements for the Board were subject to a number of changes during the year. The Governors are very grateful for the work of Mel Brown and Shar Elliot during the period and are delighted to have appointed Elaine Cooper in the 2022 summer term to act as clerk going forward.

Statutory responsibilities for Safeguarding and for Health and Safety

The Governors have a statutory duty to ensure the proper safeguarding of pupils. Melissa Hendry acted as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) during the year and Barbara Alcaraz was the nominated Governor for safeguarding. The Governing Board and the Curriculum, Safeguarding Standards and Community Committee each received regular safeguarding reports during the year. The appointment of a Family Liaison Officer (FLO) on a full-time basis from January 2022, and the close partnership between the DSL and the FLO, has also helped to improve communication with parents in relation to lower level issues and ongoing support.

The Governing Board received regular updates on health and safety issues throughout the year and was represented at the school's Health and Safety Committee by the link Governor for Health and Safety, James Stremes. Part of the maintenance and improvement work undertaken on the school property during the year was specifically designed to ensure that the school continues to meet its health and safety obligations.

Governing visits and monitoring

The Governing Board was very grateful to receive detailed reports from the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher throughout the school year. These explained how assessments of pupil progress were re-based following the pupils' return to school after the pandemic and detailed the progress that they have subsequently made throughout the year. The Governors were also pleased to see the positive results of the school-wide focus on improving reading skills and are looking forward to seeing the outcomes of the similar focus on numeracy in the forthcoming 2022-2023 school year.

The relaxation of Covid restrictions meant that the Governors were able to resume in-person visits to the school premises, both to observe teaching during the school day and for the purposes of Governing Board meetings. Several Governors attended a presentation by

the school's pathway leads which provided more detailed information on how teaching methods and the school environment is appropriately adapted for pupils in different groups. Governors were also able to observe classroom activities on several occasions throughout the year, providing further valuable insight into how the school's curriculum is delivered in practice.

Governors were delighted to attend the school's celebrations for the platinum jubilee of the late queen, HM Queen Elizabeth II, as well as the achievement assemblies for pupils at the end of the school year.

The Governing Board was also able to view the ongoing progress of works on the school site, including the re-design of the school reception, the new school staff room and the ongoing improvement of the school's playground areas. The Governors would like to express their particular thanks to Eileen Lawlor, the school's Business Manager, for all her hard work in overseeing and managing the delivery of these projects, and to the school's maintenance staff for ensuring the continued upkeep of the premises on a day-to-day basis during the works.

Assessment of the effectiveness of the Governing Board during the year

Following the return to on-site education after the pandemic, the priorities for the Governing Board during the 2021-2022 school year included:

- Ensuring that the school had a suitable plan to assess how Covid-related disruption had affected pupils' progress and to begin to allow pupils to catch up on missed educational opportunities
- Ensuring the school provided appropriate mental health support for staff and pupils
- Continuing to progress work on the school premises, addressing outstanding maintenance issues and improving the school playground facilities
- Continuing to ensure careful management of the school's budget, particularly in light of the financial pressures facing Croydon local authority and the UK government as a whole
- Increasing the presence and recognition of Governors within the school
- Ensuring appropriate succession arrangements for the Governing Board in light of changing membership

The Governing Board reflected these priorities by taking (among others) the following actions during the year:

- The Governing Board received and scrutinised detailed benchmarking information on the progress of pupils within the different school pathways, seeking further explanations from senior management where appropriate – for example, where data suggested that pupils in a particular pathway might not be achieving the expected targets
- The Governors engaged directly with staff at various events and also scrutinised the results of staff surveys to understand potential concerns or anxieties

- The Governing Board reviewed mental health arrangements instituted by the school for staff and received regular updates on how these were embedded during the year
- The Governing Board received presentations and detailed reports on pupil behaviour to understand the underlying causes of any issues
- The Governing Board closely monitored the progress of the works being undertaken on the school premises, undertaking tours of the facilities as part of Governing Board meetings to gain further understanding of the relevant issues
- Where appropriate, the Governing Board challenged the school's senior management on significant proposed items of expenditure to ensure value for money
- The Governors engaged directly with Croydon local authority on a range of funding issues to support the school's senior management
- The Governors participated in a range of school-wide events, including: a Lego training INSET day for staff, the Platinum Jubilee celebrations, a range of classroom visits, a presentation given by pathway leads on their pathways, and the school's end of year achievement celebrations
- The Governors began to publish a letter to parents directly from Governors, providing an update on the work of the Governing Board and key initiatives

The Governors recognise that succession issues in relation to the Governing Board remain a key priority. Difficulties in recruiting parent governors largely reflected the impact of the pandemic and the particular demands on the time of parents and carers. However, the Governors are optimistic that new parent governors can be found during the 2022-2023 school year to ensure that parents and carers are appropriately represented on the Governing Board going forward. Where necessary, we will consider whether any time burden can be reduced (for example, through the possible use of hybrid in-person and virtual meetings or through reduced committee membership) to encourage further participation. More broadly, it remains challenging for many schools to recruit and retain co-opted governors in the current environment. However, as part of our expected wider review of governance and operational arrangements in the forthcoming year, the Governors will consider the optimum composition of the Governing Board and how best to achieve this.

The wider financial environment remains challenging and the Governing Board will therefore continue its focus on ensuring value for money and careful use of our financial resources, while balancing this against the need to ensure the best possible education for our pupils. The Governors continue to consider ways in which we can maximise the effectiveness of our expenditure, including through participating in larger purchasing "clusters" and other structures.

In the coming 2022-2023 school year, our priorities are:

- To ensure the smooth transition to new senior management arrangements following the departure of Lorraine Slee and the appointment of Melissa Hendry as Acting Headteacher. This will include a review of governance and operational arrangements to ensure that we achieve the optimum permanent structure going forward

- To continue to support the school in raising standards through its focus on embedding and monitoring particular aspects of the curriculum, with the expected focus for the year to be on numeracy skills
- To continue the careful use of our financial resources to ensure value for money and longer term financial stability in the current difficult economic climate
- To continue to build the profile of governors across the school to ensure visibility with staff, pupils, parents, carers and the wider community

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 (anne-mariebrown@redgates.croydon.sch.uk) or contact the school office and mark your letter 'for the attention of the Chair of Governors'.

Annual Governance Statement

School name	Red Gates School
School address	Farnborough Avenue, South Croydon, CR2 8HD
Telephone number	020 8651 6540
Contact email address	admin@redgates.croydon.sch.uk
Website	https://redgates.croydon.sch.uk

Category of school	Community special school
DfE number	306/7006
Ofsted grading and date of last inspection	Good (October 2017)

Name of headteacher	Melissa Hendry (acting)
Name of deputy headteacher	Vicky Woodgate (acting)

Date of annual governance statement	September 2022
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The Governing Board is responsible for overseeing many of the strategic decisions of the school. A key role is to act as a 'critical Red Gates School friend': to support, to challenge, to ask questions, ultimately to represent the school community. In particular, the Governing Board ensures that the school is fulfilling its responsibilities and delivering a good standard of education for our children.

To do this, the Governing Board works in partnership with the head teacher, staff and Croydon local authority. Whilst the Headteacher is, of course, responsible for the day to day running of the school, the Governors are involved, at a strategic level, with such things as staffing, curriculum, school buildings and finance. The Governing Board has a range of powers and duties laid down by various Education Acts. In the main, these responsibilities relate to ensuring:

1. the clarity of the strategic framework within which the school operates
2. that the school's leaders account for the educational performance of pupils and the performance management of staff; and
3. that the school's delegated budget is well spent.

Governors carry out these responsibilities, together with many others, through at least one meeting of the full Governing Board each term. All members of the Governing Board are expected to arrange with the Headteacher to visit the school during the school day and, depending on their particular skills and interests, to have responsibility for specific issues within the school such as Special Educational Needs, finance and safeguarding.

Our Governing Board has a Code of Conduct which is reviewed and agreed annually. All Governors and Associate members are obliged to abide by this code.

Governors adopt, review and monitor a range of policies that govern the operation of the school including Child Protection, Health and Safety, Behaviour, Curriculum and Performance Management.

It is important that the Governing Board of a school brings together people with a range of viewpoints, to encourage open debate which leads to good decisions being made in the interests of the whole school community. The standard term of office for a governor is generally four years. The chair and vice-chair are elected/re-elected annually.

Our Governing Board is rightly proud of the achievements of our school, particularly in the foundations it provides for all our pupils at the start of their formal education career.

From 20 September 2021 for the 2021-2022 school year, our Governing Board consisted of the following:

Category of governor	Appointed or elected onto the Governing Board
7 x Co-opted Governor	Appointed by the governing board, generally on the basis of their skills
1 x Parent Governor	Elected on to the governing board by parents of pupils at the school
1 x Headteacher	Governor by virtue of employment by the school
1 x Staff Governor	Elected on to the governing board by all staff employed by the school
1 x Local Authority Governor	Nominated by the Local Authority (London Borough of Croydon Council), and appointed by the governing board
Total number of governors: 11 governors	

In addition, we had one Associate Member (the school's Deputy Headteacher), appointed by the Governing Board. Associate Members are not part of the Governing Board but are allowed to attend meetings and sit on committees and can be given voting powers. The School Business Manager also attended Governing Board meetings and meetings of the Finance, Premises and Resources Committee to provide financial and operational expertise.

Parent governors are elected by other parents at the school. They bring an important parental viewpoint to the Governing Board. They are elected to promote the interests of all children (not just of their own child), listening to the views and opinions of all parents and taking account of them while working cooperatively with the other members of the Governing Board. During the 2021-2022 school year, despite the Board's Instrument of Governance providing for two parent governors, only one parent governor was in office due to a lack of available candidates.

The Governing Board currently operates the following three committees:

- The **Resources (Finance, Premises and Staffing) Committee**, which scrutinises the school’s budget and financial arrangements, premises and health and safety issues, and headcount and staff resourcing issues
- The **Curriculum, Safeguarding Standards and Community Committee**, which scrutinises the school’s compliance with safeguarding requirements, behavioural standards, issues with the curriculum and teaching standards, and engagement with the wider community
- The **Pay Committee**, which considers pay awards for school staff within the framework of agreed contractual terms and conditions

Each Governor is appointed to serve on one or more of these committees and the Governing Board elects the chair of each committee at the first full Governing Board meeting of the school year. The Headteacher attends each Committee (except the Pay Committee when it is considering the Headteacher’s pay arrangements). While the committees provide detailed scrutiny and engagement on their respective areas of responsibility, the full Governing Board retains overall responsibility for complying with all legal requirements and for the overall strategic operation of the school. The committees therefore feed back to the full Governing Board on their work throughout the year and key decisions are approved or ratified at full Governing Board meetings.

The Governing Board welcomes communication from all of the school’s stakeholders. If you wish to raise a concern or share an idea or opinion then please do so by either emailing the Chair of Governors at anne-mariebrown@redgates.croydon.sch.uk or alternatively you can write a letter and give it to the school office (marked “for the attention of the Chair of Governors”) to pass on to the Governing Board.

We make a concerted effort to ensure that wherever possible, there is always at least one governor in attendance at school functions. However, if you have something of a more important or sensitive nature to discuss then please use one of the more formal routes mentioned above.

If an individual wishes to raise a concern on behalf a group of parents or other stakeholders, all parties must put their name to the communication so that the Governing Board is aware of all the individuals concerned.

Red Gates School – Attendance

Key:

Y	Attended
N	Apologies accepted
NA	Apologies not accepted
NS	Apologies not sent

Full Governing Board meetings:

Governor	Type of Governor	20 Sep 2021	13 Dec 2021	31 Jan 2022	4 April 2022	11 July 2022
Barbara Alcaraz	Co-opted Governor	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Etienne Becker	Parent Governor	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Anne-Marie Brown	Local Authority Governor	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Diana Decoteau	Co-opted Governor	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Sarah Erridge	Co-opted Governor	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Martin Hammond	Co-opted Governor	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Melissa Hendry	Associate Member	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Colette O'Brien ¹	Staff Governor	N	N			
Ben Rodin	Co-opted Governor	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Lorraine Slee	Headteacher	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Nicole Sowrey-Lewin ²	Staff Governor					Y
James Stremes	Co-opted Governor	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Danielle Wyatt	Co-opted Governor	Y	N	N	Y	Y

Resources (Finance, Premises and Staffing) Committee meetings:

Governor	Type of Governor	22 Nov 2021	31 Jan 2022	28 Mar 2022	13 Jun 2022
Diana Decoteau	Co-opted Governor	NS	NS	NS	NS
Martin Hammond	Co-opted Governor	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ben Rodin	Co-opted Governor	N	Y	N	NS
Lorraine Slee	Headteacher	Y	Y	Y	Y
James Stremes	Co-opted Governor	Y	Y	Y	Y

Curriculum, Safeguarding Standards and Community Committee meetings:

Governor	Type of Governor	8 Nov 2021	28 Feb 2022	13 Jun 2022
Barbara Alcaraz	Co-opted Governor	Y	Y	Y
Anne-Marie Brown	Local Authority Governor	N	N	N
Sarah Erridge	Co-opted Governor	Y	Y	Y
Melissa Hendry	Associate Member	Y	Y	Y
Lorraine Slee	Headteacher	Y	Y	Y
Danielle Wyatt	Co-opted Governor	N	Y	Y

Pay Committee meetings:

Governor	Type of Governor	2 Nov 2021	31 Jan 2022	14 June 2022
Sarah Erridge	Co-opted Governor	Y	Y	Y
Martin Hammond	Co-opted Governor	Y	Y	Y
Ben Rodin	Co-opted Governor	Y	Y	Y

¹ C. O'Brien's term of office ceased with effect from 13 December 2021.

² N. Sowrey-Lewin was appointed on 13 June 2022 following her election as staff governor.

Resignations and Appointments during the 2021-2022 year:

Resignations:

- **Colette O'Brien's** term as staff governor ceased with effect from 13 December 2021.

Appointments:

- **Danielle Wyatt** was appointed as a co-opted governor with effect from 20 September 2021
- **Nicole Sowrey-Lewin** was appointed as staff governor with effect from 13 June 2022 following a staff election.