

## **The Federation of Guillemont Junior School and Pinewood Infant School**

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### **Annual Statement by the Governing Body for 2022-23**

This annual statement, in line with the DfE's recommended good practice, outlines how the governing body has fulfilled its responsibilities and how it has met the three core strategic functions of the Federation's governing body as set out by Government:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction – *there is an understanding of the Federation and its aims and how they will be achieved.*
2. Holding the Executive headteacher to account for the educational performance of the Federation and its pupils – *supporting and challenging the Executive Headteacher on the operational running of the school*
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the Federation and making sure its money is well spent.

Underpinning these are the oversight responsibilities for ensuring the safeguarding and wellbeing of both school communities.

An unusual and challenging year in that we started it as two separate schools albeit in a close partnership with an Executive Headteacher leading both but each still with its own Governing Body. This functioned well, both schools becoming very popular starting the year with waiting lists. The schools are geographically close, one a feeder school to the other and sharing the same educational philosophy and values. It made sense for the schools to 'federate' and have a single governing body thereby reducing duplication of effort in the governance and leadership of the schools and bringing the schools closer together. We have seen both schools, with beneficial pupil outcomes, drawing on the resources and expertise of the other to bring about improvements. After a smooth consultation process the schools did federate in December 2022, and a new governing body reconstituted and established. Now, after two terms as a federation it is working well although we are still looking for further improvement in the way we operate and present ourselves.

Both schools have a strong community focus and always looked to serve all families and their children. For many years each schools supported a separately funded and staffed Resourced Provision (RP) for children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs. Prior to Federation, after being approached by Hampshire County Council, the Local Authority (LA), both schools agreed to additional RPs for autistic children after consultation with stakeholders. The RP at Pinewood could be accommodated within the existing school footprint and could be speedily set up. This was done and it took its first children in the Autumn term 2022. At Guillemont the process is longer as it requires a new build but the plans have been approved and the facility is scheduled to open in September 2024 ready for those children moving up from Pinewood or from elsewhere. The set up and running is fully funded and improves the resources and knowledge available across the Federation.

The Ofsted Inspection at Guillemont in the run up to Christmas was a disappointment as we felt that it did not fully represent qualities of the school and the outcomes achieved for the children, for instance, the KS2 results which show the children are performing at or above national expectations. Actions on the areas for improvement identified in the report are well in train and incorporated in the School Improvement Plan. The staff were pleased by the support of many parents and the confidence of the LA.

Although the pandemic is behind us it has still left a legacy with many children still suffering from its impact on their learning and social and emotional development. It is gratifying that the KS1 children as well as KS2 children are performing at or above national expectations in the majority of subjects. As governors, we have again been admiring of the hard work and initiative shown through the year by the school leaders and staff to enable

children to make progress, enjoy their school life and be kept safe. The staff value the very appreciative feedback from so many parents.

Both schools continue to provide focussed high-quality teaching for vulnerable and other children who need additional help and excellent pastoral support led by our ELSA and pastoral teams across both schools.

### **Governance Arrangements**

These are fully described, together with the composition of the governing body, on the school website: [www.guillemont.org.uk/About-us/Governance](http://www.guillemont.org.uk/About-us/Governance)

### **Attendance record at meetings**

Governors have excellent records of attendance at meetings, attendance is monitored by the clerk to the governing body. Absences from meetings are invariably for compelling reasons, e.g., unavoidable family or work commitments. Individual governor attendance records are published on the school website: [www.guillemont.org.uk/About-us/Governance](http://www.guillemont.org.uk/About-us/Governance)

Federation has twice termly full governing body meetings with sub-committee meetings timed to align with statutory duties, the academic timetable and the Federation's cycle of activities. All meetings are held in person although on occasion when circumstances demand governors will attend virtually.

Systems, (overseen by the Chair of Governors and the Executive Headteacher), are in place to ensure that the Governing Body and the school meet their statutory duties and that Government and local authority guidance and advice are followed in school policies and practices. These are regularly reviewed and updated particularly in the areas of safeguarding and wellbeing.

### **The Work of the Governing Body 2022-23**

*Meeting the three core strategic functions of the School's Governing Body:*

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

As mentioned above the schools shared educational philosophies, ethos and values which shape their strategic directions.

Although work has started to formulate a strategic plan - the governors have had training and guidance from Hampshire Governor Services – this remains a task for the governors to complete in the coming year.

#### **2. Holding the Executive Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils.**

Day to day each school is driven by their individual School Improvement Plan. This sets out the targets for pupil progress and attainment and for the quality of teaching and learning. It is for the governing body to hold the Executive Headteacher and Heads of School to account for meeting these targets.

Governors routinely visit the school to maintain their oversight responsibilities more directly, talking to subject leaders, receiving presentations from members of staff, and most importantly talking to the children. These activities, together with the questioning of the termly reports from the Executive Headteacher and Heads of School and feedback from Hampshire Education Inspectors give governors a wide perspective of the school's progress. It is evident by the fact that both schools are fully subscribed for the 2023 Year R and Year 3 intakes, they are highly regarded by parents and the local community.

#### **3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.**

Each school in the Federation is individually financed according to the National Funding Formula and their budgets separately managed. The overall management of the budgets is the delegated responsibility of the Executive headteacher who is accountable to the Federation Governing Body. Each spring, the governors' Finance and Resources committee review and agree the budgets for the respective financial years. Once given full governing body approval, they are submitted to the LA by the end of May. In the autumn, the progress of expenditure against budget and priorities are reviewed and approved by governors and any budget revisions submitted to the LA. Governors receive regular budget progress reports from the Executive Headteacher at their half-termly meetings. The Federation follows its Financial Management and Probity Policy (see school websites) which is reviewed annually. The governors also make an annual Effective Buying Statement (see School website) which sets out the principles the school adopts in purchasing goods and services to ensure best use of funding to improve the quality of education delivered and the well-being of its pupils. The governors are required to make an annual Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) return to the

LA, the purpose of which is to assure the LA (and Government) that the financial management of the school is sound and effective.

The governors also follow a schedule to ensure school policies and statutory requirements are periodically reviewed, acted on and appropriately updated and posted on the school website.

Although school funding is always an issue, it is a particularly difficult for us as the way schools are financed means that small schools like Pinewood are inadequately funded. Through very prudent management of staffing levels and resources, ensuring the school receives all its financial entitlements, Pinewood remains with a small overall surplus. With the benefit of good use of funds, grants and donations Pinewood has and continues to further develop the inside and outside learning and recreational environments. The situation at Guillemont is different as it is, in pupils number terms, nearly four times as big and the funding formula works in a more beneficial way. However, the same financial disciplines are maintained to ensure the school buildings and fabric are maintained in good order and improved where possible. After the major projects of last year, the Adventure Playground and the library, the adjunct to the Adventure Playground has been added. The Landscape project continues to improve the grounds for environmental, recreational and educational purposes.

The Governors' Performance Management Committee sets and reviews the Headteacher's annual targets, and the Personnel and Pay Committee oversees the management of staff performance and pay.

### **Training Courses and other Events Attended**

Hampshire Governor Services offer a range of training courses (both online and in person) covering all aspects of the governors' role and provide briefings on topical matters affecting schools. The school subscribes to take full advantage of the services offered to enable them to be better informed and effective.

The governing body as a group have had two training sessions, '*The Primary Curriculum*' and '*Setting the Strategic Direction*'. Governors individually attended courses and events on a range of topics, including; -

- Safeguarding
- SEND
- New Governors Induction
- Hart & Rushmoor Chair and Vice-chair of Governors Networking Meetings
- Hampshire Governors Annual Conference

The clerk also attends the Clerking service briefings. The Chair (or Vice-chair) of Governors attends the termly NE Hants Governors Forum which provides a two-way channel for the exchanges of views and information between local governors and the County and National Governor representative bodies.

The governing body belongs to the *National Governance Association (NGA)* which provides many resources and services for governors and produces a very informative newsletter received by all governors.

Hampshire Governor Services have now moved to providing a blend of in-person training courses complemented by online webinars.

The aim is to maintain a governing body well equipped to meet its responsibilities and to be knowledgeable about what is happening in the wider education sector.

We are always keen to speak to anyone with an interest in improving the life chances of our children as a governor. A board composed of governors who bring a diverse range of skills, experiences, qualifications, characteristics and perspectives, and who are from different backgrounds and settings, will have a positive impact on setting the strategic direction of the schools. Please contact either school office for further information or to arrange an informal conversation.

### **Looking Forward to 2023-24 and Beyond**

The governors and school leaders remain fully committed to improvement - to make the schools in our Federation even better so we do the very best we can for every child. We continue to support vulnerable children many of whom are still impacted by loss of education and social development during the lockdowns whilst making sure that all children - whatever their abilities - are stretched. This is being achieved by having high expectations – high quality teaching and learning with strong pastoral support as already mentioned. At the same time the school must ensure children receive a broad curriculum and have exciting learning experiences. Considerable investment has been put in to make the grounds of both schools high quality learning educational and recreational environments.

Both schools continue to be extremely popular and have been very successful in attracting new pupils . This is now becoming a challenge as there is a backdrop of a surplus of primary places locally. To protect the school against the current national financial situation, careful management of the budget needs to be sustained. We will continue to seek opportunities to make further improvements to the schools, the criteria being that they are planned, affordable and cost effective in enhancing the well-being or education of the children.

The Federation's strength continues to be in the quality of its staff and its leadership team.

The School Improvement Plans set out the aims we have for the children and how they will be achieved.

*The Governors*

*September 2023*