



Annual Governors' Statement The Winchcombe School

July 2019

1. What government requires from the Governing Body

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the 3 core strategic functions of The Winchcombe School's Governing Body continue to be:

- 1.1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;**
- 1.2. Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and all of its pupils;**
- 1.3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.**

2. Governance arrangements

The Governing Body was re-constituted in June 2016 and is made up of 12 governors as follows:

- two parent governors
- one governor nominated by the local authority (West Berkshire)
- one staff governor
- one headteacher
- seven co-opted governors

Co-opted governors are appointed by the Governing Body and are people who have the skills needed to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. At the time of writing we have 11 of 12 governor posts filled and we continue to look for new governors to support stronger succession planning for the Governing Body. The full Governing Body meets six times during the academic year.

The Finance & Human Resources Committee is a sub-committee of the Governing Body which focuses on income and expenditure planning, the structure for staff performance management and pay and monitoring financial performance. The Finance & Human Resources Committee meets three or four times during the academic year.

3. Attendance record of governors

Governor attendance at meetings is very good and it has not been necessary to cancel any meeting this year because it was not 'quorate' (the number of governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made). A list of governors and their attendance records is available on the school's website.



4. The work that the Governing Body has done during the past year

In 2018/2019 the Governing Body has continued to develop its own capacity and capabilities to support the school further. We have recruited 4 co-opted governors based on a breadth of experience in finance, IT, Health & Safety and leadership and we are working together to develop their skills and knowledge in school governance. This, together with the skill and experience of our longer serving governors gives us a strong and committed governing board.

Sadly, in January 2019, our excellent Head teacher, Mrs Hay, announced her decision to retire at the end of the 2018/19 academic year. After a rigorous recruitment and interview process, with the assistance of West Berkshire Council, the Governing Board appointed a worthy successor: Mr Neil Pilsworth who joins us in September. The Governing Board is looking forward to working with Mr Pilsworth to build on the success of Mrs Hay's leadership over the last 5 years.

The school continues to grow in popularity and now has 484 children on roll. Governors recognise that the success of The Winchcombe would not be possible without the fantastic skills and hard work of the 79 members of the staff team lead by Mrs Hay.

Ofsted

Following inspection in November 2016 and a rating of 'Good' from Ofsted, the Governors have encouraged the school to continue to build best practice and learning outcomes. This is a work in progress and although we do not know when the next inspection will be, Governors will be keen to see the building blocks for the next inspection during 2020/21, particularly with regard to the new inspection framework.

The Governing Body recognises its part in the inspection regime and we need to develop our understanding of the school and the issues it faces to fulfil our role of support and challenge.

Educational Performance

School performance is strong and children make very good progress. The 2017/18 academic year saw pupils in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 achieve above national average. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was disappointing - principally due to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) profile and high mobility factor as well as the specialist Speech and Language Resource (SAL) unit which is included in the data. However, the progress at the end of Key Stage 2 was above the Government's floor target. At the time of writing the results are not yet available for 2018/19 academic year although Governors are able to note the massive focus and effort that the school staff have poured in to achieving the best possible results for all the children on roll. Mrs Hay has introduced "values based education" which has been integral in the growth of our pupils as good citizens, and as governors we fully support this.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding continues to be a critical priority and governors receive update reports at each meeting. We have a single Governor leading on Safeguarding,



who is very experienced and she has spent time this year developing effective working relationships with key leadership and pastoral staff. She has worked hard to help the school with policy and best practice. The governing board recognises that safeguarding is an area that we can never be complacent in; all governors have attended training in Safeguarding Children Universal.

Health & Safety

During 2018/19 the school was audited by West Berkshire Council Health & Safety team and received a "good" rating in all areas. I would like to acknowledge the work of the school's business manager and premises staff.

One of our governors has Health and Safety expertise and has worked closely with school staff in a working party to update and where necessary, improve policy and practice. Regular working-party inspections are completed, and progress is reported back to Governors.

Finance

Governors have seen school finances continue to tighten and we acknowledge that the school continues to manage its financial resources carefully and with good control. We have now balanced and 'signed off' the 2019/20 budget plan. Despite diminished funding, the school has instigated many improvements including an online payment system for parents, an automated signing in system and enhancements to the school grounds. I would like to congratulate Mrs Hay and the school's business manager, Mrs Peacock for sound financial management.

The school faces significant challenge in future years and we will work with the School to develop a sustainable financial future in the coming year.

5. Future plans for the governors

In 2019/20 governors will focus on:

- Working collaboratively with the new Head teacher and senior leadership team to ensure a smooth transition and maintain the school's high standards.
- Supporting the school in long term and medium-term planning and development towards the next Ofsted inspection.
- Developing knowledge, skills and experience amongst our own membership to fully support the school with the 3 core strategic functions.
- Scrutiny of education performance across the whole school. This will support School Improvement Plan with a focus on educational progress and attainment for every child.
- Working with the school on budget monitoring and longer term financial plans.
- Encourage the school to support and extend levels of physical activity for all our children and participation in school sports.
- Continuing internal development so that each governor is enabled to



contribute with appropriate training and support. Succession planning will be part of our consideration so that as a team, we can be more resilient to changes of membership.

- We will challenge the Local Authority to ensure that any further building works to extend accommodation are built to the right design values in sympathy with the overall high-quality of the school as it is today.
- **It has been a privilege for me to lead the Winchcombe School Governing board over the last academic year and thank you Governors for all for your continued support to the Headteacher, staff, parents, carers and children of the Winchcombe school**

6. How you can contact the Governing Body

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents – please contact Clerk to the Governors, Mrs Skinner, via the school office. You can see the full list of governors; their attendance at meetings; minutes of Governing Body meetings and more information about what we do, on the [governors' page of the school website](#).

Gwen Mason
Chair of Governors
The Winchcombe School