



Annual Governors' Statement The Winchcombe School

September 2020

1. What government requires from the Governing Board

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing boards, the 3 core strategic functions of The Winchcombe School's Governing Board 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 Board 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 Board 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 no vacancies. The full Governing Board meets six times during the academic year.

The Finance & Human Resources Committee is a sub-committee of the Governing Board 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 good and it has not been necessary to cancel a meeting this year because it was not 'quorate'(the number of governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made).

In line with Government guidance in respect of Covid 19, all Governor meetings moved to an online virtual platform between March and July 2020.

Governors have spent sufficient time in the school this past academic year. This has included Governor attendance at school celebratory events, visits to the school to observe lessons, a meeting with the student council alongside link governor visits for SEN, Finance, Curriculum and Health and Safety. The level of Governor engagement and participation has been appropriate to their Governor position and in offering a strategic view of the school's progress.

The working relationship between governance and the school is strong with a mutual level of respect, role awareness and critical challenge. This has been developed through honest and open communications with clear objectives and boundaries of governance. Governors are visible and approachable to all.

A list of governors and their attendance records is available on the school's website.

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

In 2019/20 the Governing Board has continued to develop its own capacity and capabilities to support the school further. 2 Parent governors have been elected to the Governing Board by parents and over the next academic year we will be 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.

In September 2020, The Winchcombe School welcomed Mr Pilsworth as the Headteacher following his successful appointment in April 2019. The governing board joined the school community in welcoming and supporting Mr Pilsworth into his new role. The Governing Board has developed a strong working relationship with Mr Pilsworth.

In further developing the knowledge, skill and professional development of the board, governors have each taken responsibility for an area of the School Improvement Plan. This has further enriched the knowledge of governors and enabled a thoughtful and educated challenge. This

transfers to appropriate critical thought, reflection and challenge from governance.

Governor reports that have strategic oversight of SEN, PPG, Safeguarding and Health and Safety are routinely provided to the governing board. The reports have clear objectives that recognise and value school progress. They also allow critical challenge that is welcomed in support of continued progression that further develops the school.

The Governing board have taken the time to meet with parents and students at school events alongside supporting the Friends of Winchcombe. The Governing Board have further developed a visual presence to parents and welcome such contact. Governors have attended student council meetings to ensure that students views are embedded in Governor practice.

The school continues to grow in popularity and now has 483 children on roll. Governors recognise that the success of The Winchcombe would not be possible without the fantastic skills and hard work of the 91 members of the staff team led by Mr Pilsworth.

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. The school confidently awaits the next scheduled Ofsted inspection which is forecast in the next academic year of 2020/21.

A key group of governors have attended training in further understanding the Ofsted inspection framework which was revised in September 2019. Governors understand their governance responsibility under the inspection framework and their level of accountability.

Governors have knowledge of the School Improvement Plan and key areas the school are developing. The Governing Board understands the vision, ethos and strategic direction that is intended for The Winchcombe School.

Educational Performance

School performance is strong and children make very good progress. The 2018/19 Key Stage 2 (year 6) were the best results in the history of The Winchcombe School, with the children achieving 72% in the combined score for reading, writing and maths, well above the national average of 65% in 2018/19. This represented an overall

increase of 19.1% on 2017/18 results and placed The Winchcombe School in the top 30% of schools in West Berkshire.

2019/20 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) were, of course, cancelled due to Coronavirus, however the school has worked hard to provide consistency and routine for pupils during the school closures. Governors have been impressed by the IT support provided during this period for children who have remained at home through DB Primary online learning platform. Mr. Pilsworth and his team have developed a 'recovery curriculum' for children returning to school in September 2020.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding children remains a primary objective of The Winchcombe School fully supported by the Governing Board. The appointed safeguarding Governor completes regular visits to the school and has an oversight of regulatory requirements such as the Single Central Record. A record of such visits is made available to the governing board termly.

The Governing Board are suitably trained in safeguarding to include advance specialisms (Prevent) and safer recruitment in schools. All governors are in receipt of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance to support their professional development.

Safeguarding measures were creatively and robustly managed during the Coronavirus pandemic. This included adaptations to policies, ensuring all children were safe while home learning and additional safeguarding measures for the most vulnerable. The school was able to confidently uphold their ongoing commitment to safeguarding during the pandemic.

The Governing Board remain confident that children at The Winchcombe School are safe and that safeguarding children is a commitment of the whole school. The school demonstrates a culture of ensuring safeguarding is transferred to daily practice within the school.

Health & Safety

The school has continued to meet its responsibility for Health and Safety. Governors ensure that routine visits are completed that assess the school's compliance to Health and Safety requirements.

During the Coronavirus pandemic the governors were able to assess the school's position in adherence to policy changes. The school demonstrated that it was able to meet DfE requirements and ensure all required guidance was upheld by the school. These measures were

completed by the school in a prompt, clear and effective manner with regular communications with all parties.

The school has continued with its development plan to expand this last year with the construction of an additional building for Happy Kids Pre-School, freeing up space within The Winchcombe School. This will further provide space and opportunities for students. Due to contractual issues as a result of Coronavirus, the completion of the building works has been delayed. However, it is expected that the project works will have been completed by September 2020.

Finance

School finances continue to be challenging. However, Governors have been pleased to see that once again sound management and good forethought during the year have led to a very positive outcome. Without cutting staffing or services, the Main School Budget returned a surplus for 2019/20 which was considerably better than budget. The Speech and Language unit and the Phoenix Club were marginally below budget but all other accounts were ahead of expectations. The Phoenix Club income was hit by the need to close the facility at the start of the coronavirus lockdown.

The budget for 2020/21 sees further pressure with in-year deficits expected on all accounts. However, with the exception of the Language and Literacy unit, the end of year balance projections remain positive. The Phoenix Club continues to be a concern for 2020/21 as it remained closed to the end of the School year and the prospects for reopening in September are in doubt. This is in addition to uncertainty over the completion of the Happy Kids building mentioned above and the consequent relocation of the Phoenix Club. The F&HR Committee will continue to monitor the situation and encourage the marketing of the club to parents once plans are clearer.

On the information currently available, the prospects for 2021/22 cause concern with the Main School Budget in particular moving to a negative balance by the end of that year. Governors will monitor the situation carefully and develop plans as appropriate.

5. Future plans for the governors

In 2020/2021 governors will focus on:

- Working collaboratively with the Head teacher and senior leadership team to ensure continued progress to maintain the school's high standards.
- Supporting the school in long term and medium-term planning and development towards the next Ofsted inspection due in 2020/2022

- 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. Governors to have strategic oversight of the curriculum and how this is embedded in classroom learning, off site learning and home learning.
- 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. This includes after school clubs and forecasted expansion of the Phoenix Club.
- 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.
- Continue to ensure that the students voice is appropriately embedded in governance and that views and options of all stakeholders is routinely sought.
- Continue to ensure that Governors' are appropriately accessible and visible to all stakeholders.
- Encouragement of community and school events that bring together families and celebrate success of each student.
- Supporting the Head teacher in the recovery from the impact of Coronavirus.

6. How you can contact the Governing Board

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 Board meetings and more information about what we do, on the [governors' page of the school website](#).

Rachel Redgwell
 Chair of Governors
 The Winchcombe School