

Annual Governance Statement
Governing Body of Theale Church of England Primary School
Academic year 2021/2022

Our Purpose

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the 3 core strategic functions of the Theale C of E Primary School Governing Body are:

1. ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
3. overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Our Board

Per our Instrument of Governance (reconstituted August 2015), our Governing Body consists of ten governors.

- 2 Foundation Governors
- 2 Parent Governors
- 1 Local Authority Governor
- 1 Staff Governor
- The Headteacher
- 3 Co-opted Governors

During 2021/22 three new governors were either appointed or elected: Alice Gough – Foundation Governor, Aurelia Noel – LA Governor, and Kirsty Holehouse – Staff Governor. A new clerk was also appointed. We are now in the fortunate position of having all our roles currently filled.

The governing body annually reviews our skills to focus training where needed and use this information when we have vacancies to ensure we have the broad range of skills required in a Governing Body.

Information and profiles of the current Board can be found on the Governor page on the School Website. The attendance of Governors at meetings can be found at the end of this document.

What We Do

The full Governing Body (FGB) meets six times a year, and also has a number of subgroups to consider different aspects of the school in detail. At Theale C of E Primary, we have a Finance Committee to review the financial performance of the school and make sure its money is well spent; we also have committees that meet when require including a Staffing Committee; a Pay Committee and an Admissions Committee (nursery only). We also have First and Second Committees in place to deal with any complaints or disciplinary matters that may arise.

We also visit the school to have more focussed meetings on our areas of expertise, eg. curriculum, quality of teaching and learning, safeguarding, finance, H&S.

We have the privilege of having the Rev. Martin Davy on our board, his regular visits to the school to take assembly are popular with the staff and pupils, but also add to the knowledge we as a governing body have of the school.

Our meetings - this year in governance

All of the minutes of the FGB meetings can be found on the School Website. We have a number of items that we discuss at every meeting (safeguarding, finances, H&S, school update etc), and a number of items that we discuss are certain times of year.

At our first meeting of the school year we agreed roles and our focus for the upcoming year. For 2021/22 we agreed this would be:

- how we ensure we remain an effective FGB, including succession planning,
- risk identification and mitigation,
- our future structure,
- to provide continued support for the school.

At this meeting we also ensure all governors are up to date on the latest required training and information.

The second meeting (November) of the year looked at Performance Management for teachers and leaders, and the policies that we are required to review and update. These policies can be found on the website.

The third meeting (January) we discussed progress against our priorities for the year. Progress has been slower than hoped, but we discussed what we can realistically achieve and how to ensure we focus on what adds value to the school. Having our new governors now in place will help with this. This meeting also began looking in more depth at the financial position of the school in preparation for the financial year end. At this meeting Rebecca Clifford stepped down as Chair and we appointed a new Chair (Jon Houghton), whose dedication and experience will help continue to lead the Governing Body forward as we continually strive to adapt to the increasing expectation of school governance and ensure our impact on the school is positive.

In March we held our annual Governor Day. This is a favourite day for many governors as we get to spend the day in school, visiting classes and enjoying the opportunity to be part of it. This day also helps ensure we know happens at school and provides many opportunities to speak to students and staff.

Our fifth meeting (April) is always a long one, we review the final financial submission for the previous financial year and approve the budget for the next. This is presented to the FGB by the finance committee who work closely with the School Business Manager. This, as always, was a very difficult budget to set and required us to scrutinise every item of cost. It is incredibly important to all staff and governors that we continue to provide the children of Theale Primary with the broadest experiences we can, whilst ensuring that all requirements of our diverse and creative curriculum are met and the children achieve as highly as possible.

Our 6th meeting for the year will be in July, this will look at the proposed staff structure for 2022/23 and also provide an opportunity to reflect on what went well in the past year and what could be improved so that we are ready to start the year again in September, with a view to how best to support the school in the upcoming year.

More about the school this year

The work we do on our committees and in the FGB support the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school, working with the Headteacher to ensure we have a three-year School Development Plan focussing on our continued efforts to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to the children of Theale, with a large variety of opportunities to support their development.

After a very challenging time over the past two years, we are all are enjoying being back at school with all of our children and are so happy school is open to all children. The COVID disruption is reducing, but the staff continue to support the children facing challenges.

Currently we have 337 children on roll, and the school are working hard to ensure all children receive exciting opportunities to help them reach their potential and be ready for secondary.

Our new building enables us to give the children space to play and learn outside, as well providing spaces inside that are suitable for the 21st century, including IT equipment which is a crucial part of a modern education.

Some of the highlights of 2021/2022 include

- we have been able to fully access our school field,
- we were able to hold nativity services in person with a donkey at Rushall Farm,
- Yr 6 choir bubble sang at the Royal Berkshire Hospital at Christmas,
- Yr 6 went on their traditional residential to Osmington, Yr 4 went to Ufton Court,
- at Easter, we were excited to be able to once again invite families to join our services at the Church,
- we are excited to return to the Hexagon on the 6th July for our KS2 production,
- it was great that we were able to take all the children to London for a trip to a museum and a show,
- SATS returned for both KS1 and KS2,
- our sporting opportunities are increasing now that COVID restrictions have been lifted, for example - swimming, netball, football, and so much more; there is a report on our website about how we spend the Sports Grant money to improve sporting opportunities for the children,
- music opportunities – guitars, steel panning, violin and three school choirs so all children have the opportunity to be part of this,
- the children enjoy their regular weekly assemblies with Rev. Martin Davy,
- we have been able to hold parents evening in person again which has given the opportunity for parents to visit the new school,
- the steel panners performed at the Village Jubilee Fete on June 5th,
- families were welcomed into the school for a Jubilee Celebration,
- our PTA continues to work hard to raise money for the school with cinema nights, a reindeer visit and more, and were able to hold a Summer Fayre for the first time in the new school on July 9th.

Other Governance Activities

Educational performance

We continue to monitor pupil performance and are proud of the pupils' continued positive attitudes and eagerness to embrace our broad curriculum. We continue to monitor how "vulnerable groups" of children will be supported and how the Pupil Premium Grant is being spent by the school and what impact this has on the outcomes, and a report on this is available on the website. COVID disruption has added challenge in this area, but we have the systems in place to support our students to ensure we continue to aim to have our students at the expected level when they finish primary school.

Safeguarding

Governors are also responsible for safeguarding children and staff in school and we have a Nominated Governor for Safeguarding (Francoise Woolley) who regularly meets with the designated safeguarding lead and other staff members as well as providing regular updates to the governors about any safeguarding matters.

Health and Safety

Michael Carpenter and Sanjiv Anand lead on our Health and Safety responsibilities. They visit the school and carry out checks of the premises with the school's caretaker. This has been a big task

due to the new school and COVID19 necessitating changes in policies and procedures. We work closely with the School Business Manager, Caretaker and Senior Leadership on this.

Financial Performance

In April, the Finance Committee approved the 2022/23 budget plan for the school. We are pleased to report that, due to the school's excellent management of finances, our children will continue to benefit from a diverse and creative curriculum in line with the school's vision but adapted for the current requirements. We recognise the huge effort from all staff that is required to enable this. We also recognise that these financial challenges along with changing government guidance will impact how we are able to deliver the curriculum. The finance committee also takes responsibility for maintaining many of the policies and looking in depth at benchmarking data to understand if there are areas where we can improve what we are doing and how we are doing it.

Collaborations

We have successful relationships with Enborne C of E Primary School and Highwood Copse Primary School which allow us to share learnings, training and provide support to each other. These continued successful collaborations are a benefit to the school community.

Rebecca Clifford and Jon Houghton

July 2022

Governor Attendance at Full Governing Body meetings

Governor		2020/2021	2021/22
Catherine Morley (HT)	HT	7/7	6/6
Jon Houghton (Chair – from March 2022)	Co-opted	7/7	6/6
Rebecca Clifford (Chair – until March 2022)	Co-opted	6/7	5/6
Michael Carpenter	Co-opted	5/7	4/6
Martin Davy	Foundation	6/7	5/6
Marjorie Burrington (until July 2021)	Foundation	6/7	n/a
Alice Gough (from Nov 2022)	Foundation	n/a	3/5
Francoise Woolley	Parent	7/7	5/6
Sanjiv Anand	Parent	7/7	4/6
Sue Kedar (until March 2022)	Staff	6/7	4/4
Kirsty Holehouse (from March 2022)	Staff	n/a	2/2
Aurelia Noel (from Nov 2022)	LA	n/a	4/5