



STAPLEHURST SCHOOL- ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21

As the Governing Body of Staplehurst School, we are proud of the school and its welcoming, inclusive ethos and strong family atmosphere. At Staplehurst “Children come first.”

In accordance with the Government’s requirement for all governing bodies, we set out below the three core strategic functions of the Governing Body at Staplehurst School:

- 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.**

Governance Structure

The Governing Body consists of 12 Governor roles as follows:

- 2 Parent Governors appointed by ballot of the parents at the school;
- 1 Local Authority Governor appointed by the Local Authority;
- 1 Staff Governor appointed by ballot of the staff;
- The Headteacher;
- 7 Co-opted Governors appointed by the Governing Body based on a skills audit.

The Governing Body appoints a professional Clerk who is responsible for arranging meetings, taking minutes and following up on all actions. The Clerk also advises on procedural matters and plays a key role in the work of the Governing Body.

Governors are volunteers who apply for, and are appointed to, their roles (except for the Headteacher), are independent and have equal status to each other. A Chair and Vice Chair are elected by the Governing Body each year and work closely together with the Headteacher and the Clerk.

The Full Governing Body (FGB) met five times in the 2019/20 school year. The FGB delegates certain functions to its sub-committees – *Learning & Development*; *Finance & Premises*; and Leadership Group Performance Management.

As well as sitting on one or more of these committees, each of our Governors is asked to take on a Link Governor role, i.e. responsibility for monitoring a specific

aspect or priority of the school, such as Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs, Health & Safety or Finance. Details of individual Governors, their terms of office, attendance records and which committee(s) they sit on can be found on the 'Governors' section of the school website.

Covid Impact

In addition to their committee work, all Governors usually visit the school regularly in order to carry out Link responsibilities and write reports about their activities and meetings with school staff. In the current set of circumstances, meetings with key members of staff are likely to be carried out via telecommunications, although timed visits that can be made to the school safely and in line with current regulations will be made as appropriate. Inevitably however, there will be less governor "presence" in the school during this current Covid situation.

Members of the Governing Body will continue to write reports following on from their discussions with staff to ensure that actions agreed in the School Learning Plan are being actively undertaken by the school.

It is to be hoped that as the academic year progresses the national Covid situation will ease. In this case the normal programme of Governor visits to the school will be able to resume.

After each staff contact, a formal report is prepared and presented at the next Governing Body meeting. From this, the progress in the delivery of agreed school priority areas can be actively monitored and impact on the education of the pupils more effectively assessed.

During 2019/20 the Governing Body met 5 times, the Headteachers Appraisal Committee met 3 times, the Learning and Development Committee 4 times, the Finance Committee 3 times, and the Pay Committee met once. Governors also visited informally, supporting school events such as plays, music evenings and Parent Teacher Association evenings and fund-raising events.

The Chair of Governors has regular meetings with the Headteacher and Clerk outside full Governing Body meetings, and Governors attend training sessions organised both within the school and outside delivered by school staff or the Local Authority (LA). (Training is currently delivered remotely.)

Governing Body Skills & Knowledge Development

The Governing Body recognises that to effectively fulfil its role, it must ensure that all Governors have the required skills and knowledge to support the achievement of the school's priorities.

Regular skills audits are undertaken to identify and address any skills gaps together with an annual self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the Governing Body over the school year. The Governing Body is a member of the National Governors

Association and uses this and other relevant information channels to ensure it remains abreast and up to date on relevant developments in the education sector.

Governor Focus in Academic Year 2020-21

The Governing Body will continue to develop and engage with the longer-term strategy of the school; will continue to closely monitor the school's financial status and progress; and will work closely with the Headteacher, SLT, staff and parent communities to deliver the best outcomes for all of our pupils.

The school's priorities for the current academic year, outlined in its Learning Plan are: -

1. To ensure children reach attainment and progress targets in line with pre-Covid national expectations;
2. To embed an ambitious curriculum that is built on core knowledge and its application and to respond effectively to the evolving national situation in order to maximise academic achievement and progress for all pupils;
3. To have a thriving and engaged school community which actively supports and provides opportunities for parental involvement in their child's learning;
4. To embed strong distributed leadership with shared values and ambition for all children to drive school improvement.