



## **GOVERNORS' REPORT JULY 2018**

*Our ethos is to create 'an inspirational setting, where all children flourish'.*

### **Our Vision for 2017/18**

Our vision is to be the rural school of choice in the local area, where every child is inspired with a love of learning and is supported to become a confident and resilient lifelong learner. We aim to

- provide a broad and varied curriculum with opportunities for all children to develop a wide range of skills and interests alongside achieving the best possible progress over their time at the school
- to be a learning community where teachers, support staff and governors continue to learn in order to create strong leadership, outstanding practice and attain national recognition for the realisation of this vision.

The governors have been working on three strategic priorities identified by staff and governors for the next three to five years from 2017/18. During the year we developed a work plan setting more detailed objectives and the actions, responsibilities and timeframe for achieving those objectives. Our three priorities are to establish

**A thriving village school under strong and dynamic leadership**

**An enriching curriculum where we work together to achieve the best**

**The creative use of resources to strengthen teaching and learning**

### **How we operate**

Governor activities are shared between the Full Governing Body (FGB), the Teaching & Learning Committee (TLC) and the Strategic Operations Committee (SOC) while individual governors have specific responsibilities. The FGB, TLC and SOC each have responsibility for one of our strategic priorities. This report reflects on our work for each priority.

### **The FGB is responsible for our first priority:**

**A thriving village school under strong and dynamic leadership**

During the year, a strong sense of well-being developed in school. The numbers on roll have remained stable and for September 2018, the school is growing naturally. The governors have enormous regard for Mrs Barron who set out on her first headship experience in September 2017 as a Co-Head working with Mrs Pilkington. Mrs Barron unexpectedly became our full-time headteacher in January following Mrs Pilkington's bereavement. The governors and staff have done everything possible to support Mrs Barron at this difficult time and the school has gone from strength to strength under Mrs Barron's leadership.

The governors have followed advice from the local authority's Human Resources Department in managing our CoHead's absence and have kept in touch with Mrs Pilkington who will not be returning this year. The challenges related to staffing, the budget and the move to three classes in September have been significant.

At the same time, the governors have been working to ensure that all aspects of good governance are in place. Lynsey Willis and Elisabeth Skinner were elected as Co-Chairs at the start of the year and Chloe Turner was co-opted as a governor to replace Mark Tallents who retired in December after several years' service. We have reviewed standing orders, committee terms of reference, meeting procedures, the full range of policies and our action plan. Specific responsibilities are allocated to governor champions and we keep a record of all our activities including formal visits and training events attended.

Our main role set by the Government is to make sure that the headteacher is accountable for her actions in school. While we do all we can to support the headteacher, we also challenge her with questions that help us understand how the school works. The headteacher submits a report to every meeting in response to prepared questions from governors and the Co-Chairs meet with her approximately every three weeks to discuss progress and the impact of actions taken. All governors have visited school formally to monitor learning and informally for school events. The Co-Chairs conducted a parent survey at Christmas and have met with the school council, while once a year, the governors and staff work together to review the school's strategy. The website and prospectus have been kept up-to-date and our ethos has been embedded into the school's daily life.

The governors have taken part in several school review activities. The Co-Chairs joined the Co-Heads in conducting a school self-evaluation in the autumn and in January governors took part in an external review to prepare for Ofsted. The Co-Chairs joined a project group set up by the local authority to support the school as we sought to improve children's attainment and progress, especially for those taking SATS in May. The Co-Chairs met with the Ofsted inspectors on February 1<sup>st</sup>. This was a constructive visit where we retained our 'good' rating. Ofsted will return by spring 2019 to find out how recent changes in school have had an impact.

The children's safety is taken very seriously. Lynsey Willis is the governor responsible for this aspect of our work so she took part in an external safeguarding audit which led to CCTV being fitted in February to monitor the public footpath. Governors review attendance data at every meeting with the expectation that maximum attendance will be achieved.

The governors help to build connections with the village through the Sheepscombe News, the Church, Sheepscombe Cricket Club, Sheepscombe History Society and the National Trust. Volunteering by villagers is encouraged while governors acting as volunteers work closely with the school; for example Debby Thacker led the successful book project that extended links with the village while Chloe Turner led maths week in the summer. External speakers came into school for both of these events. A group of volunteers keen to help the school met in the early summer to share ideas while an extra performance of Wind in the Willows was put on for the village.

### **The TLC is responsible for our second priority:**

#### **An enriching curriculum where we work together to achieve the best**

Under the leadership of Tessa Lentel and then Debby Thacker, the TLC monitors learning across the curriculum with a focus on reading, writing, maths, science and PSCHE (Personal, Social, Citizenship, Health Education) and holds the school leadership to account for pupils' attainment and progress. We allocate governor responsibilities, make formal visits to the school to look at the children's books and we discuss questions with staff during visits and at

our meetings. We meet three times a year to review the evidence that helps us understand what the children have achieved and the rate at which they are progressing.

The data published in the autumn (based on the summer's SATS results) was reviewed by the TLC in January but year group numbers are small so the percentages in this report have limited meaning; Mrs Barron therefore introduced the governors to the more detailed Insight data. Teachers record individual achievements on this programme and assess each child's progress compared with the Government's expectations for that age group. The TLC needs to know how the teachers use the data to help children make progress.

We also use the data to monitor the achievements of children with special educational needs and those who qualify for extra funding through the pupil premium. Tessa Lentel is the governor who focuses on these special situations. The data also shows how boys often struggle with reading and writing in comparison with girls and the impact of delayed entry into school or inconsistent attendance. The TLC asks the school leadership for their strategies to improve performances where these issues give cause for concern.

The TLC monitored the impact of a staffing change in January designed to split Class 2 in the mornings so that teaching could be more focused on the needs of individual children while Mrs Barron made detailed plans for improving performance through the MOP. The data provided significant information for the Ofsted inspectors who visited on February 1<sup>st</sup>. The inspectors were particularly concerned that the data for maths was showing insufficient progress. This echoed a point expressed by some parents in the survey that governors carried out before Christmas and by an external reviewer in January. The MOP shows how the teachers have been working to improve maths performance and when the Co-Chairs visited the school council before maths week they found a real buzz among the group when maths was mentioned. Chloe Turner is the governor specialising in maths.

The TLC was already monitoring the impact of special attention being given to reading, writing and spelling. The TLC received a report from the English lead, Mr Ringer, in January and the English policy was reviewed. Debby Thacker is the governor focusing on English. Governors were also involved in Debby's book project in Term 3 and Chloe's maths week in Term 6 both of which strengthened links with the village community and generated even greater enthusiasm for the subjects among the children.

The TLC has found the impact of the PSCHE curriculum harder to pin down. Elisabeth Skinner is the governor focusing on PSCHE. The Prince William Award Scheme has been an exciting project designed to develop children's confidence and resilience while Mrs Lane's forest school on the National Trust's estate at Ebworth extends learning into our wonderful rural environment.

Governors are delighted that Mrs Lane has become a qualified Forest School teacher this year and that Mr Taylour has completed his NQT year. We are also pleased that Mrs George was able to embrace a teaching role when Mrs Barron took over as our full-time headteacher.

### **The SOC is responsible for our third priority:**

#### **The creative use of resources to strengthen teaching and learning**

Under the leadership of Tara Murphy, the SOC has been alert to the challenges of managing the school budget for the year. Governor monitoring of significant spending (over £1000) is

now in place including the need to see evidence of multiple quotes. The Schools Financial Value Standard has been returned as required and updated Finance Policy and Charging and Remissions Policy were adopted. Compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 was organised.

The SOC is also responsible for oversight of staffing and staff CPD and has therefore been reviewing the strategic move to a three-class structure and the recruitment of an Early Years teacher in preparation for this change. Tara was the governor responsible for overseeing the CPD for staff; she visited the school to discuss the impact of the several training courses experienced by the staff this year and has set out some development points for monitoring next year including extending the appraisal process to include teaching assistants. The Pay and Appraisal Policies were adopted having been adjusted to ensure that they are consistent and are better fit for purpose. The governors' Pay Panel and Appraisal Panels reported to the SOC.

A third area of responsibility is for the premises and the outdoor environment. Seth Johnson is the Health & Safety governor; he has visited the school from time to time to exercise his responsibility and has updated the H&S policy. Work has begun on a Disaster Policy. The outdoor area adjacent to Class One has been the subject of much discussion. A scope of works document has been drawn up to support the management of the project which has been designed and costed.

Chloe Turner undertook a comprehensive review of Pupil Premium spending by 25 other local primary schools so that governors would be better informed about ways in which the fund could be spent to support pupils eligible for the premium. The next step is to monitor the impact of Pupil Premium spend more closely to ensure value for money. The Attendance and Absence Policy was also reviewed.

The FGB is grateful to Tara for her work this year and wishes her well in her new post as our Early Years specialist teacher.

<b>Information about the governing board</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Type of governor</b>	<b>Committee membership</b>	<b>Any link roles</b>
<b>Vicky Barron (or Heather Pilkington)</b>	<b>Head Teacher</b>	<b>Both TLC and SOC</b>	
<b>Seth Johnson</b>	<b>Parent governor</b>	<b>SOC</b>	<b>Environment, Health &amp; Safety, website</b>
<b>Tracey Lane</b>	<b>Staff governor</b>	<b>TLC</b>	
<b>Tessa Lentel</b>	<b>Local authority governor</b>	<b>TLC</b>	<b>TLC chair to Term 5 SEND, science</b>

<b>Tara Murphy</b>	<b>Parent governor</b>	<b>SOC</b>	<b>SOC Chair, data analysis</b>
<b>Elisabeth Skinner</b>	<b>Co-opted governor</b>	<b>TLC</b>	<b>FGB CoChair, PSCHE</b>
<b>Debby Thacker</b>	<b>Co-opted governor</b>	<b>TLC</b>	<b>TLC Chair from Term 5 English</b>
<b>Chloe Turner</b>	<b>Co-opted governor</b>	<b>SOC</b>	<b>Maths, finance</b>
<b>Lynsey Willis</b>	<b>Co-opted governor</b>	<b>TLC</b>	<b>FGB CoChair, safeguarding, EYFS</b>

**Note that one CoChair attends every SOC meeting.  
EYFS: Early Years Foundation Stage**

<b>Governors' record of attendance</b>				
<b>Name</b>	<b>Possible attendance (full governing board meetings and committee meetings)</b>		<b>Actual attendance</b>	
	<b>FGB</b>	<b>Committees</b>	<b>FGB</b>	<b>Committees</b>
<b>Vicky Barron (or Heather Pilkington)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Seth Johnson</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Tracey Lane</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Tessa Lentel</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Tara Murphy</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Elisabeth Skinner</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Debby Thacker</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chloe Turner</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Lynsey Willis</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Lynsey Willis or Elisabeth Skinner (SOC)</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>4</b>

**School improvement plan: headlines of what the governing board has been working towards, with year-on-year figures for comparison**

Criteria	2018	2019	2020
<i>Pupil numbers</i>	<b>There have been 51 pupils on roll throughout the year with the prospect of 57 in September</b>		
<i>A good rating from Ofsted</i>	<b>Achieved</b>		
<i>All procedures are in place for good governance</i>	<b>Achieved</b>		
<i>The best possible level of attendance</i>	<b>At 94% for the year to date (1% below the Government's target), attendance has been significantly affected by illness.</b>		
<i>Pupils reach age-related expectations in attainment and progress (reading, writing, maths)</i>	<b>Numbers in each age group are too low for significant percentages. The teachers maintain a detailed record of individual progress and attainment in maths, reading and writing. This record shows significant improvement in performance especially in Terms 4 to 6.</b>		
<i>Expectations of excellence in teaching</i>	<b>Under Mrs Barron's leadership, the teachers and teaching assistants have worked hard this year to achieve excellence. This has included a range of professional development achievements.</b>		
<i>Sound financial management</i>	<b>Following the sound advice of Mrs Powell, the school leadership has been striving to manage a tight budget that has been more severely constrained since January.</b>		

**Pupil premium grant**

Number of children currently eligible for the pupil premium	5
Pupil premium allocation April 2017 – April 2018	£12,460

## Details of interventions and innovations using the pupil premium (PP)

Initiative/innovation	Amount	Impact (with commentary)
Access to Educational Psychology Service where needed	£900	The psychologist's emphasis was on general strategies for supporting PP children who were still not making progress once behaviour and the quality of teaching were resolved last year.
Music lessons in school time	£455	2 x PP children have benefited
Swimming lessons within and outside school time	£600	3 x PP children have benefited
Costs covered of residential experience	£130	1 x PP child was able to benefit from the residential experience at Viney Hill
Allocated funds to provide classroom support staff	£8640	This has enabled greater teacher engagement in the tracking of attainment and progress using Insight, MyPlan reviews and pupil progress meetings.

## Questionnaire summary and governors' impact statement

**Two stars and a wish:** The governors took the opportunity of parents gathering for the Nativity to ask for your current thoughts on the school. Twenty one forms were returned representing more than half of the families with children at the school.

In summary, parents agree that the school has a great team of adults who care passionately about the children in their care. They make learning fun and exciting and value every child as an individual. The curriculum is creative, engaging, active and adventurous. Parents feel they are kept well informed and value the strong sense of community. After school clubs and activities are very popular as is Forest School.

Parents hope that the school will continue to grow and develop with staff working creatively to maximise opportunities and provide exciting, diverse experiences for all children. They would like to see more support being given for maths, including a daily times table challenge and a maths workshop. Suggestions for playtime activities include use of the library for quiet reading, the orchard for more weeks of the year and some new loose playground equipment.

*Governors' response:* The school is continuing to grow. More support has been given for maths since Christmas and in the summer term a special event, the Maths Olympics, was held. When we met with the school council in June we asked about maths teaching and the children were visibly excited, emphasising their enjoyment of reasoning exercises. The orchard is used as much as the weather will allow (parents need to note that the orchard is leased from a neighbouring property owner) and new playground equipment has been purchased. The children tell us they are thrilled with the ball nets.

The **Parent View Survey** was completed for Ofsted inspectors by midday on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2018. There were 25 individual responses. These are the headline results of the survey.

All respondents 100% strongly agree that they would recommend the school to others.

All respondents agree (with over 80% strongly agreeing) that their child is happy at school, feels safe, is taught well and is well-looked after; they also agree that the school is well-led and managed; it responds well to identified concerns, it makes sure the children are well-behaved and provides valuable information on the school's progress.

All respondents agree that their child makes good progress (72% strongly agreed) and received appropriate homework for their age (68% strongly agreed).

The one issue that does not fit this pattern is bullying. Although 68% strongly agreed that the school deals effectively with bullying, two respondents (8%) disagreed while three others (12%) didn't know. The Ofsted inspector was not concerned about this but it was a signal that action may need to be stepped up.

*Governors' response:* The governors regularly ask Mrs Barron about incidents of bullying and of any concerns expressed by parents. We are reassured that all staff are extremely watchful and that children know how to report incidents to staff.

## On the horizon

Ofsted will visit again by the spring of 2019 for a two-day inspection. The governors aim to ensure that recent developments at the school are embedded and that a good rating can continue to be maintained while some aspects of the school are judged to be outstanding.

The school is moving to three classes in September. The governors aim to ensure the success of this development for both children and staff.

The governors will continue to strengthen governance by identifying more precise success criteria for 2018/19. There will continue to be challenges in managing the budget.

Matt Stanway will join the team in September as a new parent governor following Ms Murphy's change of role to Class One teacher.