



GOVERNORS' REPORT JULY 2019

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

Our Vision for 2018/19

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 and outstanding practice.

The governors have been working on three strategic priorities identified by staff and governors for three to five years from 2017/18. This is the second year of the strategy. Our work plan sets 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 have been shared between the Full Governing Body (FGB), the Teaching & Learning Committee (TLC) and the Finance & Resources Committee (FRC) (replacing the Strategic Operations Committee in September 2018) while individual governors have specific responsibilities. The FGB, TLC and FRC 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

In September 2018, we offered Mrs Barron the position of full-time permanent Head Teacher and were delighted when she accepted. Under her impressive leadership over the year, the school has flourished with all places filled and children on a waiting list. It is the village school of choice for many families in the Stroud district. Its caring and nurturing ethos, the supportive family atmosphere and the breadth and vibrancy of the curriculum provide a much-valued school experience for all children.

Mrs Barron has created a strong and stable staff team comprising excellent teachers and teaching assistants who work exceptionally hard for the school. Mrs Barron is a teaching head working with Kestrel class where she leads by example. The first task of the year was to adapt to three classes instead of two. With a small staff this involves complex timetabling and the careful management of resources. The governors supported Mrs

Barron and her staff ensuring that these new arrangements improved experiences for both children and teachers. In July 2019, governors and staff worked together to reflect on the successes of 2018/19 and identify ideas to be embedded or developed in 2019/20.

Governors and staff were all aware that Ofsted would be visiting for two days during the 2018/19 school year and worked extremely hard during the autumn and spring terms to make sure we were on track for Ofsted. In preparation, the Chairs continued to take part in a Project Group organised by the local authority and in January we invited an expert to review our governance procedures and recommend ways of improving. Although the reviewer was impressed with our strategy and work plan and many other of our activities, she recommended we reconsider the topics discussed at FGB meetings. As a consequence, we are planning to combine the FGB and the TLC for the 2019/20 school year so that all governors are involved in discussions about children's progress and the curriculum.

In the event, Ofsted visited on March 26th/27th. It was an intense experience for all concerned but especially for Mrs Barron and Mrs Powell who were called upon to provide concrete evidence for a remarkable range of factors from data on the progress and attainment of every child to the breadth of the curriculum. As governors, we too were quizzed in some detail to reassure the inspector that we fully understood the school and were carrying out our roles as effectively as she expected. We were delighted with the 'Good' rating and the highly complementary report which recognised the tremendous impact that Mrs Barron has had upon the school.

The governors' main role set by the Government is to make sure that the Head Teacher is accountable for her actions in school. We do all we can to support her but we also challenge her with questions during meetings and visits to help us understand the impact of actions taken. Lynsey Willis and Elisabeth Skinner have continued as Co-Chairs with Chloe Turner and Debby Thacker as committee Chairs. On her appointment as teacher in Merlin class in August 2018, Tara Murphy resigned as a parent governor. She was replaced by Matt Stanway who attended induction training and has been finding his feet as the governor responsible for monitoring science in the school. Governors continue to have specific responsibilities. We keep a record of all our activities including formal visits, informal activities and training events attended. Lynsey and Elisabeth visit Mrs Barron regularly to stay up-to-date with matters of concern to governors. All governors have visited school formally to monitor learning, behaviour and safety and informally for school events. The children's safety is taken very seriously. As the governor for safeguarding, Lynsey Willis monitors safety through frequent visits and discussions with Mrs Barron and Mrs Powell. Governors review attendance data at every meeting with the expectation that the maximum potential attendance will be achieved. The staff have worked hard to address persistently weak attendance and as a result attendance has been raised by at least two percentage points.

The Co-Chairs conducted a survey in February 2019 to find out what parents thought about the Prince William Award scheme, Forest School and after school clubs. The results showed that the PWA was of moderate benefit but that Forest School and after school clubs were greatly appreciated. The governors help to build connections with the village community. Debby Thacker writes a piece every month for the Sheepscombe News; Elisabeth Skinner promotes links with Sheepscombe Cricket Club and Sheepscombe History Society while Matt Stanway facilitates the all-important link with the National Trust. Volunteering by villagers is encouraged while governors acting as volunteers work closely with the school; for example, Debby Thacker, supported by Chloe Turner, leads on a project called 'What's it

like to be ...?' where guests come to talk about their profession. This is in addition to her work on reading and literature while Chloe Turner continues to inspire children with maths and coding.

The TLC is responsible for our second priority:

An enriching curriculum where we work together to achieve the best

Under the leadership of Debby Thacker (English champion), the TLC monitored learning, learning resources and the quality of teaching across the curriculum. We used the school's Moving on Plan (MoP) to focus on spelling, reading, writing, maths, science and PSHE (Personal, Social, Citizenship, Health Education) and cross-curricular themes. Our main task is to hold the school leadership to account for pupils' attainment and progress compared with initial targets. We made formal visits to the school to look at the children's books and discussed questions with staff during visits and at our meetings. The committee met three times in the year to review the evidence from Insight data collected at the end of every long term. The data helps us appreciate what the children achieve and the rate at which they progress. The TLC needs to consider the impact of actions taken to address issues arising from the data. We have also started to discuss the implications for teaching and learning of the Ofsted report following the visit in the spring.

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 have limited significance; Mrs Barron explains the detail to governors who look for evidence to support the data when visiting the school.

We use the data to monitor the progress of children with special educational needs (Tessa Lentel is the SEND champion) and those who qualify for the pupil premium (Chloe Turner focuses on this). The data continues to show that boys often struggle with writing in comparison with girls while late entry to school or fragile attendance has an impact. The TLC needs to know that there are strategies in place to address such issues. The teaching of maths has shown significant improvement culminating in the amazing victory of the school in the inter-schools Maths 24 competition in the summer of 2019. Chloe Turner is the Maths champion; she has also had a significant part to play as a volunteer. The TLC monitors the challenges offered to children who achieve 'greater depth' in their learning.

Elisabeth Skinner is the governor focusing on PSHE where emphasis has been on healthy living and sport. The staff survey conducted in July 2019 shows that the use of Bentham and Atlas sports throughout the year (and paid for by the sports premium) has been a great success. The staff have been developing greater confidence for delivering sport as a result of working with Atlas sports coaches. The children have taken part in many sporting competitions where they have shown great resilience.

The FRC is responsible for our third priority:

The creative use of resources to strengthen teaching and learning

Under the leadership of Chloe Turner and working closely with Caroline Powell (our excellent School Business Manager), the FRC has monitored the financial condition of the school's revenue and capital budgets throughout the year. With the increase in pupil numbers significantly preceding any related increase in funding, the management of the budget for a small school is a considerable challenge but staff and governors have worked hard to eliminate a pre-existing deficit. The FRC supported the proposal to seek an increase

in the PAN (Published Admissions Number) from 9 a year to 10. The Local Authority agreed to permit the increase in Reception year only from 2020. The Schools Financial Value Standard has been returned as required and the value of Gloucestershire County Council's Traded Services has been reviewed. The budget for 2019-20 with a tiny surplus was submitted to the local authority.

The FRC is responsible for strategic issues related to staffing, staff absence and staff CPD including the planning of INSET days. It has therefore monitored the change to a three-class structure, the performance management of staff and pay-related issues. The governors' Pay Panel and Appraisal Panels reported to the FRC. Chloe Turner is also responsible for reviewing the school's use of the Pupil Premium and Mrs Barron's comprehensive report which shows that the Premium had a measurable impact.

A third area of responsibility is for resources, the premises and the outdoor environment. The FRC monitors spending on ICT equipment from the capital fund and general maintenance. Seth Johnson is the Health & Safety governor; he has visited the school from time to time to carry out H&S checks. Adopted policies include a Disaster and Emergency Policy and a Governors' Allowances Policy (the governors do not receive allowances). Governors were also impressed that children wrote their own version of an Anti-Bullying Policy. Significant improvements have been made to the outdoor area above the Merlin classroom including specialist sheds (most of which were sponsored by parents or villagers) and artificial grass to address the slippery decked surface. The addition of solar panels to the roof of the original school building was a major project overseen by the FRC and led by Chloe Turner who orchestrated a very successful fundraising project. Chloe and Caroline have been relentless in pursuing grants and fundraising opportunities. The FRC also agreed to contribute to the Sheepscombe Village Hall playground fund.

Information about the governing board			
Name	Type of governor	Committee membership	Any link roles
Vicky Barron	Head Teacher	Both TLC and FRC	
Seth Johnson	Parent governor	FRC	Environment, Health & Safety; Website
Tracey Lane	Staff governor	TLC	
Tessa Lentel	Local Authority governor	TLC	TLC chair to Term 5 SEND
Elisabeth Skinner	Co-opted governor	TLC	FGB CoChair; PSCHE
Matt Stanway	Parent governor	FRC	Science

Debby Thacker	Co-opted governor	TLC	TLC Chair; English
Chloe Turner	Co-opted governor	SOC	FRC Chair; Maths; Finance
Lynsey Willis	Co-opted governor	TLC	FGB CoChair; Safeguarding and Attendance; Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

FGB meetings were held on October 2nd, October 16th, February 26th, June 4th and July 11th (review workshop). The planned meeting on March 26th was cancelled (Ofsted visit).

FRC meetings were held on November 29th, March 21st and May 23rd. Note that one CoChair attends every FRC meeting. TLC meetings were held on 24th September, 14th January and 13th May.

Governors' record of attendance				
Name	Possible attendance (full governing board meetings and committee meetings)		Actual attendance	
	FGB	Committees	FGB	Committees
Vicky Barron	5	6	4	6
Seth Johnson	5	3	3	3
Tracey Lane	5	3	4	2
Tessa Lentel	5	3	4	3
Elisabeth Skinner	5	3	5	3
Matt Stanway	5	3	5	2
Debby Thacker	5	3	4	3
Chloe Turner	5	3	5	3
Lynsey Willis	5	3	5	2
Lynsey Willis or Elisabeth Skinner (FRC)		3		3

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>	51	62 (May 2019) with the prospect of 65 in September	
<i>A good rating from Ofsted</i>	Achieved	Achieved March 2019	
<i>All procedures are in place for good governance</i>	Achieved	Achieved (external review of governance January 2019)	
<i>The best possible level of attendance</i>	94%	95% (May 2019)	
<i>Pupils reach age-related expectations in attainment and progress (reading, writing, maths)</i>	Numbers in each age group are too low for significant percentages. Teacher records show significant improvement in performance especially in Terms 4 to 6.	<p>Attainment data for 2019 shows a marked improvement compared with 2018. 83% of children at the end of KS2 made at least the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined, with 33% combined at Greater Depth. (2018 33% Expected /0% Greater Depth)</p> <p>Individual subject figures for the end of KS2 for 2019:</p> <p>Reading 83% EXS 67% GDS (2018 83%/33%) Writing 83% EXS 50% GDS (2018 50%/0%) Maths 83% EXS 33% GDS (2018 50%/0%)</p> <p>This is above the national average in all areas (based on provisional headline figures). End of year levels would have been 100% for all subjects but we had one late entrant at Easter 2019. Class teachers maintain a detailed record of individual progress and attainment in maths, reading and writing (and in other curriculum subjects) for all children in all year groups and this is analysed by teachers and leaders. Plans to tackle any underperformance or to close any gaps are created and data is shared with Governors.</p>	
<i>Expectations of excellence in teaching</i>	Under Mrs Barron's leadership, the teachers and teaching assistants have worked hard this year to achieve	Ofsted confirmed that under Mrs Barron's leadership and her relentless drive to achieve excellence, staff have become more reflective and open to adapting their approaches to learning. Focused professional development and rigorous monitoring by the	

	excellence. This has included a range of professional development achievements.	Head Teacher have been key levers in ensuring pupils receive high-quality teaching and support.	
<i>Sound financial management</i>	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.	Mrs Powell (SBM) and Chloe Turner (FRC Chair) continue to work hard, closely scrutinising and managing the limited budget. Acting on their sound advice, leaders have ensured that the school remains financially stable.	

Pupil premium grant

Number of children currently eligible for the pupil premium	3 (was 4 until Easter 2019)
Pupil premium allocation April 2018 – April 2019	April 2018-19: £6330 Allocation April 2019-20: £5270

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

Initiative/innovation	Amount	Impact (with commentary)
Smaller class sizes (move to 3 classes in 2018-19) enable targeted smaller group work with PP children alongside Teacher /TA based on regular assessment to drive learning and close gaps/drive for greater depth. Additional teaching capacity for 2018-19 also provided by HT and an Experienced Subject leader	£5000	100% disadvantaged children have met at least age-related expectations in reading compared with 79% for non-disadvantaged children. 100% have met at least age-related expectations in writing compared with 74% school wide. 33% children have met age-related expectations in mathematics compared with 76% school wide. Progress scores and assessment data shows good progress for all children although 66%

		children did not reach the age-related standard – this will become a focus next year.
<p>Prince William Award to develop positive attitudes, resilience self-esteem and teamwork.</p> <p>Access to a wider range of competitive sporting opportunities during school time to which PP children will attend</p>	£0, as came from Sports funding this year	<p>Feedback from PWA instructor showed that 100% PP children were fully engaged in sessions. PP children were given opportunities to be team leaders and had also been 'star of the week'.</p> <p>All children participated in at least one (often more) competitive sporting event over the year and showed a willingness to join in and to put themselves forward for events</p>
<p>Pupil Premium budget funded: Clubs, educational visits, school swimming, Music lessons and Holiday clubs</p>	£1218	<p>Pupils were able to participate in all activities and feedback from children, club leaders and school-based instructors was positive. Children achieved awards and certificates through their designated programmes that they followed outside of school.</p> <p>Families were able to put in structures for their holidays that supported mental wellbeing</p>

Questionnaire summary and governors' impact statement

The governors conducted a short survey of parents using Survey Monkey during the first week of February 2019. The aim was to gather views on activities including the Prince William Award Scheme, Forest School and after-school clubs. The survey was sent to all parent/carer contacts (40 families). 17 responses were received (42%).

Summary of findings

All respondents are aware of the **PWA scheme**, but respondents find it difficult to separate the benefits of the scheme from other school activities such as sport, Forest School and after-school clubs as well as 'fantastic teachers'. 56% of the children **occasionally** talk about the PWA with 25% talking often and 19% rarely. This is reflected in the respondents, 53% of whom

felt that the scheme was of **moderate** benefit; three thought it was of no or minimal benefit with others (5) agreeing it was of considerable value. Identified benefits included confidence (5), team spirit (4), fun, variety to the day, kindness, problem solving, creativity, enjoyment and positive language. Two thirds thought the PWA time was well-spent but only 47% thought the money was well-spent with 41% unsure. Suggestions for spending the time and money more effectively included (one each) more maths, art/music/languages, yoga/meditation and the curriculum.

Respondents were more certain about **Forest School** and **after-school clubs**. 88% were very satisfied with only two respondents less so in each case. Parents also commended the increase in sport although one suggested more coaching was needed to give them a better chance in competitions. All other comments were extremely positive (wonderful, fabulous, valuable) stressing what an exceptional school Sheepscombe is.

Governors' response: The school will be taking a break from the Prince William Award Scheme in 2019/20. The governors recognise that the scheme has made an important contribution to the children's development, but it is difficult to assess its impact separately from sporting activities, Forest School and the wide range of activities that children experience at Sheepscombe. Governors will continue to support Forest School and after-school clubs. The school's leadership team will consider all additional suggestions for activities.

The **Parent View Survey** was completed for Ofsted inspectors by midday on March 27th, 2019. There were 43 individual responses. These are the headline results of the survey.

All respondents overwhelmingly agree (with over 91% strongly agreeing) that the school is well led and managed, their children are taught well and are well looked after. All but one respondent would recommend the school to others.

All respondents agree (with over 86% strongly agreeing) that their child is happy at school and feels safe and that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved; it responds well to identified concerns and provides parents with valuable information on the school's progress.

All respondents agree that their child makes good progress (79% strongly agree) and received appropriate homework for their age (65% strongly agreed).

The one issue that does not fit this pattern is bullying. Although 67% strongly agree that the school deals effectively with bullying, ten respondents (23%) disagree while four others (9%) don't know. The Ofsted inspector was not concerned about this, but it was a signal to school leaders 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. Governors will continue to monitor this issue through discussions with pupils, staff and parents.

The governors also carried out a staff survey in July 2019 focusing on sports provision and the well-being of both staff and pupils. Only four responded from a potential of at least nine members of staff. This was a disappointing response which might have been due to the survey being circulated too close to the end of the school year. It is therefore unrealistic to draw conclusive evidence from the responses received but the following points were noted:

There was full support for funding Atlas Sports and sporting activities at Bentham for the benefit of both children and staff who are growing in confidence for teaching sport. In general, staff and children are in good health, but staff would support additional activities that contribute to mental and physical well-being.

Governors will consider recirculating the staff survey later in the Autumn term once new members of staff have had time to settle in.

On the horizon

Following the findings of the school's Ofsted inspection in March, the governors will focus on supporting the school to improve further. Key actions for governors will be to evaluate the impact of additional funding and to monitor the development of middle leaders' skills to support the Head Teacher in sustaining improvement.

The governors will work closely with the Head Teacher to review the school's current curriculum in the light of the requirements set out in the Government's new Inspection Framework.

The governors will continue to strengthen governance by identifying more precise success criteria for 2019/20.

There will continue to be challenges in managing the budget over the next academic year.