



GOVERNORS' REPORT JULY 2020

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

Our Vision for 2019/20

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 third 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) (incorporating the role of the TLC since September 2019) and the Finance & Resources Committee (FRC) while individual governors have specific responsibilities. As an action resulting from an external review of governance which took place in January 2019, the FGB and the TLC were combined from September 2019 to ensure that all governors are involved in discussions about children's progress and the curriculum. The FGB and FRC each have responsibility for one or more of our strategic priorities. This report reflects on our work for each priority.

The FGB is responsible for our first two strategic priorities:

A thriving village school under strong and dynamic leadership

An enriching curriculum where we work together to achieve the best

Under the impressive leadership of Mrs Barron, the school has continued to grow and flourish with all places filled and children on a waiting list. We have a full allocation of 10 children for Reception 2020 plus 10 Little Lambs on roll for 20/21. 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 continued to further develop the 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. This year she has gained a place as an Early Years Moderator and Mr Ringer will continue his role as a Year 6 moderator. Both these roles bring sufficient funding to the school to offset time spent out of school moderating other schools. Mrs Barron has also been appointed as a GlosEd leader for Early Years, a role which provides support to schools in difficulty pre or post Ofsted and governors congratulate her on securing this advisory position.

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 as FRC Chair. 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 meet with Mrs Barron regularly to stay up to date with matters of concern to governors. They also hold a 1:1 meeting with each governor annually to discuss their role and specific responsibilities.

All governors plan to visit school formally to monitor learning, behaviour and safety and informally for school events. Their visit reports are shared with the FGB. All visits were cancelled from March 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Governor meetings have continued during lockdown using a virtual platform which has proved very successful. A new clerk to governors was appointed in January 2020.

The safety and welfare of the children and the entire school community is taken very seriously. As the governor for safeguarding, Lynsey Willis monitors safeguarding through frequent visits and discussions with Mrs Barron and Mrs Powell. Mrs Barron and the safeguarding governor have carried out the annual Gloucestershire Safeguarding Audit and produced an action plan for the year with a scheduled mid-point review. Mrs Powell, school business manager, has completed Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training and has now become a second deputy DSL as she is frequently the first point of contact for parents and takes calls from any external services. New computer software has been installed where any member of staff can enter any concern they might have about a pupil. This will ensure that all information is stored securely and in one place and will ease the transfer of records as pupils move on to their next school.

The government's enforced school closure due to COVID-19, for all but a few children, brought about extreme logistical and safeguarding challenges for Mrs Barron and her team as they went above and beyond to adhere to official guidance. Governors were kept informed of the school's plans throughout and were in full support of the measures taken to ensure that children could continue to learn at home until restrictions began to ease. The staff also ensured that learning in school at Cranham was available to keyworker and vulnerable children. Mrs Barron's outstanding leadership during this time shone thorough in the governors' survey to parents and the children were delighted to eventually be invited back into school, with the addition of the Village Hall, to enjoy time with their friends and teachers for the last few weeks of the school year. The governors sent a letter to the Village Hall Management Committee thanking them for allowing exclusive use of the Village Hall as this made all the difference to the summer term experience. We congratulate Mrs Barron on her superb leadership during these extraordinary times and thank all staff for their commitment and willingness to provide the best possible support for the children in their care.

Pre-Covid, governors reviewed pupil attendance data at every meeting with the expectation that the maximum potential attendance will be achieved. Despite staff continuing to work hard with parents and pupils to address persistently weak attendance, targets for the year were not being met prior to school closure in March 2020. Attendance will be a priority focus again during the next academic year.

The governors continue to help build connections with the village community although plans were disrupted from March by Covid-19. 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 Debby's work on reading and literature while Chloe continues to inspire children with STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) activities.

Chloe managed to secure a generous grant from British Science Week and supported by Debby, worked extremely hard this year to inspire and support the entire school in creating and preparing for publication their very own maths-based interactive story, 'The Quest for the Golden Sheep'. Copies of the book were snapped up readily by proud families and the wider community.

Our main task is to hold the school leadership to account for pupils' attainment and progress compared with initial targets. We therefore visited the school to look at the children's books and discuss questions with staff. We report visits to the FGB where we also review the evidence from Insight data collected at the end of each term. The FGB met five times in the year; (October, November, January, May and July). In October, January and May our focus is normally on the data - the statistics that help us appreciate what the children achieve and the rate at which they progress. The national data published in the autumn (based on the summer's SATS results) was reviewed 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 also 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 FGB needs to know that there are strategies in place to address such issues. The FGB also monitors the challenges offered to children who achieve 'greater depth' in their learning.

The FGB will need to consider the impact of the extended period of school closure on the progress of each cohort of children and be alert to the actions taken to address the impact identified. All statutory assessments were cancelled by the DfE this year due to COVID-19 and therefore data for the end of KS1 and KS2 will not be published by the Government.

A key area of focus at the November meeting was to review Sheepscombe school's curriculum offer. This has involved teachers drawing up detailed curriculum plans which show progression over a child's primary school career as well as alignment to the national curriculum. With a small staff this has been a huge undertaking involving complex delegation to draw on the vast array of areas of strength and expertise which already exist

within the staff team. Elisabeth Skinner attended the local authority training on the curriculum which helped to inform governors of their role in supporting the implementation of a broad and ambitious curriculum designed to be equally accessible for all pupils. Governors will be involved in monitoring the impact of the planned curriculum through leadership reports during 2020/21.

As governor Elisabeth focuses on PSHE (personal, social and health education) where the Sheepscombe emphasis has been on healthy living, sport and forest school. Revised legislation and Government policies on relationships and sex education and health education has required a review of plans for PSHE. Training has also been organised for staff to help them with developments. It is certainly a challenge finding time in the school day for all aspects of the PSHE curriculum. Tracey Lane is the staff lead on PSHE and she leads the way in keeping a pictorial record of PSHE learning. Elisabeth sat in on a session where Year 6 discussed prescribed and illegal drugs with PC Weedon from School Beat.

At the FGB meeting in July (by Zoom), the governors started work on a revised strategy for the school based on ideas emerging from one-to-one discussions led by the co-chairs. The strategy will be further developed in the 2020/21 academic year including discussions with parents.

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 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 2020-21 with a small 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. During the financial year 2020/21, the FRC supported the updating of classroom interactive whiteboards with the purchase of 4 BenQ Boards, 2 stands, staff training and installation. A replacement photocopier has been installed and the new school server is being installed in October 2020 half term. COVID-19 screens have been installed in

the school office and Head Teacher's office and new tables and chairs purchased for Kestrel Class.

Chloe and Caroline have been relentless in pursuing grants and fundraising opportunities and FOSS has donated £2000 for library books and the voice collective project. The FRC also agreed to contribute to the fund for improvements to the Sheepscombe Village Hall playground.

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: Health and Safety; Staff appraisal; Finance; Pay; Capability of staff; Code of Conduct for staff.

Information about the governing board			
Name	Type of governor	Committee membership	Any link roles
Vicky Barron	Head Teacher	FRC	
Seth Johnson	Parent governor	FRC	Environment, Health & Safety; Website
Tracey Lane	Staff governor		
Tessa Lentel	Local authority governor		SEND
Elisabeth Skinner	Co-opted governor		FGB Co-Chair; PSHE
Matt Stanway	Parent governor	FRC	Science
Debby Thacker	Co-opted governor		English
Chloe Turner	Co-opted governor	FRC	FRC Chair; Maths; Finance
Lynsey Willis	Co-opted governor		FGB Co-Chair; Safeguarding and Attendance; Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

FGB meetings were held on October 8th, November 12th (curriculum meeting), January 28th, May 5th and July 9th (review meeting). Meetings after March 2020 were held remotely using a virtual platform.

FRC meetings were held on November 28th, March 19th and May 21st. Note that one Co-Chair attends every FRC meeting.

Governors' record of attendance				
Name	Possible attendance (full governing board meetings and committee meetings)		Actual attendance	
	FGB	FRC	FGB	FRC
Vicky Barron	5	3	5	3
Seth Johnson	5	3	3	2
Tracey Lane	5		5	
Tessa Lentel	5		5	
Elisabeth Skinner	5		5	
Matt Stanway	5	3	5	3
Debby Thacker	5		4	
Chloe Turner	5	3	4	3
Lynsey Willis	5		5	
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	67 (July 2020) with the prospect of 70 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)	93% prior to lockdown in March 2020 91% when school re-opened to all pupils in June/July 2020
<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.	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) Individual subject figures for the end of KS2 for 2019: Reading 83% EXS 67% GDS (2018 83%/33%) Writing 83% EXS 50% GDS (2018 50%/0%) Maths 83% EXS 33% GDS (2018 50%/0%) 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	Attainment data was on track to meet almost all of Mrs Barron's challenging targets for reading, writing and maths until March 2020 when Covid-19 put an end to the recording of data. SATS tests in May were cancelled therefore there will be no national data for 2020. Governors will monitor the evidence of the impact of school closure in Terms 1 and 2 of the 2020/21 academic year.

		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.	
<i>Expectations of excellence in teaching</i>	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.	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 Head Teacher have been key levers in ensuring pupils receive high-quality teaching and support.	Governors and Mrs Barron continue to have high expectations of teachers including the provision of materials for home-schooling and contact with children during the COVID-19 crisis. However, at the same time, governors were concerned for the physical and mental well-being of staff during the lockdown especially where staff were simultaneously home-schooling their own children.
<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.	Mrs Powell is always impressive in the way in which she manages a restricted budget to provide the best possible benefits for children and staff.

Pupil premium grant

Number of children eligible for the pupil premium in 2019-20

4

Pupil premium allocation April 2018 – April 2019	£5280
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Details of interventions and innovations using the pupil premium (PP)		
Initiative/innovation	Amount	Impact (with commentary)
Targeted professional development of staff to help them support disadvantaged pupils and enable them to close the gap between them and their peers. As a consequence, teachers and teaching assistants made high quality targeted interventions through the school.	£0 Free training accessed via Stroud Association of Schools paid for from another budget.	Internal and external tracking data showed improved outcomes. In maths the gap was closing and in other areas there was no gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Covid-19 imposed restrictions. Staff development moved online but this has improved staff confidence for working online.
High quality resources and adult support to meet individual needs enhanced teaching and learning with greater level of support staff in the classroom.	£4100	High quality resources for maths improved understanding and confidence. Smaller group sizes improved support leading to stronger outcomes. The plan for SEND and disadvantaged pupils was a key driver. The SENDCo's role was time efficient.
The aim was to close the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in school and nationally from similar starting points through high quality targeted interventions.	See ££ above	Pupils are achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths and aspire to greater depth in all three subjects.

<p>The aim was to ensure that specific disadvantaged pupils had their emotional needs met. Staff were to be trained in emotional wellbeing and in the delivery of specific approaches in small groups such as Emotional Literacy. PSICHE sessions would be chosen to ensure that disadvantaged children would benefit the most.</p>	<p>£0 Training postponed due to Covid-19. The funding will be carried forward to cover this.</p>	<p>Impact will be measured through pupil surveys and the Leuven scale for engagement in learning. Pupils will ask for help when it is needed and will engage with opportunities on offer.</p>
<p>No pupil is denied access to a school trip. The SBM contacts parents to make sure that they are aware of this.</p> <p>Pupils have support during school holidays (access to Atlas Sports Camps).</p>	<p>£407</p> <p>Some opportunities did not happen because of Covid-19 and therefore there is a small carry forward.</p>	<p>Disadvantaged pupils accessed everything on offer but some opportunities were not taken due to Covid-19.</p>

Questionnaire summary and governors' impact statement

The governors conducted a short survey of parents using Survey Monkey during the May 2020. The aim was to gather views on the quality of support and education provided by staff during the period of enforced school closure due to COVID-19. The survey was sent to all parent/carer contacts (56 families). 24 responses were received (43%).

Summary of findings (This is a copy of the report sent to parents.)

The school's response to closure for Covid-19: Survey of parents

Governors decided to seek the view of parents and carers in order to gain some understanding of how far the school's response to this unprecedented situation has gone in meeting the needs of parents/carers and their children during the period of school closure. As a leadership team, we hope to learn what is going well but also what could be managed better or differently so that we can continue to develop and improve and build upon these experiences in a positive way when school begins to return. 24 responses were received and we would like to thank all those who took the time to share their thoughts and experiences with us.

Mrs Barron has kept governors fully informed and updated throughout. We know that she and her staff continue to work tirelessly to do all they can to provide both continuity and reassurance to parents/carers and their children, adapting to a whole new way of planning and delivering a coherent curriculum while managing their own, often complex sets of personal

circumstances.

Strength of leadership shines through in the survey outcome with 96% of respondents agreeing* that Mrs Barron has provided the support they needed, 'her care, respect and help has been second to none'.

An overwhelming majority, 92%, agree* that the staff were well prepared for school closure prior to lockdown being announced, with the take-home packs providing 'some semblance of normality' as adults and children began to adapt to the new situation. 92% of parents/carers agree* that they have felt supported and encouraged by staff if they chose to offer alternative and/or additional learning experiences for their children with 90% agreeing* that staff's expectations of parents/carers as home teachers have been realistic, unpressurised and flexible.

Staff communication with parents/carers and children about home learning is considered strong by 88% of respondents and it is noted that this is something that has improved as time has progressed. Similarly, it is considered that staff have made increasingly good use of technology to support home learning, although some would have welcomed the launch of Google Classrooms earlier and would like 'more live lessons and workshops' to 'help the children to work with peers and to stay engaged and connected to their teachers and the school'.

There is a consensus, 88% agree*, that class teachers have expressed a genuine interest in the welfare of their pupils during school closure. Some parents feel that this came a little late and others would appreciate more regular personal contact between their child and class teacher.

82% agree* that school provides opportunities for parents and children to maintain virtual contact with their friends and class teacher. Google Hangouts are popular and staff support has been on hand to resolve some issues that occurred with initial access. One parent has suggested having a 'school wide event' and others would like more meet-ups, including something which would enable Little Lambs to link up with their friends.

Many parents/carers, 80%, agree* that tasks set for children are flexible and could be adapted to suit a range of interests and abilities. Most realise the enormity of tailoring virtual learning to match the needs of every individual child but suggest that it might be helpful to build in greater differentiation for year groups who are unlikely to be returning to school for some time.

There has been a slightly mixed response to the question of class teachers establishing clear communication systems and feedback about children's learning. 76% agree* although some acknowledge that marking and feedback for Reception and for other year groups in the form of worksheets requires little or no teacher response. Parents and children particularly value the 'personal touch and help' which has brought 'excitement and encouragement'.

In conclusion, governors have been delighted to receive such positive, honest and supportive feedback from parents and carers. All comments are greatly valued and will assist us in our role which is to both support and challenge school leaders and in turn, to ensure that you and your child have the best experience possible during these important years spent at Sheepscombe school.

*Denotes either agree or strongly agree

On the horizon

Following the findings of the school's Ofsted inspection in March 2019, the governors will continue to 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 monitor the development of Sheepscombe's revised curriculum in the light of the requirements set out in the Government's new Inspection Framework.

The governors will continue to work on a revised strategic vision and will involve parents in discussions.

There will continue to be challenges in supporting the school as staff and children return to the classroom following the Covid-19 crisis and in managing the budget over the next academic year.