

GOVERNOR'S IMPACT STATEMENT

2015/2016

2015/16 will have to be remembered as the year in which OFSTED recognised that Barrow 1618 was and is a school that is outstanding in all categories! This was achieved not by sitting back and awaiting our dues, but by continuing and united hard work and commitment from everyone involved in the school. Success is reflected in every area of the school's work and the Governing body are proud to be part of it.

As good a guide as any to the success or otherwise of the school, is the fact that the Admissions committee had to meet to consider 28 applications for 12 places. The head has to work hard to continue to encourage people to apply for the school, as it is widely recognised as being so popular that there is a perception that applications will not be successful. Of course, the message that governors help to convey, is that it is always worth trying, and this year there were a peculiarly large number of siblings which exacerbated the issue. Since opening the new school, several queries have arisen about the admissions policy, and the Admissions committee met again in the year to consider amendments to their policy and these will now go out for consultation with the aim of adoption for the 2018/19 school year. We also had to deal with our first admissions appeal.

There have been three changes to the governing body over the year – one due to a parent governor re-election at the end of their initial term, a new staff governor due to staff changes, and one academy trust governor was replaced due to circumstances making it impossible for them to attend sufficient full governing body meetings. The three new governors have received new governor induction training, and all governors have also undertaken “prevent” training. Two governors attended a session entitled “school governance – effective challenge and support” and others have attended child protection training alongside staff “keeping children safe in education”. All have read Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 June 2015, there has also been training on interpreting the schools data dashboard, Raise Online, and in preparing for OFSTED. The training matrix and the governor skills audit have both been updated.

Governors arranged a parents evening at the beginning of the academic year as a forum for any issues, concerns or suggestions to be aired and they also analysed responses to the parent questionnaire. A representative from the Friends of Barrow parents association attended a governors meeting and it is intended to extend this invitation again in the future at least for one meeting a year, and a member of staff attended another meeting which was equally successful in perpetuating our transparency and open door policy.

The HR committee and Salaries and Performance management committee having merged, work was undertaken to merge their terms of reference and ensure that standing agendas for the future covered all elements. The committee considered the complaints procedure in the light of the new tool kit and also considered and adopted new policies with regard to flexible working and domestic abuse; a volunteers and visits policy was also updated and amended due to the large number of both volunteers and visits into school. The governors continue to support the school in the deployment of resource, and

appointing people to the right jobs. New full time appointments have been mentioned elsewhere, but there has also been another successful temporary inclusion of a trainee from the West Midlands Consortium and also an apprentice through the school sports partnership. The committee have appointed a new part time teacher in reception class to share the role with the original teacher who has chosen to go part time, staff personnel files have been audited, and support given to the administrator with regard to the Central record of recruitment and vetting checks.

A code of conduct has been introduced for all governors and circulated, and a new clerking service procured from Telford and Wrekin Local Authority, since it was felt that a better service could be given than that we had been used to. The marketing committee have met and given assistance to the head teacher in researching and sourcing the printing of his fantastic leaflet “50 things you will do before you leave Barrow 1618 School”, and laid the ground work for more publicity in the future.

Teaching and learning having been identified as an area for improvement by the first OFSTED inspector, governors have continued to support the Head in his daily striving for good or better teaching and learning in every lesson, and to secure and sustain improvements in teaching and learning and assessment. Budgets were increased again for teacher training and for the employment of peripatetic and support teachers, the governors have carried out staff satisfaction surveys, monitored and conducted performance management reviews throughout the year and written to all staff with regard to the meeting of targets, pay increases, and the staff bonus scheme.

The curriculum committee and the data link governor have spent time considering the monitoring of pupils progress and their attainment, ensuring that the new “steps” system is working well, and considering new initiatives, policies and training opportunities for staff. The new marking policy introduced at the beginning of the year has had a huge impact, and considerable extra work has been carried out, in conjunction with the literacy link governor, to bring the attainment in EGPS to higher levels. The numeracy policy is firmly embedded now and with input from the numeracy link governor has been amended and improved and the calculations policy has been rewritten. With new testing arrangements in Years 2 and 6 being introduced, it is a testament to all involved that all pupils in Year 2 had exceeded 100 in all areas and a number had achieved 114/115; the highest possible outcomes. In year 6 92% achieved standard in Reading, 100% in EGPS, 92% in Maths and 83% in Writing – this can be seen against national averages of 66%, 72%, 70% and 74%. This year again, 100% of the children in the EYFS class achieved a good level of development by the end of the year, and there was 100% pass rate for the Phonics screening check.

The Health and safety and premises committee met consistently throughout the year, usually twice a term to include site walkabouts as well as meetings to discuss issues and proposals. Governors arranged for building regulations to be signed off and certificated for the capital work last year. Whilst the capital works budget, granted on the opening of the new school, has now been spent out, the site has not ceased to develop and of course ongoing maintenance is important to save large costs in the future. The polytunnels took a big hit from high winds in the winter and governors worked with school firstly to make them safe after the damage, and ultimately to repair them, governors also worked with the school to move forward the livestock area and introduce a pig farmer who is keeping

breeding sows there. On the less glamorous side of things, governors stepped in to assist with dealing with a collapsed inspection chamber on the sewage system early in the year, and the chamber and associated pipework were replaced for only the cost of materials.

Walkabouts with governors help to identify areas for maintenance or improvement and a 'wish list' has been created alongside the school 'accessibility plan' highlighting future areas for development or where significant repair expenditure may be necessary. Work has been carried out to improve the drainage in the car park, to install new lockable gates on the overflow car park, and to repair and replace the ramp to the main school entrance. A new entrance for nursery was created to reduce the disruption to the school administrator by parents and staff sharing the main school entrance, and a "prayer and reflection garden" created adjacent to Elm classroom.

Governors have attended Health and safety training, and the "Green and Global" conference with reference to sustainability. They have overseen the appointment of new school cleaners at the start of the year, recommended the appointment of independent legionella assessors to carry out periodic checks on the school water system, and approved and budgeted for the appointment of a part time school caretaker to carry out much of the ongoing maintenance work/odd jobs throughout the school year. Governors also negotiated a price for the renewal of our Safetymark accreditation and arranged for this to take place mid year. The initial audit gave a mark of 93% (13% above the pass mark) and with only a couple of minor amendments the school was able to achieve 95% and the much coveted, but rarely awarded, Platinum mark for Health and Safety.

For the first time since opening the school has had to deal with a safeguarding issue, and the link governor and chair have supported the Head in his actions and decision making. They have also been referred to for advice with regard to a fixed term exclusion this year.

The Finance committee continue to robustly hold the school to account for its expenditure, and to advise and help with budget setting, and updating and amending policies – this year in particular, the Discretions policy was reviewed, Pensions and Fraud policies adopted, and the Leadership Pay Policy has been largely rewritten. Members attended the schools forum to discuss the school funding formula early in the academic year, and are also part of the school audit team. There has been an external audit carried out termly this year, and financial controls are seen to be very strong. The Finance committee approved changes to the school uniform suppliers, and administration of after school clubs and governors was able to agree funding for a new administrative assistant post, and a caretaker and further staff changes at the end of the year. Through Head Teachers Performance targets, the Head teacher has continued to be supported on his journey towards enhanced financial understanding and management.

The Governors identified three targets on which to concentrate throughout the year. The first of which was to continue to support the development of middle management in the school through new subject leadership roles. All teachers were given areas for subject leadership and link governors, in particular, have worked closely with their subject leaders to develop curriculum plans, SEFs and to otherwise develop those subject areas. A meeting was held in the summer term for all link governors and their subject leaders to identify action plans and further work together to enhance curriculum development. New link governors were also introduced in the light of the subject leader action plans and

there are now link governors for British Values and Humanities as well as all those there have been in the past. A British Values policy has been compiled and it also now forms a standing item on the Head Teachers report for full governing body meetings. The RE link governor has given feedback into the RE SEF and development of RE throughout the school community.

The second target was to continue the work on the strategic direction of the school and its sustainability in the future. Various meetings and discussions have been held with different schools and groups, Separate working parties were set up to consider federation and collaboration in their various guises, and, now that we have an Outstanding OFSTED report, to also consider Teaching school status. These will report back in the next academic year.

The third target was around collaboration and community and strengthening the impact of the school in the local area. There are developing links with St Matthews School and pupils met with them for face to face discussions on British values and democracy. There is also work continuing with the sports partnership, on specific projects with local businesses and with Longnor Primary School. Assessment moderation was carried out with St Lawrences school, and benchmarking in the reception class with St Lawrences.

The Forest school continues to be used at least once a week by each classroom throughout the year, with sessions being led now by teachers as well as the Forest school Leader (governor), and other groups also come in to use it. The football pitch is used regularly by two Broseley teams after school, and Activ8U also use the site for clubs in half terms and holidays. The “hire of school premises” policy has been reviewed and updated, and it is hoped that with the new caretaker available to lock up, the school hall can be used more widely by the local community.

In a year marked with some fantastic successes, it is fitting to finish with a couple of quotes from the recent OFSTED inspection “Governors and the trust support the school and challenge leaders exceptionally well to ensure the school maintains very high standards.... Through detailed checks, they ensure that the pupil premium and the PE and sports grants are spent effectively and make a difference to pupils“; “Governors know their school extremely well; they are articulate and passionate about education, and are confident in asking appropriately challenging questions. They are committed to their role and meet regularly to monitor the school development plan. They are often involved in evaluative activities, such as observing around the school, with leaders, focusing on their subject area.” We move onwards and upwards and there are still many exciting challenges ahead for the school as a whole and the governing body in particular.