

Annual Statement of the Key Issues Faced and Addressed by the Governing Body Over 2016-17

2016-17 saw our staff, governors, parents and pupils working incredibly hard to make continued significant improvements to our school. This hard work was rewarded in the summer term by a “Good”, with an ‘Outstanding’ Ofsted judgement for Personal development, behavior and welfare. Governors want to thank everyone for the part they played over the past year in reaching this achievement. We are particularly pleased that our special community spirit and the outstanding behaviour of our children was recognised.

Our aim is to continue our journey of further school improvement, striving to ensure we reach our strategic goal of effective leadership, retention of a strong staff team and improved provision and outcomes for our children.

Over the year, we have seen an improvement in staff retention; progress and outcomes, especially in writing, reading and maths, are above Surrey and National averages; and a new leadership structure has been introduced to ensure succession planning, sustainability and continued improvement in the future.

One of the Local Governing Body’s core functions is overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent. Careful consideration was given to the impact of the LGB’s decisions on the school budget, especially as we are facing increasing budget pressures due to cuts in government funding. The school is in-budget and has focused on investing its funds in high quality leaders to ensure fast-track development of middle leaders and teaching staff, and the implementation of a new senior leadership structure. Cost reduction, income generation and sharing of resources across GEP will be increasingly important over the next few years. We are very lucky to be supported by a very active and successful PTA which is helping to fund key projects for the children and staff.

Individual governors are committed to their own development to improve their performance through setting personal targets for the year, attending relevant training through Babcock, online training (The Key and Better Governor) and in-house training. Towards the end of last year, a skills audit of the governing body was conducted, and two governors were recruited to fill the identified gaps in knowledge, skills and behaviours, with a thorough induction and mentoring programme. The extensive skills, experiences and professional expertise of each governor have been mapped, ensuring each committee has the right blend of challenge and support to hold senior leaders to account. External advice from the GEP and the local authority, together with a professional clerk, further ensures governance is strategic and that we continue to raise standards still further.

Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for individual governors and committees, together with how the LGB fits in within the governance structure of GEP Academies has been clearly outlined, ensuring governance is effective and fit for purpose. Robust self- evaluation is carried out annually, with relevant areas of improvement identified. This ensures the LGB is operating effectively.

The well-established working practices of the governing body ensure that there is regular scrutiny of the work of leaders. Governors visit the school regularly as part of a robust cycle of governor evaluation in line with the SDP Priorities, assessing the impact of leaders’ work, including regular evaluations of safeguarding practices and Health and Safety.

- The LGB continued the focus on **leadership development** and increasing the capacity of leadership:
Our **Headteacher** continued to receive individual coaching and support, alongside peer-to-peer support from a GEP (and wider) network of Headteachers. This enabled him to become secure in his role, embed systems and stabilise the school. A change in leadership structure of two class-based **Assistant Headteachers** proved successful. They received coaching and support from GEP via a network of deputy heads.
- Our **SBM** joined the GEP as the Chief Operating Officer at the end of Autumn 2016 which provided the LGB with an opportunity to restructure this role. In an effort to share resources across the GEP and reduce costs, a SBM was seconded from GEP to work 2 days a week and a **Premises Manager** was recruited to work across Kings College and Sandfield.
- Developing the skills and expertise of **middle leaders** so that they have a greater impact on continuing to improve teaching and raise standards in the early years and in the subjects other than English and mathematics continues to be a focus and was highlighted by Ofsted as a priority area for 2017-18.
- Governor **communication** with staff improved through the year, with the introduction of informal tea and cake afternoons. Staff questionnaires were used and face- to-face meetings help identify and address issues.
- **Provision and Outcomes:** A key issue was the delivery and assessment of the new curriculum. Assessment and moderation was done alongside other GEP schools to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- Focus has continued on improving and embedding the provision, progress and outcomes in Maths and English, with emphasis on Reading. Improving teaching and raising standards in the early years and in the subjects other than English and mathematics is now a focus
- A new school **website** was launched as well as a secure parent group on **Facebook**. Live streaming of curriculum presentations took place, enabling the school to reach and engage with more parent/carers.
- Improving the **mental well-being** of our children and staff has been and will continue to be an area of focus
- Investment in **Early Years** – Support of the class teacher, both from within school and from a wider network of other GEP schools and local schools resulted in continued improvement. Investment in the use of IT enabled teaching staff to accurately assess and record progress by the children. An outstanding outdoor learning environment has been created.
- Significant investment from a CIF grant enabled governors to oversee major building maintenance and improvement in the **whole school learning environment** – the school buildings are now in excellent condition and work is in progress for an outdoor classroom
- **Disadvantaged children** – diminishing the difference in progress and attainment for our disadvantaged children compared to other pupils nationally continues to be a key priority, not only at Sandfield but across the GEP. A part-time SENDCo was appointed to start Sept 2017 and work alongside our HSLW.
- **End of Key Stage** outcomes for children were above Surrey and national averages. Progress across most groups was at least as good as national average, and progress in maths a considerable improvement from the previous year.