

The Role of the Governing Body

The core strategic functions of Pickering Infant and Nursery schools' Governing Body are to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Hold Senior leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Oversee the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

Skill and Training

The governing body is made up of individuals with differing backgrounds and experience. To ensure that the body as a whole has the right skills to provide clear and consistent challenges to the school's leadership team, we undertake an annual self-evaluation of our effectiveness and regular audits of our knowledge, skills, competences and behaviours. These help to identify current training needs and informs the recruitment of governors into co-opted positions.

In the last year governors have attended a number of training courses and refresher meetings.

The Work of The Governing Body 2023-24

Our work is driven by our School Development Plan (SDP) which is available on request through the school office.

We approve, evaluate and monitor the SDP and it has been another busy year for the governing body. As well as fulfilling our core strategic functions as outlined above we have been fully involved in school life. When possible, we all make regular visits to school to see the SDP in action as well as monitoring the wellbeing of the children and staff.

Attendance:

We continue to regularly review attendance and the steps being taken to address the small number of children who have low attendance level. During the 2023–24 academic year we have seen a gradual improvement in our attendance figure, but there is still room for improvement and the Senior Leadership Team will continue to focus its attentions on this area during the coming year.

Finance Managing:

Finances continues to be challenging for all UK schools, with continued inflationary pressures, real-term reductions in per-pupil funding and the birth rate decline in North Yorkshire which is starting to be reflected in the number of pupils entering primary education in the area. To ensure that Pickering Infant and Nursery School has sufficient support to meet these challenges head on, the Governing Body receive regular updates on the financial position with the Chair of Governors meeting regularly with the schools Finance Manager. The focus is on: - Ensuring that the school's resources are being managed in the most efficient and effective way to support its strategic aims. - Providing support and challenge to strategic investment decisions, making sure that they deliver good value both in the near and longer term. - Monitoring income streams and looking ahead to potential opportunities or challenges that may be on the horizon. - Benchmarking the school budget against similar schools locally and nationally. - Reviewing staffing levels and the management structure to

ensure that we have the right staff, with the right skills, in the right roles. The budget provision for 2023-24 showed that the school has a managed deficit at the end of the financial year. We are faced with further pressure in the 2024-25 finance year starting April 2024, with work needed to minimise negative balance going forward. We continue to work with the school leadership team and the local authority to monitor this situation and develop a long-term deficit recovery plan, with a view to returning to an overall positive position in the next two to three years.

Safeguarding:

This area continues to underpin work throughout the school and is the fundamental framework in which the school operates. As governors we take our responsibilities very seriously to ensure and verify that statutory obligations are being met, for example through an annual audit of our safeguarding provision carried out in partnership with the Local Authority, we continue to oversee compliance with our policies and procedures to ensure that these are fit for purpose and meet not only our legal responsibilities but also our vision and aims for the school and our pupils. This involves keeping up-to-date with safeguarding developments, for example with the Keeping Children Safe in Education framework and its updates for 2023. As governors, we also ensure that a culture of awareness and vigilance is maintained across all aspects of the school's safeguarding provision so that we uphold our very high standards in this regard and there is no room for complacency.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Pupil Premium:

Whilst all of the governing bodies have responsibility for and interest in SEND we also have a member of the governing body who has specific responsibility for oversight of the school's arrangements for SEND. They undertake two monitoring visits a year. Particular strengths noted this year include: the use of personalised learning as part of the catchup funding and the use of 1 to 1 phonics interventions. The Headteacher and SENDCo regular reports back to the governing body on, for example, the school's SEND provision, budget and resources and the strategic oversight of the school's systems and processes for supporting pupils with SEND. Schools receive Pupil Premium funding to help close the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. As a governing body we monitor the use of this funding to ensure that it is used effectively and has demonstrable impact.

The Curriculum:

The strategy of the school has been overseen and supported by the Governors, with particular focus throughout on ensuring the Curriculum is fully embedded and all staff are working to common goals. The Governing body have considered the strategies in place with the Senior Leadership Team and maintained an overview of the attainment data; we were able to see direct links between the real statistics and the targets set at the beginning of the year. The curriculum and learning areas of the school have developed considerably to ensure that the learning opportunities that we provide are to the highest standard and excite the children, motivating them to learn.