



Annual governance statement for the Governing Body of Drake Primary School and Little Pirates Daycare

2020/21

Governing Body Structure

Louise Rosen
Headteacher

Carly Brien
**Co-opted
Governor**
(Chair of
Governors)

Roy Brame
**Co-opted
Governor**

Sam Chapman
**Co-opted
Governor**

Ricky O'Connor
Parent Governor

Jammar Prince
**Co-opted
Governor**

Marie Stevenson
Parent Governor

Stuart Terry
**Local Authority
Governor**
(Vice Chair)

Fiona Rudd /
Suzanne Shear
Staff Governor

Our role as governors is to monitor school and pupil progress & attainment, ensuring resources are used appropriately to give each child the best possible education. We work alongside the Headteacher and school staff, as a 'critical friend', to make strategic decisions and set visions for our school.

As defined by the Department for Education (DfE), the core functions of the governing body include:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and
- Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources.

In exercising their functions, the governing body shall

- Act with integrity, objectivity and honesty and in the best interests of the school; and
- Be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take and in particular shall be prepared to explain their decisions and actions to interested parties.

Our governing body has a code of conduct, which is reviewed and agreed annually. All governors are obliged to abide by this code.

Meetings

During the 2019/20 Academic Year it was agreed to dissolve the Finance and Curriculum committees due to a lack of governors, at the time, within the governing body. Full Governing Body (FGB) meetings are therefore held monthly, 9 per year, with the theme of finance and curriculum on alternate months. During the pandemic, all FGB meetings have been held virtually.

Attendance at meetings is good, which is demonstrated on the Governor pages of the website, with apologies generally given, which are explained and accepted by attending governors.

School Improvement and Development Plan (SIDP)

The SIDP is a working document, collaboratively produced by governors and school senior leaders. The SIDP documents the school's priorities for improvement and development and is monitored by governors and senior leaders to ensure standards are maintained and objectives completed.

At Drake we have 2 Key Priorities, with many actions sitting within them:

Key Priority 1 – Outstanding leadership of the curriculum by ensuring leaders

- Understand how to measure their own effectiveness using pupil outcomes in comparison with both local and national benchmarks. As a result, children with English as an additional language do not fall behind.
- Evidence a secure understanding of how their subject 'fits in' to the Drake curriculum, mission, vision and aims.
- Provide effective written guidance for other staff to ensure that the highest expectations are set in all year groups.
- Demonstrate a sense of urgency and understanding of change management in their School Development Plan.
- Demonstrate the highest ambitions for all children and families at Drake and Little Pirates in the planning, delivery, analysis and reporting of their curriculum.

Key Priority 2 – Outstanding learning and assessment by ensuring

- Teachers use questioning effectively in lessons.
- Pupils' questions demonstrate a high level of engagement.
- Teachers' use of in-lesson feedback ensures pupils do well.
- A high-quality planning of the Drake curriculum is evidenced in writing and engagement in lessons.
- Teachers identify and secure the key learning for each year group. As a result, vulnerable groups keep up with their peers.

Governors at Drake are allocated monitoring responsibilities in relation to the SIDP and monitor accordingly.

Data Analysis

The FGB are regularly presented with progress and attainment data, at meetings, by the headteacher and subject/senior leaders. It is important to note that no National Curriculum assessments (SATs and Phonics screening check) have taken place for both 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years, therefore data presented to governors has been predominantly teacher assessments and mitigation given to lockdown and home learning across various online platforms. As children spent the entire Summer Term back in the school setting, more formative assessment data is now beginning to be presented to governors for scrutiny, with strategic plans in place to ensure gap closures and achievement for all.

Governors pay particular attention to data relating to vulnerable groups and scrutinize the effective use of Pupil Premium funding to ensure appropriate use of resources and funding to ensure pupil progress and attainment is encouraged in this cohort of children.

Policies

The Headteacher and senior leaders, in collaboration with governors have devised a robust policy renewal cycle, and policies are regularly brought to FGB for ratification. Specific policies, such as Safeguarding and Behaviour for Learning are kept as working documents and may be frequently brought to FGB for ratification to reflect any updates to procedures, updated by the Local Authority (LA) and/or school.

Governors ensure that specific policies outlined by the DfE as mandatory are given specific attention and are detailed on the school's website.

Staff Recruitment

Several senior members of Drake staff have completed Safer Recruitment training, in addition to our designated Safer Recruitment governor. Safer Recruitment is monitored under the safeguarding umbrella by the designated Safeguarding governor.

Governors are often invited to participate in the recruitment of high-quality staff, whom demonstrate the school's mission, vision and aims.

Training & Monitoring

As a reasonably new governing body (new governors to the school and/or role), training is significantly emphasized and encouraged at all FGB meetings. Governors have completed Induction training in addition to Safeguarding and Finance Awareness training modules, delivered online by Educator Solutions. The Chair has outlined a clear direction of key modules to have been completed, by Governors, by September in readiness for monitoring and ensuring statutory responsibilities are met and ensured

Providing COVID-19 restrictions remain relaxed, Governors will be expected to visit school regularly to ensure monitoring priorities are evidenced, in accordance with the SIDP. Visits are recorded on a monitoring form and presented to FGB meetings for discussion and any action plans to be implemented.

Examples of Monitoring over the last academic year include: Behaviour for learning, Home Learning Monitoring, Safer Recruitment, Safeguarding, Budget monitoring including School's Financial Value Standards & Budget Revisions.

Finances

There has been much emphasis on finance training for governors, given finance as a significant core principle of governance. Training has been completed, supported by the school's Lead Officer and attendance at budget setting meetings with the LA's Finance Officer.

The FGB has the opportunity to scrutinise and critically question the school's finances by having access to the monthly BCR and work closely with the Headteacher and school's Finance Officer. The governors have taken a greater ownership of the School's Financial Value Standards document.

Governors have supported Little Pirates in the implementation of an online booking system to mitigate against the risk of debtors and establish a fairer approach to booking childcare within the setting.

Governing body effectiveness

What were the significant challenges for the governing body in 2020/21?

- COVID
- Wellbeing – Staff & Families
- Specialist Resource Base (SRB)
- New FGB

How were the challenges met?

- Monitoring switched to critical questioning with staff over online meetings.
- Rigorous scrutiny of risk assessments, sometimes weekly, to ensure safety of pupils and staff was assured throughout lockdown and in preparation for full school reopening.
- Liaising with LA departments relating to planning and building of the SRB. Forensic budget monitoring of SEND funding and regular updates, from the Headteacher, regarding the phase of the build.
- Extensive online training provision from Educator Solutions, available for all Drake governors. Training held as a monthly agenda item at FGB meetings.

What were the achievements of the governing body for 2020/21?

- Many governor vacancies have been filled and governor training underway.
- Monitoring the continued impact of COVID-19 on the school's budget.
- Monitoring the school's home learning provision, including curriculum and behaviour.
- Purchase of professional clerking service via Educator Solutions.

Future and continuous improvement

- Increased and thorough monitoring in 2021/22, aligned with SIDP objectives.
- Continued governor training, specifically relating to designated roles and monitoring/analysing data.
- Continued monthly scrutiny of the school budget and recruitment of parent/co-opted governor with financial background/expertise.
- Ensure progress and attainment in core subjects and monitoring of attainment raising strategies in identified cohorts.
- Monitoring of Achievement for all project and in relation to Pupil Premium funding.
- Implement a governance development plan to ensure the FGB remain focused on its strategic direction and continued development.

The governing body continues to welcome open communication with staff, families and the wider community via the school's office.