

**Annual Governance Statement 2019– 2020  
for the Governing Board of Taverham Voluntary Controlled Church of England Junior School**

In accordance with the Government’s requirement for all governing boards, the three core strategic functions of Taverham VC Church of England Junior School's Governing Board are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

**Governance arrangements**

The governing board of Taverham VC CE Junior School was re-constituted with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015 and totals 11 members. It is made up of -

2 foundation governors, 3 co-opted governors, 1 local authority governor, 3 elected parent governors, 1 elected staff governor and 1 headteacher. The governing board has also agreed to appoint associate members where there is a clear benefit to the effectiveness of the board.

Foundation governors are appointed by the Norwich Diocese to help preserve the school’s founding Church of England character and support the school’s partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.

Co-opted governors are members of the local community who, in the opinion of the governing board, have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

The local authority governor is nominated by the local authority (the local county councillor) and appointed by the governing board.

Parent governors are parents / carers of children at the school. They must be proposed and seconded by parents and if there are more applications than vacancies, an election is held.

Staff governor is elected by the school staff.

One place should always be kept for the headteacher

An associate member is not a full member of the governing board but brings particular skills and knowledge and can only vote at committee meetings.

**The Governing Board for 2019-20 comprised -**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Role / lead area</b>	<b>Committee (see below)</b>
Chris Wilson-Town	Co-opted governor	Chair / Pupil Premium / English	CCS & PPF
Josie Rayner-Wells	Foundation governor (Term of office expired July 2020)	Vice-chair / Safeguarding / Looked After children	PPF
Neil Dyas	Parent governor (resigned July 2020)	Chair of PPF / Training / Finance and contracts / Science	PPF
Claudette Bannock	Local Authority governor	Sports Premium	PPF
Paul Henman	Headteacher	Leadership	CCS & PPF
Michael Holmes	Co-opted governor	Mathematics / support for health and safety	CCS
Fiona Johnston	Clerk		CCS & PPF
Matthew Lambert	Parent Governor	Mental health and well-being (staff and children) / support for health and safety	CCS
Vicky Myers	Co-opted governor	Chair of CCS / SEND /	CCS

		Environment	
Ellie Potter	Staff governor (elected February 2020)	Equality	PPF
Rev. Paul Seabrook	Foundation governor	RE / Attendance	CCS
Mary Wilson	Deputy head – associate member	SEND & Leadership	CCS

The term of office and expiry date for each governor can be found on the school website.

For the academic year 2019-20, the board ran with a parent governor vacancy. The process to elect a parent governor started in February 2020 and expressions of interest were received. However, the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown requirements meant that it was not possible to continue and, because Neil Dyas had given good notice that he would be resigning from the FGB in July 2020, the governing board decided to carry the process forward into 2020 -2021 and seek to fill two vacancies

### Organisation

The full governing board (FGB) meets twice per term / six times in a school year. A range of topics are discussed and agreed at these meetings. However, for all the work to take place effectively, the governing board has a committee structure in place.

In 2019 – 20, the committees and their key roles were:

#### *Children, Curriculum and Standards (CC&S): Chair – Vicky Myers*

- Ensures pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those identified as vulnerable or receiving Pupil Premium, are given every opportunity to develop personally, socially and academically.
- Ensures that the curriculum remains broad and balanced, that pupils have access to a good range of extra-curricular activities, including school trips, and that there is a high quality of learning and teaching.
- Ensures that key policies such as safeguarding, and behaviour meet statutory requirements, and monitors how those policies are put into practice.
- Ensures that the school continues to reflect in Church of England foundation and is distinctively Christian.

#### *Personnel, Premises and Finance (PPF): Chair – Neil Dyas*

- Sets the school budget, ensuring that the available funds are spent on the agreed priorities and areas for development.
- Monitors spending throughout the year to ensure the school does not run into deficit and evaluates the effectiveness and impact of financial decisions.
- Ensures that the premises are safe and maintained, and that there are plans to meet the future needs of the school.
- Ensures that the school is appropriately staffed to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of pupils

The committees meet at least once and often twice a term and have the power to make decisions on behalf of the governing board. Committee minutes are reported to the next full governing board meeting. Both committees can commission working groups of governors to carry out specific tasks and report back to the committee so that decisions can be made; for example, the Christian Distinctiveness working group discusses the school's Christian values and their impact.

As indicated in the table above, governors have lead areas to enable the board to look in more detail at specific aspects of the school. Some areas are statutory requirements e.g., safeguarding, SEND. Whilst governors are attached to a committee, the committees are 'open' to every governor.

Meetings of the full governing board and committees are expertly supported by a highly experienced clerk from Educator Solution's Governor Services, Clerking Service.

The governing board has had access to governor training and development through Educator Solutions Governor Services, the Viscount Nelson Education Trust, and the Diocese of Norwich Governor Service. Governors have a good record of attendance; a meeting has never been cancelled and all meetings have been 'quorate' (the number of governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made). Details of governors' attendance and training records can be found on the school website.

### **What the governing board has achieved in 2019 -20.**

For the second successive year, the school has faced significant challenges and the fact that it has come through these and continued to provide high quality learning opportunities, care and support to the children, and often their families, is testament to the remarkable commitment, skills and knowledge, compassion, and resilience of the whole staff team.

September 2019 brought the sad but not unexpected news of Paul Stanley's death, almost a year after becoming so seriously ill. The governors were clear that the school should close to enable those who wished to attend the memorial service at Greenacres, Colney. It was a moving and memorable service. Shortly before Paul's death, the family confirmed his agreement to having the new building, which replaced the mobile classrooms, named after him. Arrangements were set in place for a summer term 'celebration' but Covid-19 led to it taking place in October 2020.

Covid-19 has determined so much of what has taken place during this academic year and I do not believe its impact on the children, especially those who were in Year 6, will be fully recognised until well into 2020 – 21. In addition, Covid-19 has required headteachers and leadership teams to respond almost overnight to short notice government guidance and make exceptionally difficult decisions. Our role as governors has been to offer our full support to Paul Henman and the staff, to check and approve the frequent Risk Assessments, to reassure ourselves that the online learning was working well and that alternative arrangements were being made for those families struggling with internet connectivity or simply appropriate devices. We have carried out remote safeguarding checks, undertaken socially distanced visits to the school to see how the bubble arrangements were working and in doing so, talked to children to understand how they felt. We have analysed the costs associated with providing a safe and secure school environment from expenditure on sanitisers to having a member of the premises / cleaning team on site daily. There were regular conversations with Paul Henman and the leadership team, fundamentally to check on their health and well-being and all the school staff, as well as feeding back to the local authority if things were not working well. An obvious example was the Free School Meal vouchers. A similar opportunity was taken when Jerome Mayhew, MP for Broadland, visited the school in the summer term, following governors' concern that politicians did not appear to be finding out what was happening locally and the pressures the school was dealing with.

Normally, much of the detailed work of the FGB takes place in committee. This year our two committees have met only twice. Once each as planned in the autumn term and fortunately both managed to have a meeting in the spring term before the school closed to all but specific groups, and the general lockdown.

CCS governors were able to investigate the 2019 KS2 outcomes, look in detail at how children with additional needs are supported and their progress monitored, and consider the plans for the redesign of the Peace Garden. PPF governors discussed the school's catering contract and agreed to change provider, scrutinised the school budget by looking at planned and actual expenditure, and reviewed the Premises Development Plan, and Health and Safety priorities.

For the summer term, in line with DfE, local authority and Diocesan recommendations, governors agreed to meet virtually as a FGB and to dispense with the schedule of committee meetings. We held three FGB meetings, meeting monthly, mainly covering the Covid-19 issues highlighted earlier.

Arguably, one of our most important actions was to agree Paul Henman and the school team's decision to have all year groups back in school for several days on a staggered basis in the final month of term. Not only did this mean that children could 'transition', see their new classrooms, meet their teachers and teaching assistant but it meant that most children in Years 3, 4 and 5 had the chance to get used to some form of school routine. Staff also welcomed the chance to establish 'real' contact with children and the feedback from everyone fully justified making this decision, which was above and beyond the statutory guidance.

Our belief as governors is that, despite everything Covid-19 has caused, the school has continued to provide children with the opportunities for 'Learning for a Fuller Life' and that we have supported and enabled the school's vision to be put into practice.

### **Focus**

Previously, in the Annual Governance Statement, to help parents and the community understand some of the specifics of governance, we have focused on one aspect. This year it is appointing staff; an aspect that is governed by legislation and detailed guidance. This often comes as a surprise to governors familiar with interviewing and employment law but used to greater freedom and flexibility.

The appointment of school staff is a key governing board responsibility and must follow statutory regulation, the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 and associated guidance, as well as Education Acts, Equality Acts, and other legislation. As examples, at least one governor on the appointment panel must have completed Safer Recruitment training (evidenced by certificate), certain questions must be asked, and statutory pay grades and job descriptions are set out in the School Teachers Pay and Conditions document.

Although in general staff appointments can be delegated to the headteacher, appointments to posts on the leadership scale must be carried out by the governing board. The governors can decide to have an interview panel, but the panel can only recommend an appointment, final approval has to be given by the FGB.

The key priority from last year's Governance Statement was the appointment of a permanent headteacher and senior leadership team. In February 2020, all governors took part of a day of interviews and activities, supported by senior officers from the local authority and Diocese (a requirement). These colleagues confirmed that the process was rigorous and robust, and spoke very positively about the maturity of the school council and how even though they knew Paul Henman, the questions were by no means straightforward.

In accordance with the governing board's strategic leadership plan, arrangements followed to appoint a deputy head and an assistant headteacher. The deputy head interview held in the last week of March 2020 took place in a socially distanced environment as by then the school was open to only specific groups of children. However, the assistant headteacher interview in late April 2020 was virtual. Both were carried out by a smaller interview panel of governors (the legal requirement is a minimum of three), followed best practice and had been approved by the school's HR advisers.

In all three cases, the recommendations of the interview panel, even though for the headteacher interviews all governors were involved, had to go to a quorate FGB for ratification and approval. All three appointments, Paul Henman, Mary Wilson and Sam Jones, were approved and certainly have enabled the school to provide continuity, stability, and support at a time of great uncertainty.

In addition, during 2019-20, governors have been involved in the appointments of the School Finance Manager, Year 3, 5 and 6 teachers, and teaching assistants. Over the past 12 years, almost all staffing appointments at any level have involved at least one governor. Governors being involved in the interview process ensures that they can see first-hand that the school's strategic vision, 'Learning for a Fuller Life' and for which they are responsible, is understood by staff joining the school.

Many of last year's objectives are carried forward so **Governors' future work includes -**

- Filling the parent governor vacancies by the end of the autumn term 2020

- Reviewing the curriculum and all school related expenditure to ensure that the school continues to be effective and achieve the best outcomes for children and staff.
- Having approved the School Development and Improvement Plan for 2020 -21, monitoring and evaluating progress and outcomes against the plan.
- Becoming more visible in the school, talking to children and meeting with staff, and at parent meetings / learning reviews and school activities.
- Understanding the new SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) framework so that the school is well prepared for a future inspection.

**How the governing body can be contacted.**

Suggestions, feedback, and ideas from parents are very welcome – please contact Chris Wilson-Town, chair of governors, via the school office. Likewise, if you would like to know more about our work or becoming a governor. In addition, you can contact Paul Henman or have an informal conversation with any of the current governors.

The full list of current governors with ‘pen portraits’ and further information about the governing board can be found on the Governors’ page of the school website. These together with the governors’ photographs in the main entrance will continue to be updated.

Minutes of all scheduled and constituted governors’ meetings are available and can be requested via the school office.

Chris Wilson-Town  
Chair of Governors

December 2020