

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE GOVERNING BOARD OF PRIORY WOODS SCHOOL AND ARTS COLLEGE IN MIDDLESBROUGH 2015/2016 ACADEMIC YEAR

In accordance with the Governments (Department of Education) requirements the strategic functions of the Governing Board of Priory Woods School are:

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

Good Governance

The Governing Board of Priory Woods School is effective in monitoring the quality of educational provision, ensuring that statutory requirements are met and playing a key role in determining the strategic direction of the School. This is achieved through a process of scrutiny of policies, overseeing the financial performance of the school and appropriate and assertive challenging of the Head Teacher.

As well as the main governing board four main committees are in place; the Finance and Resource Committee, the Raising Achievement Committee, the Complaints and Appeals Committee and the Head Teachers Appraisal Committee. The Governing Board determines the membership and proceedings of the sub-committees. Each have explicit terms of reference that are linked to school improvement priorities, via the School Improvement Plan, and each have clearly defined membership. The Finance and Resource Committee membership includes the School Business Manager and a Governor with a background and expertise in financial management and accountancy.

Full and detailed minutes are kept of the proceedings of the sub committees. The minutes and prepared statements and reports are transmitted to the full governing board for scrutiny and discussion.

The Governing Board retains a professional Clerk who is independent of the school. Minutes are recorded, examined and agreed according to conventional procedures. A register is kept of governor attendance at meetings, the attendance record is good and, during the past academic year, it has not been necessary to cancel any meetings for reasons of being inquorate.

The effectiveness of the governance of our school is enhanced by the balance in composition, together with the diversity of skills and experience that members of the governing board possess. Governors whose children attend the School, Governors with skills and expertise in special, secondary and higher education and Governors with financial expertise are all represented on the Governing Board.

Individual governors have been designated to a specific area of responsibility, including crucial link roles in monitoring the implementation of policy and legislation in the following areas: Behaviour and Safety/E Safety, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural, Teaching and Learning, Leadership and Achievement.

All of the Governors have a strong commitment to the role and each sign a prepared proforma on a termly basis to submit themselves to scrutiny in relation to any private or conflict of interest that will inappropriately influence their duties as a Governor.

The process of Head Teacher Performance Management is conducted over each academic year. Objectives are set each year by the Head Teacher Appraisal Committee, including the Chair of Governors and an External Advisor, utilising a model based on the SMARTER approach. Set and agreed objectives, therefore are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timed. Furthermore, the model demands that the objectives be evaluated and the outcomes recorded.

The objectives in this academic year focused on key drivers related to the school improvement agenda which include the development of peer review strategies, development of the outside learning ethos and improvements to the school website in order to enhance communication between school, families and the wider community.

The Head Teacher and Chair of Governors met on a two monthly basis to monitor progress and revisit the criteria and milestones. Formal review was conducted by the Head Teacher Appraisal Committee. The Chair of Governors then took responsibility to report the review findings to the Governing Board.

The Head Teacher achieved all of her agreed targets in the academic year 2015/2016.

The details of all the actions related to the Head Teacher Performance Management Plan are contained in a separate School Improvement Plan for the School.

School Finances

Whilst the Governing Board takes lead responsibility for overseeing the financial performance and financial management, we consider it good practice to have in place a Finance and Resource committee.

The Finance and Resource committee has a key role in managing and monitoring the schools finances by careful scrutiny of resources and expenditure. This includes determining the staffing levels and the recruitment of staff that is consistent with Safer Recruitment Guidelines and Policy. The committee is given delegated authority for financial decision making by the governing board with regular reporting to governing board meetings. Whilst the delegated authority extends to financial decision making the governing board as a whole remains accountable and remains actively engaged in financial matters. The minutes and reports provide the mechanism for monitoring and reporting back to the Governing Board.

Benefits

It provides an opportunity for detailed discussion and consideration of financial matters;

It ensures that the finance function is not performed by one person without scrutiny from others;

It allows the full governing board to focus on a wider range of issues, as detailed financial discussions can take place within the sub-committee;

It enables more democratic control of the Schools finances;

It facilitates review of the schools teaching and learning and curriculum-related policies in line with the agreed cycle and make recommendations to the Governing Board for change.

Raising achievement - teaching, learning and curriculum-related strategies.

Monitoring and Appraisal of the schools teaching, learning and curriculum-related strategies and policies is the remit of the Raising Achievement Committee. The Governing Board appoints appropriate Governors to this committee. The committee has responsibility to then report to the Governing Board and communicate any recommendations. The Governing Board delegates responsibility to the committee to plan, monitor and review the academic and pastoral arrangements of the school in order to ensure that the school maintains and delivers a broad and balanced curriculum in keeping with aims of the school.

Benefits.

It facilitates partnership working with the Head Teacher and representatives from the Senior Management Team in order to prepare, monitor and evaluate the School Improvement Plan;

It provides a role for Committee members to contribute, monitor and evaluate the School Self Evaluation Proforma;

It enables the provision of advice to the Governing Board on curriculum organisation;

It enables a partnership approach with the Head Teacher when agreeing targets aimed at raising standards of pupil/student performance, including attendance targets;

It provides a monitoring process to gauge the effectiveness of key curriculum policies and guidelines in relation to inclusion for ability and vulnerable groups, ambitions for current and future pupils, together with the promotion of community cohesion and the schools relationship with other schools;

It provides an opportunity to interrogate and interpret comparative data;

It informs the Governing Boards reporting mechanism regarding the ways in which the standards set out by the Local Education Authority have been met.

I hope that you find this statement useful and informative. Further information can be found on the school website. I am happy to receive questions or comments regarding this statement and I can be contacted via the website or via the school office – www.priorywoods.middlesbrough.sch.uk

David Mudd

Chair of Governors – Priory Woods School and Arts College