



**Governing Body
'Keeping in Touch'**

Newsletter 4 – 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

This is the 4th Governors' Newsletter, and we would like to use this as the platform for publishing our annual governance statement for the academic year 2019/20. This statement demonstrates transparency and accountability of the way governors and the school leadership team work in partnership.

Message from the chair – Sandra Allen

It is my pleasure to provide you with this Annual Statement during this unusual year. For Elm Park this has once again been a busy time, Ofsted in November 2019, leadership change and the pandemic. Firstly, I would like to thank Mrs Bond and her leadership team for the commitment and hard work during the last academic year to ensure the continuity of the children's education, in securing an Ofsted judgement of continuing to be good and permanency in teaching staff. For Mrs Bond to take the role of interim Head Teacher during an Ofsted inspection and the unprecedented challenges of 2020 is a fantastic achievement showing her professionalism and commitment to our school. A big thank you to Mrs Bond and her Senior Leadership Team as well as all the staff.

As you are aware due to the pandemic the school had to close from March to July. Due to this, the last academic year brought new demands and challenges that we have never had to face before. As a governing body we have worked hard to operate in partnership with the Interim leadership to manage the school through this time.

Governor visits before the lockdown demonstrated the hard work, dedication, and professionalism of all staff. This continued when delivering both distance learning as well as when the school opened at the end of Term 6.

Our Governing Body meetings have continued via Microsoft Teams this year enabling us to see the work taking place and make decisions to move the school forward. Since March the emphasis of the governing body has focused mainly on the provision for children and families during lockdown, safeguarding, children with additional needs, September 2020 intake, wellbeing of children, families and staff, budget ratification, plans for return to school in Term 6 and the new academic year and staffing. Mental Health and Well-being of children, families and staff has been integral to all our meetings. Alongside this we have continued to work with the Local Authority to ensure that our new school build remains as near to schedule as possible.

On behalf of myself and all governors I would like to thank you as parents for your support during the last academic year

It has been a privilege to be elected as Chair of Governors of Elm Park for the 3rd year and would like to thank my fellow governors for all the time, dedication and honesty for the benefit of all pupils at our school. I wish you a very Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing what we can achieve next year with our substantive leadership team, staff, parents, children and PTFA.

Governance Arrangements and Attendance

Governor name	Category	Term of Office	Attendance 2019/20
Mr. Matthew Lewis	Clerk	24/9/2014	FGB 5/5 P&F 2/2 L&S 1/1 S&C 3/3 EGB 2/3
Mrs Sandra Allen (CHAIR)	Co-opted	18/1/19-17/1/21	FGB 5/5 P&F 2/2 L&S 1/1 S&C 3/3 EGB 3/3
Mrs Nicola Allaouat	Co-opted	23/11/18-22/11/20	FGB 5/5 L&S 1/1 S&C 3/3 EGB 3/3
Mrs Karen Anderson	Co-opted	FORMER GOVERNOR	FGB 2/2 S&C 2/2
Cllr Nicholas Labuschagne	Co-opted	20/01/20- 19/01/22	FGB 0/2 EGB 0/3
Mr. Andrew Evans	Headteacher	01/09/17- LEFT AT THE END OF THE 19/20 SCHOOL YEAR	FGB 0/5 P&F 0/2 L&S 0/1 S&C 0/3 EGB 0/3
Ms Jo Briscombe	LEA	27/11/18– 26/11/20	FGB 5/5 L&S 1/1 EGB 3/3
Mr. David Drew	Co-opted	20/05/19-19/05/21	FGB 5/5 P&F 1/2 S&C 2/3 EGB 3/3
Mrs Carol Bond	Headteacher (FORMERLY THE STAFF GOVERNOR)	15/09/20 - Ongoing	FGB 5/5 P&F 2/2 EGB 2/3 L&S 1/1 S&C 3/3- Observer
Mrs Vicky Drew	Co-opted	14/01/19-13/01/21	FGB 3/5 L&S 1/1 EGB 3/3
Mrs Claire Hall	Parent	01/12/18-30/11/21	FGB 4/5 P&F 1/2 EGB 1/3 S&C 3/3
Mr Jason Walker (VICE CHAIR)	Parent	26/06/19- 25/06/22	FGB 5/5 P&F 2/2 EGB 3/3
Ms Tracy Lenzy	Co-opted	13/07/20- 12/07/22	No meetings in 19/20 (New Governor)
Vacancy	Co-opted	This vacancy has now been filled by Caitlin Bragg	
Vacancy	Staff		

KEY:

FGB - Full Governing Board, **P&F** - Premises and Finance, **S&C** - Staffing & Communications, **EGB** - Extraordinary Governing Board, **L&S** - Learning and Standards
The Governing Body of Elm Park is made up of 12 governors. The staff vacancy is the only vacancy we have at present and we hope that will be filled by the end of December.

Overview of the school aims:

Our school vision '**Inspiring Learners, Enriching Lives, Achieving Together**' has been recognised by the Ofsted 2019 inspection where the report state: '*The school's values, Inspiring, Enriching, Achieving, are at the heart of its work.* This continues to be at the forefront of the curriculum development to ensure that each aspect links to what is taught. Therefore, it is central to governor monitoring.

Governors' role in promoting school improvement

The School Development Plan and Self Evaluation Report continue to provide strategic direction for the school. The Governing Body has continued to monitor school improvement priorities through regular virtual meetings this year. These meetings give governors the opportunity to support and challenge school leadership. Meetings have clear agendas which focus on the impact of actions in the school development plan. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic Governors have not had the opportunity to visit the school regularly to take part in learning walks to see first-hand the impact on children's work as in previous years. We have been able to take part in a virtual review with the Local Authority as they have continued to routinely review schools during lockdown.

Our successes this year

Usually, this part of our annual report would focus on progress towards our School Development Plan but with the extraordinary circumstances of this year with no National data, our school successes have been somewhat different. The key successes have been

- A successful Ofsted remaining a good school
- Managing home learning during lockdown
- Consistent management team and staff

Governors and Senior leadership continue to strive for continuity and consistency in the staffing structure taking account of a reduced intake. Any decisions in relation to future class structure, children's learning and wellbeing are at the heart of any decisions.

Alongside the challenges of the year the Chair of Finance and New Build Link Governor have been working with Mrs Bond and the Local Authority representatives to ensure the building of the new school remains as near to schedule as possible. In conjunction with this a focus has been to ensure the school site is safe for children during commencement of the project.

Update from New Build link Governor – Dave Drew (Co-opted governor)

The building of the new school is now underway, and we would like to thank all parents, staff and of the course the children for their tolerance during this challenging period. As you can all no doubt imagine, the difficult year of 2020 has had its toll on the project, and inevitably some minor delays have been experienced, although the main contractor is now in place and detailed designs of what will be an incredibly energy efficient and eco-friendly school building are now well under way.

The new school is being built to an enviable 'PassivHaus' standard. Whilst this represents a significant additional investment from the UK government and the local authority, it demonstrates the importance being placed on Elm Park and the wider village community. Existing and new families to the village will benefit from these cutting-edge facilities in the coming years.

The school has also been designed with the community in mind, and as such the hall facilities and meeting rooms, which includes a community kitchen, will be available for rental to local clubs and groups, who will also be able to enjoy the new amenities.

Externally, we also have a new all-weather sports surface, which is already in place, in advance of the main school build, and doubles as the new key-stage 2 playground.

A new timber hoarding has been erected around the construction site, to separate and protect the existing school and the local environment from the construction work. The hoarding also provides us with the opportunity to decorate it with illustrations of what is to come, so please watch out for this as you pass the school. Hopefully you'll all be impressed by the design of the new school, and the outdoor 'tree' based Elm Park theme,

which has resulted in timber cladding being used from a wide variety of sustainably grown trees, covering all of the class names at Elm Park.

Major construction works are scheduled to commence early in the New Year, so please spread the word about our lovely new school to anyone locally who is thinking about new school choices, as Elm Park will soon be leading the way in school standards in South Gloucestershire. If anyone would like more information about the new school, or to look at the plans, please just get in touch with us.

Our response to Ofsted/ Our current priorities

Our good Ofsted report in 2019 highlighted two areas for development

- Leaders have recently revised teaching in several subjects, such as history and science. In these subjects, well-planned sequences of lessons are in the early stages of being taught. Leaders and governors will need to ensure that teaching in these subjects consistently builds on what pupils have previously learned.
- Several parents are concerned that unavoidable changes of staff over the last year have been unsettling. Leaders must continue to work closely with parents, and further improve communication, to secure parents' confidence in the school.

Area 1 continues to be included in the 2020/21 School Development Plan. During the pandemic staff have been working tirelessly to further develop the programmes of study with well-planned teaching sequences building on previously learning. Our Governors Learning and Standards sub-committee will continue to monitor this area and report back to the Full Governing Body.

In respect of area 2 during the last year we have aimed to secure a permanent Senior Leadership and more consistent staffing structure for the 2020/21 academic year. We successfully appointed a permanent Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher in Term 1 this year and have started this academic year with a stable staff. Every effort has been made to communicate and gather views from you as parents especially during the pandemic. Staffing and Communication Governors sub-committee will continue to monitor this area and seek your views at relevant times.

Priorities for 2020/21 are:

- Improve learning outcomes for all pupils within KS1 and KS2 to reach expected/national standards or better (at expected standard and greater depth)
- Provide a high quality, enriching and inspiring curriculum for all pupils in all year groups, which positively impacts on their mental health and wellbeing and achievement of core skills in English, Maths and Science as well as foundation subjects.
- Teaching throughout the school, in every lesson, 80% good or better.
- Design a new build, which promotes an inspiring and enriching learning environment for all children and is a hub for the local community.

Alongside these priorities we will continue with our key actions from Ofsted 2019 together with a catch-up action plan to address any gaps in children's learning caused by the lockdown.

Our support for children with SEN/D

To fulfil our legal requirement ensuring the needs of children with Special Educational Needs are met, a designated governor, Mrs Sandra Allen, is assigned to monitor the provision throughout the school and the progress of this group of children. During the pandemic this has been closely monitored through regular virtual conversations with the SENCo Mrs Bond and reported at our virtual Full Governing Body meetings during the

pandemic. More recently Mrs Michelle Keeping was appointed as SENCo and governors are looking forward to working with her in the future.

All schools were subject to a review from the Local Authority to ensure that SEND children's needs were being addressed during the pandemic. Elm Park SEND provision/support was found as positive and confirmed the school is doing everything necessary to meet SEND children's needs.

At Elm Park we are committed to providing high quality education to every child and this has been no exception during this challenging year. The SEND Policy can be found on the school website alongside the School's SEND's Information Report. These two documents are useful if you believe your child has an additional need as it will explain the process to remove barriers to learning by following the **Graduated Response**. This is a four-part cycle, **Assess, Plan, Do, Review**. Elm Park believe a key role in removing barriers to learning is a trusting and supportive partnership with parents and children.

Attendance

During this year progress towards our target has been impossible to meet. However, early indication for 2020/21 is that we are on track to reach our target in the new academic year.

At Elm Park, governors take attendance seriously and monitor closely as there is a strong link between good attendance and making good progress. A nominated governor, Mrs Sandra Allen monitors this area.

The Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that registered students of school age attend school regularly and punctually. Children whose absence falls below 96% or are continually late will be supported to improve attendance. If attendance does not improve legal action will be taken in line with our policy that can be found on the school website. Governors support the school in implementing improvements to boost attendance.

Working with parents and the community

As governors we value the contribution of parents and carers and keen to seek your views. We have a planned cycle of collecting your views and will be contacting you again in the New Year.

Contact details

The Governing Body welcomes suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents/carers. Please contact the **Chair of Governors Mrs Sandra Allen c/o the school office**.