



July 2024

Governing Body 'Keeping in Touch'

ANNUAL REPORT TO PARENTS

Message from the chair – Sandra Allen

It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report to Parents & Carers for the academic year 2023-24. This document provides parents with an outline of the events and developments Governors have been involved with over the last 12 months. By providing this statement Governors demonstrate transparency and accountability in the way we work in partnership with the school leadership team.

This year has been a special year for Elm Park school, tinged with sadness as we leave the old building but excitement as we continue our journey in new premises. As Governors it has been an honour to be part of this process ensuring the best possible environment for our children and future generations of our community. I would like to say a special thanks to Dave Drew who has played a vital role in working with Mrs. Bond to make our aspiration for new premises for the future a reality.

As Governors we are privileged to work with Mrs Bond, her leadership team and all the school team. Their dedication, commitment, and hard work for providing the best possible educational outcomes for all our children is commended. During the move to the new premises all staff went above and beyond expectations in guaranteeing the school was ready to receive children.

We set our school priorities for 2023/24 in September last year to build upon the previous year successes continuing to mitigate areas that may have been affected by the pandemic restrictions. As last year, we continue to see progress in standards across the school, and this is explored in more detail further on in the report. Enrichment continues to play an important role valued so much by children and staff.

I would like to highlight that the success of the children's academic outcomes whilst preserving their wellbeing is only achieved through effective teamwork. Every member of staff plays an important role in the life of your child at Elm Park. ***A huge thank you to Mrs Bond and her Senior Leadership together with all the staff for another successful year for Elm Park together with successfully settling into a new premises.***

Additionally, a big ***Thank You*** to you as parents/carers, as part of the team, for all your support, engaging in events and supporting fund raising events. Thank you for ensuring your children arrive at school happy and ready to learn. Your support is very much appreciated. It is this team, staff, parents/carers and community that makes Elm Park such a fantastic place for children to learn and thrive. The children of Elm Park are a credit to you and the staff. It strikes me how delightful the children are, love to speak to visitors and show them what they are doing and talk about their achievements. They are polite, confident with a love of exploring and learning.

It has been a privilege to be Chair of Governors for the last 7 years and I would like to thank you again as parents/carers for your continued support and my fellow Governors, who as volunteers, give their time and dedication so freely. I hope you find this report interesting and informative.

Finally, I wish you all a well-deserved summer break and look forward to seeing what we can all achieve together in coming academic year.

Sandra Allen – Chair of Governors

Governors

The Governing Body is part of the Elm Park leadership team. It is responsible for the performance and strategic direction of the school, working in partnership with the Head Teacher who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. The full Governing Body meets 6 times a year, and the sub-committees, Learning & Standards, Staffing & Communication and Finance and Premises, meet 3 times a year.

Central to our role is to ensure that children achieve the best possible outcomes in a safe, secure environment. The way in which we do this is multi-faceted, visits to school to see in action the priorities on the action plan, speak to staff and children, attending school events where possible and Governor meetings. Our meetings are a mixture of face to face and virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams to ensure a work-life balance for staff and Governors.

To be an effective Governor Body it is essential that we have the right mix of knowledgeable and skilled Governors. We carry out annual audits to gauge and monitor our skills, knowledge and experience and seek to fill any gaps by targeting the recruitment of co-opted Governors and prioritising training.

Governance Arrangements and Attendance

Governor name	Category	Term of Office	Attendance 2022/23
Mrs Sandra Allen (CHAIR)	Co-opted	21/11/22–20/11/24	FGB 6/6, L&S 2/3 F & P 3/3, S&C 2/3 SPG 2/2
Mrs Nicola Allaouat	Co-opted	23/11/22-22/11/24	FGB 5/6, L&S 3/3 S&C 3/3,SPG 2/2
Mr. David Drew	Co-opted	23/05/23-resigned	FGB 2/5, F&P. 2/3
Mrs Vicky Drew	Co-opted	21/11/22- 20/11/24	FGB 5/6, L&S 3/3 SPG 2/2
Ms Tracy Lenzy	Co-opted	13/07/22- 12/07/24	FGB 4/6, S&C 1/3
Mr. Balbinder Singh	Co-opted	24/01/22-23/01/26	FGB 4/6, F&P 3/3
Ms Caitlin Bragg	Co-opted	28/09/22 -27/09/24	FGB 5/6, S&C 2/3
Mrs Carol Bond	Headteacher	15/09/20-	FGB 6/6, F&P 3/3 L&S 3/3, S&C 3/3
Dr. Kate Turton	Parent	06/12/21- 05/12/24	FGB 5/6, S&C 3/3
Mr Jason Walker (VICE CHAIR)	Parent	26/06/22- 25/06/25	FGB 4/6 F&P 3/3
Miss Rosie Griffiths	Staff	24/05/21- 23/05/23	FGB 5/6, F&P 2/3
vacancy	LA		

KEY:

FGB - Full Governing Board, **P&F** - Premises and Finance, **S&C** - Staffing & Communications, **EGB** - Extraordinary Governing Board, **L&S** - Learning and Standards, **SPG** – Strategic Planning Group

The Governing Body of Elm Park is made up of 12 governors. We currently have a vacancy for a LA governor and are still exploring with the LA avenues to recruit one. In September we will have a vacancy for a co-opted Governor and 1 parent Governor.

We are still in **urgent** need of a Clerk to Governors.

Anyone interested in the Clerk's please contact me via the school office. Additionally, if you know anyone in the community who would consider being a co-opted Governor contact me as above.

Overview of the school aims:

Our school vision '**Inspiring Learners, Enriching Lives, Achieving Together**' is the forefront of curriculum development ensuring that each aspect links to what is taught and central to governor monitoring. It was recognised by Ofsted 2019 inspection which stated: *'The school's values, 'Inspiring, Enriching, Achieving,' are at the heart of its work.*

As Elm Park continues its journey in a new building the Whole Leadership Team will be revisiting our vision to ensure that it still represents what we believe is central to our school together with our values. Staff, Governors, children, parents/carers and the community will be consulted in September to ensure this meaningful to everyone.

Governors' role in promoting school improvement

Our primary function is to provide the strategic direction for the school, and our aim is to make sure that every aspect of the school is the best it can be. Central to this role is monitoring the School Development Plan and Self Evaluation Report. Our role is to analyse how the school is being run during committee meetings and governor visits to school.

Impact of Governor role on Learning and Standards

It has been a busy year at Elm Park Primary School and as the staff and pupils have been moving into the new building, the learning and standards committee have been monitoring the learning and progress of pupils.

Over the course of the year, all governors have had the opportunity to visit the school during the day. During these visits, governors see the school in action and can cross reference this against the points that have been discussed at governor meetings. Whilst in school, governors see teaching in action, discuss action plans with relevant staff and talk to pupils about their learning. The visits are informative and enjoyable, enabling us to strengthen our relationships with staff in school.

A key part of the learning and standards committee is to monitor the progress of pupils and to understand what steps the leadership team are taking to meet the needs of pupils at Elm Park. This year has seen the introduction of a new phonics scheme and the impact of this has been shared with all governors. Moving forward we will continue to monitor the impact of this new approach across all areas of English. The regular and careful monitoring of pupils has continued throughout the year; despite starting the school year in one building and ending it in another and the governors appreciate the time that staff have given to them during their visits to the school.

Vicky Drew – Chair of Learning & Standards

Impact of Governor role on Staffing & Communication

The staffing committee meet 3 times a year to discuss staffing matters such as new appointments, class structure, & wellbeing. This year we have been involved in the recruitment of new teaching staff.

Communication with staff, pupils & parents and carers is also important to us. Governors attended parents evening in March to hand out a short survey. We asked what was good about Elm Park and what could be even better. Feedback was really impressive. We were particularly pleased about the following:

- ✓ Many comments about how lovely the new school is, how children are safe, and the transition to the new school has been good. Children love school.
- ✓ Teachers are amazing, create a great & positive atmosphere. They ensure knowledge & progression but also are really supportive of children and the family. Good standards of teaching.
- ✓ Communication between parents & teachers is excellent.
- ✓ Mrs. Bond is an excellent leader, welcomes children into school with a smile and shows commitment, enthusiasm & genuine care for the children.
- ✓ The new phonics system is great & children enjoy it.
- ✓ Children are happy.

Some parents suggested that after school clubs could be more varied, offering more non-sporting activities. The school offers a range of free and paid for clubs providing unique experiences for the children but are delighted school will be extending the offer in September. Progressive sports continue to cover wrap around care during school holidays.

Thank you to all those who returned a survey, we do appreciate your views, it is considered in future development of the school.

Ks2 children and year 6 children leaving this year will be asked their views during term 6.
Nicola Allaouat – Chair of Staffing & Communication.

Impact of Governor role on Finance and Premises

This committee's prime function is to ensure financial stability and provide a safe building for children to learn.

As chair of F & P I attended budget setting with the Head Teacher, Senior School Administrator and our Finance Officer to set the budget for the financial year 2024-25. The F & P Committee scrutinised the budget plan in May 2024 and then recommended it to the full Governing Body for ratification. We ensure that the greatest possible share of funds goes towards the education and development of our pupils. Governors concluded that the school has managed its finances well despite the impact of lack of additional funding from central government to fund increases in staff pay and energy costs. The school continues to compare favourably against benchmarks. If we find any material differences, we follow up to see what we may learn.

In respect of school premises, we have spent the past few years ensuring that the new school building becomes a reality. I am thrilled that at last our children are benefitting from new premises and a wonderful learning environment. This would not have been possible without the determination of Mrs Bond support by governors, particularly Mr. David Drew, in pursuit of this venture.

Whilst building work was being carried out Governors were satisfied that all Health & Safety procedures were followed around the surrounding areas and in the old building. We have an assigned H & S Governor, Mr Jason Walker, specifically to oversee this and he visits three times a year to speak to school staff and to carry out a walk around to ensure processes are being followed. This is reported back to the F & P committee.

Sandra Allen – Chair of Finance & Premises

Integral to our role as Governor is to systematically review the school's policies. School policies are reviewed at either one of the sub-committees or the Full Governing Body. These policies are examined to satisfy ourselves that they uphold our shared ethos and values, and that those policies are consistent with each other; for example, that each

policy is in line with the safeguarding policy. Governors ask questions of school leaders and gather evidence to ensure that these policies reflect the school's practices. When Governors visit school, they monitor the effectiveness of these policies. This gives us an overview of all the school's processes, enabling Governors to secure a consistently high standard of provision for every child at the school.

Our successes this year

There are two ways in which we celebrate the success of our children.

- ✓ Standards and Progress
- ✓ Impact of the School Development Plan

Standards and Progress

Key years that are measured against National Standards are:

- ✓ EYFS
- ✓ End of Year 6
- ✓ Year 1 Phonics

Comparison between previous year data is not an indicator of school progress as each cohort of children is unique. This year we have seen a growing number of in-year transfers from children moving to the area or transferring from other schools, some have additional needs who are working below expected standards. Our inward mobility is 23.6% across the school this academic year that impacts on data as children settle into their new school.

Successes

We are all so proud of the children's achievements across the school especially considering all the changes and challenges they have faced. The disruption of the pandemic still having an impact on academic achievement and well-being of our children.

- ✓ **EYFS assessment** is slightly above our prediction with 82% meeting their Early Learning Goals (ELG). This is significantly better than the previous 6 years!
- ✓ **Year 1 Phonics** for this year group shows the % of children meeting expectation has increased from previous years. The effectiveness of the new phonic system is evident but was impacted by inward mobility of children.
- ✓ **Year 6 statutory tests (SATs)** – The number of children achieving greater depth in Reading, Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling (GP&S) and Maths is higher than we predicted. Children achieving expected standard in all areas (Reading, Writing, GP&S) is also higher than anticipated. Mobility, in this year group makes it problematic in comparing with National data, however the % number of children achieving expected standards in Maths & GP&S is above the National and broadly in line with Reading.

The Government places great emphasis on pupil progress rather than just the headline figures. However, this year there will be no progress data, as our current Year 6 children were not assessed in Year 2 due to the pandemic.

School Development Plan

Our School Improvement Plan set at the beginning of the academic year 2023/24 set 5 key priorities,

Priority 1

- ✓ *Accelerate progress of early reading through the implementation of Read, Write Inc Phonics throughout the school.*

Successes:

School data shows that 87% of EYFS children achieved their ELG in Reading showing clear acceleration since starting school. External English Advisors note that they see rapid progress in many children with 2-3 reading stage progress.

Priority 2

- ✓ *Accelerate progress of PP, SEN Support and off track pupils in reading, writing and maths.*

Successes:

Internal data shows an improving picture of progress of groups identified in the above priority.

Priority 3

- ✓ *Improve attendance of all groups to be at least in line with the LA*

See Attendance section update.

Priority 4

- ✓ *Embed children's ability to identify, use and evaluate the skills needed in each area of the connected curriculum e.g. 'As an historian, in this lessons I...'*

Successes:

Internal school and Governor monitoring shows there is clear evidence that children are become more skilled at using the language of areas of the connected curriculum. They are retaining and building on knowledge they have learned in their oral and written language.

Priority 5

- ✓ *To develop children's sense of identity within the wider curriculum*

Successes:

School internal monitoring demonstrates the new PSHE curriculum has been embedded with subject leader confident to lead together with children learning age appropriate safe and healthy relationships.

As governors we are proud of the achievements of the school leadership team and staff for the success/impact they have made towards these priorities during a year with considerable upheaval with the move to a new building. We would like to thank them all for their dedication and commitment during this year.

Our response to Ofsted/ Our current priorities

The two areas of development highlighted from our good Ofsted in 2019, listed below, are still a focus for school and governance.

- 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 – Good progress continues to be made in this area. Through Governor meetings and monitoring it is evident that planning & teaching sequences are in place. Key skills have developed as can be seen in Priority 4 of the School Development Plan.

Area 2 – is an aspect that as Governors we believe has been successful. A permanent and stable leadership team has now been in place for a few years. Teaching and non-

teaching staff is also stable. Parent feedback to Governors in March this year clearly demonstrates that parents are happy with communications as we received many comments such as:

- ✓ Communication between parents & the teachers excellent.
- ✓ Communication great through text, email, app.

Additionally, it has been wonderful to welcome so many new children to the school this year and we look forward to meeting our 30 Reception children in September.

Our support for children with SEN/D

As an inclusive school we pride ourselves in meeting the needs of all our children. Key to this is the belief that to remove barriers to learning is a trusting and supportive partnership with parents/carers and children. As Governors we fully support the school and to fulfil this responsibility, we have assigned a Governor to this role, Mrs Sandra Allen.

To ensure Governors are kept up to date with the provision regular meetings with the SENCo, Mrs Keeping are carried out and a comprehensive report is prepared and presented to the FGB outlining how the provision is being met. Additionally, in the summer term a summative report is prepared to give an outline of the progress children with additional needs have made.

If you believe that your child may have additional needs, please contact your class teacher in the first instance. Two useful documents are available on the school website that will explain the process to remove barriers to learning by following the **Graduated Response**. This is a four-part cycle, **Assess, Plan, Do, Review**. Also, on the school website the SEND Policy and the School's SEND's Information Report can be found.

Attendance

There is a proven link between good attendance and making good progress. 2 days off a month equates to 10% of learning loss over the school year. It is for this reason Elm Park strives to support families to increase their child's attendance, therefore we continue to make this a priority in our School Development plan:

- ✓ *Improve attendance of all groups to be at least in line with the LA-(Priority 3)*

Our target this year, was for all children to have 96% attendance.

As Governors we are committed to supporting families and the leadership team to achieve this priority. Mrs Sandra Allen nominated Governor regularly meets with the Attendance lead to discuss trends and the school's approach to tackling any concerns. Unfortunately, despite many supportive measures in place the attendance for our children is still below the LA's and National. Attendance has increased slightly from last year, 92.8% this year in comparison to 91.9%.

Unauthorised absence for a holiday remains a substantial factor in poor attendance and this significantly impacts on your child's outcomes due to lessons lost. In line with our Attendance Policy, that can be found on the school website, we continue to fine families for taking unauthorised absence for a holiday. This is a difficult decision for Elm Park but one we believe we must make for the benefit of our children. Elm Park School does not benefit from these fines as the funds go to the LA. Our policy is in line with all local schools.

The partnership between families and senior leadership is something the Governors are proud of, and we are sure with your continued support we will see a reduction in unauthorised absence due to holiday thus achieve our aim of 96% attendance to maximise outcomes for children next year.

Working with parents and the community

As Governors we value the partnership with you as parents/carers and were pleased by all the positive comments about the school. Any concerns were addressed by the school leadership team. I would like to leave you with a few of the amazing comments we received.

- ✓ My daughter enjoys the atmosphere and interaction that her teachers create. There is proactive approach to identify areas of learning that are challenging with assistance provided.
- ✓ Beautiful new building. Staff that care not only about the children but the family too.
- ✓ The school is very supportive of all children's needs & abilities. They help the children reach their full potential.
- ✓ Children feel comfortable in school & love coming here. They both talk about lots of different learning activities. Lots of events & celebration days.
- ✓ Teachers are fantastic, always care, always there for the children.
- ✓ We love this school. The new building is lovely. We feel the kids are well supported & I am confident the kids are well cared for. Family focussed, excellent events. Our son has learnt so much. Kids have fun whilst learning and lots of opportunities.
- ✓ All teachers/staff are very supportive.
- ✓ We are very happy with all aspects of the school, great communication, smooth transition to the new school. Love the stem challenges & wow days
- ✓ Friendly and supportive staff. Progression of learning. Brilliant & welcoming head teacher greeted with a smile every morning. Our son is super happy here.
- ✓ New school is amazing. Communication is good.
- ✓ School building is amazing! The children have settled so well & with minimal disruption. Obviously, teaching is awesome!
- ✓ Mrs Bond is an excellent leader. I've been so impressed with her commitment & enthusiasm and genuine care for our children.

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.**