

## **Annual Governance Statement September 2018**

### **Role of Board of Governors**

Heathmere Primary School has a Board of Governors that is made up of co-opted Governors, parents, staff and an LA Governor. The governing body represents various walks of life and brings a varied and balanced level of relevant expertise. Governors have a role in our school to provide strategic leadership and ensure accountability, oversight and assurance for the educational and financial performance and wellbeing of the school, its pupils and staff. The three core functions of the Board of Governors are:

1. Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. Hold executive leaders in the school to account for the educational performance of Heathmere and its pupils and the performance management of staff; and
3. Oversee the financial wellbeing and performance of Heathmere and make sure its money is well spent.

The Board of Governors shares the school's ambition and high expectations and is keen to support further enhancing the performance and educational wellbeing of each of Heathmere's pupils.

### **When do we meet?**

The Full Governing Body meets 4 times a year as a group and, as well as this, the Chairs of the Committees meet 3 times a year to discuss priorities for Governors and the strategic issues we need to focus on. The Children, Families & Community, Curriculum & Standards and Resources Committees meet once per term. Governor's talents and strengths are matched appropriately to a committee to ensure they can have the most impact. Attendance by Governors is always good with apologies given for any absence where appropriate.

Outside the formal meetings the school is frequently visited by Governors to gain first-hand experience of learning and teaching, offer sounding support and discuss certain matters in more depth. More examples of the Governors' involvement can be found below.

### **How are we involved?**

The Board of Governors is committed to the success of Heathmere. We devote our time to the school by attending events, observing classes, meeting with teachers and pupils and speaking with external inspectors to ensure Heathmere keeps on track in all aspects. As a Board we also undergo regular training including safeguarding, data and finance.

Last year we reviewed Governors' effectiveness to check that we have the relevant skills and experience to guide the school. We are confident that we have balanced mix of skills and knowledge relevant to constructively challenge data and development plans and uphold accountability in the interest of pupil outcomes. In particular we felt that the school has continued to improve following our 'Good' Ofsted rating. We also spent time working with the SLT to review and refresh the strategic vision for Heathmere which reflects our shared ambition for the school.

We work hard to ensure that every pupil is a Heathmere pupil, embracing the school's values and becoming a responsible member of our community, with high expectations of themselves. We track every pupil, not just for attainment but also attitudes to school, to learning and in behaviour and attendance. We offer support as it is needed and this may come from our Head of Inclusion, from

our Family -Link Worker or from other services such as our Educational Psychology Service. Attendance of individual pupils is improving and the numbers of exclusions are falling rapidly. We involve pupils in the school, ensuring they take on responsibilities as they develop, step up to lead in different areas of school life, attend enrichment activities, take part in challenges in sport, music, or different curriculum areas and learn to express themselves with confidence and self-assurance. A year 6 Heathmere pupil is ready for secondary school.

Governors ensure that they challenge the school about the achievement of different groups including pupil premium, gender, and the various ability groups and ensure that pupil premium is used to have an impact on the outcome of any disadvantaged pupil plus encouraging senior leaders to develop new tools to track pupil progress so that interventions can be earlier and have even greater impact.

Governors also take their role in Safeguarding seriously, working to support and challenge school leaders to make sure we are applying the policies and procedures in place to ensure our students have a safe and supportive environment for learning.

As Governors we are consistently ensuring we as a team provide the school with challenging, helpful and meaningful strategic guidance. We complete skills audits and regular reviews of both our roles and the role of the chair. Last year we were able to recruit new faces to our governing board and through careful selection and audits we have matched their skills and talents to where they can be most effective. A continuing theme of both the school and the governing body is increasing parental engagement and we also recruited new parent governors to the board to make sure the voice of the community is heard and reflected within discussions and decision making.

We have a number of future focus areas to enhance the Board of Governors' involvement with Heathmere. These include increasing school Governors' visits and ensuring governors are engaging with the school in multiple ways, the encouragement of parents to become Parent Governors, supporting the Head to get the right resources in place to enable the school to thrive and to ensure that we conduct a fair annual review of each Governor's contribution to the school.

### **A number of specific and noteworthy matters**

In 2017 – 2018 the school was able to upgrade the Key Stage 2 playground by means of a charitable donation. The school was also able to purchase a minibus for sole use by our pupils, allowing the school to attend more local events including sporting tournaments. This charitable foundation has committed to a further donation that is going to enable us to upgrade and improve the layout and function of some key spaces in school over the next few years. These investments are welcomed as they will have a direct impact on our children's sporting and recreational activities.

The school continues to invest further money from the budget to continue to upgrade the facilities to have a safe and enriched learning environment. A major improvement last year was the upgrade of the school boiler system funded by Wandsworth with contribution from Heathmere's budget.

The school takes Health and Safety very seriously and our Health and Safety Governor carries out termly checks of the premises. The school is checked annually by a Health and Safety Officer from Wandsworth Borough Council and we achieved another 'Good' rating in our last inspection. In

addition premises documents are checked annually to ensure that all relevant legal documentation and risks assessments are in place and the pupils are safe.

Pupil Premium funding is reviewed by the resources committee and full governing body and is used to improve pupil outcomes and enrichment activities for disadvantaged children. This year we have continued to use this funding to increase specialist teacher provision and to fund some key intervention systems that have been used to accelerate progress for children in danger of going 'off track'. This has enabled attainment and progress to improve across the year.

A key strategic decision taken by the Governing body in 2016/17 was to restrict Heathmere to having 45 children in each year group. This was welcomed by teachers and support staff as it has enabled smaller class sizes, enabling the teachers to focus more time on individual children's needs. This year we reviewed that decision by looking in depth at the data across year groups and movement and stability of classes across the school.

Governors are always encouraged to attend both internal and external training courses relating to their role. All new Governors receive introductory training to help them understand their role within the governing body and existing members of the board keep up to date with changes in policies by attending refresher training. Last year the school also offered a package of internal training courses on a variety of subjects such as the Curriculum at Heathmere and Data for Governors. These were designed and led by the Head, Deputy Head and other Governors from the board and were very well attended. Governors have also attended the schools internal meetings for the School Development Plan and visioning sessions to share ideas and be part of the forward planning of the school.

The school has developed ambitious targets for the standards that Heathmere pupils will achieve for approval by the Full Governing Body and tracked progress against those targets each term using reports from external observers/inspectors (e.g. The Local Authority's School Improvement Partner and the Guided Peer Evaluation), reports from Link Governors for Literacy, Maths, Early Years and SEND and feedback from parents. Using a variety of data sources helps ensure that Governors have a strong evidence base for their conclusions and can be assured that what is happening in school is in accordance with agreed policies and aspirations.

In the area of staffing we recognise that attracting and retaining high quality teachers continues to be an area of focus for Heathmere. We are in a London borough where affordable housing is not readily available with high costs of living and whilst staff retention is generally good, this is a priority area for Governors. Our Governors are involved with recruitment and also carry out exit interviews with staff that leave, feeding back the results to our Head Teacher who takes action where she can to improve the working environment.

Minutes of full Board of Governors and committee meetings are public documents. If you would like to see any of the minutes, please ask at the school office.

### **Looking ahead**

Heathmere is in a good place, and this is thanks to the contribution and engagement of all involved with our school. We, as Board of Governors, look forward to continue to support, evaluate and guide Heathmere and will specifically focus on a number of strategic matters:

- The continuing safeguarding of a secure and robust budget for Heathmere, examining implications of national funding and other central Government initiatives which may impact us.
- A continuing look at the targets set by teachers in relation to individual and groups of pupils to ensure maximum progress throughout their school time. This includes the monitoring of pupil funding to ensure it is being used across the school to maximise pupil achievement and wellbeing.
- Ensuring that Heathmere is able to continue building its reputation as a 'Good' school in the community and securing a safe, stable and encouraging environment for the pupils, staff, parents and carers.

We always welcome Parents, Carers' and pupils' input. Please contact the Board of Governors or an individual Governor through the school office with any question, concern or suggestion.