

Governor Annual Statement

Brinkworth Earl Danby's CE VC Primary School

November 2020

Introduction

17/18 focused on stabilising after significant changes allowing 18/19 to be a year of development. 19/20 was meant to be acceleration of our development; little did we know that we would effectively lose 6 months of it to a global pandemic.

The first half of our academic year saw successful relationships being built with our future families through open days and contact with Early Years settings, the entertainment and celebration of Christmas together and a challenging but satisfying SIAMS inspection with us achieving a very welcome 'Good'.

Early in the spring the Senior Leadership Team and governing body began to work on risk assessments and contingency planning as the pandemic started to develop. Challenges and obstacles not previously encountered required a different way of working and communicating not to mention the understanding of prodigious volumes of information coming from the government and county daily.

Whilst the challenge to all our wellbeing and livelihoods is far from gone, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone, parents, carers, children, staff, governors, volunteers and your families for the continued support for our school community. Without a lot of personal sacrifice, effort and flexibility our educational provision and ability to support vulnerable individuals would have been severely compromised.

At the end of the academic year, we were sad to see Mike Graham, Rob Platt and John Mitchell come to the end of their terms and step down. With combined governor experience of nearly 40 years, it is a big loss of experience and character to the governing body. We are very grateful for their time, effort and achievements. They have been outstanding governors.

Many new ways of working and teaching have been in practice during this academic year and despite the challenges we have found some have led to improvements which we are taking forward. I would encourage you to give us feedback, positive or constructive through the governor email address: governors@brinkworthearldanbys.wilts.sch.uk It will help us keep improving what we do.

Ella Morgan
Chair of Governors

Summary of Achievements

Governor Improvement Plan (GIP)

The following areas were chosen for the governors to improve upon during the year:

1. To increase our skills of holding the school to account through improvement in link governance
2. Continue our governor training and development
3. To improve governors' general understanding of the school's financial affairs.
4. Support SIAMS and new ways of working to support SEN and PP

The reality is that all these plans were just starting to gather pace when all focus had to shift to managing COVID-19. We conducted a review in July 2020 and were satisfied we understood what progress had been made and what was achieved and learned as an unexpected outcome of COVID-19.

The **Link Governors** function is where governors work alongside their staff contacts split down by curriculum area and review subject planning and delivery with a view to provide objective support and a critical friend role. Process improvements have been made to the way we manage link governance and align to our staff partners and this will continue in earnest in the next academic year. It is vital to enabling the right support and challenge of curriculum leads within the OFSTED framework.

Training and Development improvements began with individual governors identifying their focus areas for development and where they could access support. COVID made this a very difficult area to achieve however with more training now being conducted online the opportunity has now increased and remains a continual element of the governor role.

We have a strong **Finance & Staffing** team led by Tom Ridgway who have done an excellent job of steering strategic budget decisions and ensuring that the full governing board understood the status quo, the changes to funding, the implications of the changes and therefore enabling an informed decision-making process. We thank Katharine Davis our school business manager for her management of the processes and data to support all of this.

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) The efforts of Mike Graham, Nicki Sinclair, Anne-Marie Tuck, Nicky Gray, Laura Hilliard and Sally Cross have seen a very comprehensive and rich curriculum of Religious Education taught in the school.

The SIAMS inspection was particularly challenging as we had to embed and provide evidence for a completely new framework of assessment. The inspection was very professionally delivered by a Diocese representative and enabled us to demonstrate the quality of the Religious Education and teaching in school as well as demonstrating Church distinctiveness. Particularly welcome were comments about how we work as one team across different functions in the school.

We continue to update the Dauntsey and Brinkworth Parish Councils with school matters and assist in supporting and being involved in village life and progress.

Ofsted

Whilst our inspection fell in the previous academic year Ofsted have since launched a new framework and criteria to work within. We have aligned the school organisation and the way governors perform their link governor duties to support this.

Finance

For 19/20, our primary focus has been to maintain the financial stability of the school during a very uncertain time. Through careful budgeting and expenditure review Mrs Davis and Mrs Hilliard and the school team have been able to bring the school through to the end of the year with a better than expected carry forward into the next financial year.

The committee have invested significant time in forecasting the financial position of the school in the coming years. We are always looking 2 or 3 years in advance to try and maintain the school on a sound financial footing. The large intake into the reception class in September has helped the budgeting for next year and is showing the benefit of the marketing of the school that has taken place over the last year.

The structure of the governing body committees has recently changed with the duties of the Health and Safety committee now being divided between the Finance and Staffing and Education and Development committees.

Prior to the reorganisation, the Health and Safety committee had one face to face meeting, before moving to virtual/online meetings. Several policies were reviewed and changed due to new statutory requirements. Again, two H&S internal walkarounds were completed at each site. The second walkarounds were moved forward due to the re-opening of school after COVID-19 lockdown 1 and included reviewing the COVID-19 risk assessment. The committee would like to thank the staff for the hard work for the extra effort in keeping the school neat and tidy, especially in exceptional circumstances.

Our internal school catering continues to offer good value meals which meet all the nutritional needs of the children. The catering team have shown their usual enthusiasm and careful management of resources to keep within budget and provide great food.

We will still need to manage our school budget very carefully in the coming year especially as we emerge from the pandemic and settle into the new normal.

Education and Development

The Educational Development Committee met twice in person with remaining meetings taking place remotely due to the pandemic. A large proportion of our time in the Autumn was spent in scrutinising preparations for the SIAMS inspection in early 2020 where we successfully retained our status of Good. There have been substantial changes to the framework since our last inspection and I would like to thank all the staff for the considerable work and effort required to keep this certification. We also monitored the curriculum through link governor reports, and reviewed policies.

Then came Covid and an abrupt change in how school had to operate. We discussed the emotional health of both pupils and staff and the strategies in place to support staff, pupils, and families. We reviewed the provision of learning both at home and in school for vulnerable and key worker children, including access to IT. Later we discussed the planned phased reintroduction to school, progress and identification of needs where catchup funding would be used.

The successful provision of learning throughout lockdown and a safe reopening of school was the result of significant and diligent work by the entire school team for which I thank them.