

Annual Statement of Governance from the Governors of Hiltingbury Junior School (HJS) 2022/23

Welcome to our Annual Statement of Governance. Its purpose is to share key aspects we have been working on as a Governing Body this year and our areas of focus going forward.

Our legal responsibilities as a governing body remain the same and they can be summarised by three core strategic functions:

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

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

HJS continues to live by its vision of “Learning, Caring and Achieving together” with links throughout lessons and the school day to the Learning and Community Values.

This was put to the test in January 2023 with a visit from OFSTED that the school was due since the last one in 2008. OFSTED commented ‘The school’s warm, welcoming and upbeat atmosphere reflects its core values of respectfulness, kindness, honesty, equality and resilience’.

The inspection was also an opportunity to share the school improvement plan, which is already in action, to continue to develop both high-quality inclusive teaching practice and the design and implementation of a new, updated whole school curriculum.

As a governing body we were extremely pleased with the result which shows the dedication of the Head and her Senior Leadership Team, along with staff and pupils to implement and build on the vision and School Improvement Plan. We will continue to monitor the areas for improvement through school visits, monitoring and governor meetings.

This year also saw the key addition of Hugo the dog to HJS. Hugo has been very welcomed by staff and pupils and has undergone a lot of training this last school year. We all look forward to seeing further positive benefits of Hugo to pupils on a 1-2-1 and group basis in the new academic year.

Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff

As governors, we monitor the academic progress all groups of children make on a termly basis through reviewing the school data. We have also continued to have regular visits to school for cohort governors to provide year leaders with the opportunity to discuss the profile of the children, their needs, and the curriculum with a specific person on the governing board. This in turn will enhance our ability to both support and hold the school to account.

As a Governing body, we work closely with the SLT to ensure our safeguarding policies and procedures are robust. Our safeguarding governor meets with the SLT on a half-termly basis, monitoring the impact of the safeguarding action plan and setting areas for development. Alongside these meetings, our safeguarding governor continues to meet regularly with groups of pupils and undertakes conferencing with different members of staff to develop a clear understanding of how they feel about their school. OFSTED spoke positively about the proactive approach the school takes in regard to safeguarding and the depth of understanding of the needs of different children within the school.

Once again the governors are very pleased with this year's SAT's results from the current year 6's. They have worked extremely hard and should all be proud of themselves. A big thank you to the year 6 teachers for the coaching and teaching this year to enable the pupils to do their best.

Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure money is well spent.

We have a dedicated Finance and Resources Committee which maintains detailed oversight of the school budget. Balancing the budget in the education sector continues to be a challenge and some of the difficult decisions we have to make continue to ensure our school remains financially sound. Our focus remains on ensuring money is spent in the areas that have the most positive and direct impact on all our children.

A key area is the planned funding for elements of the upcoming building work. This will enhance the learning environment for all HJS pupils current and future. The main objectives of the project are to improve the thermal and comfort performance of the building fabric. This will involve the re-design and replacement of windows and doors and over cladding of walls and roof in order to make the building more energy efficient but also resilient to future climate change. At the same time, to reduce carbon emissions, to make the building as green as possible; lighting will be replaced, as well as a new ventilation system and eventually replacing the old gas boilers with a ground source heat pump to reduce the energy consumption and hopefully fuel bills.

Future plans for the Governing Body

We have welcomed new parent and co-opted governors to our board this year, which has strengthened our mix of skills and experience. There are still positions that need filling and whilst parent support is important and valued we also require representation from those without pupils in the school. If anyone has contacts in their jobs or networks who would like to become a co-opted governor please have them reach out to me.

We have had to say goodbye to some governors this year and thank them for their service to the board. One change was the Chair of Governor role. I took this on from June 2023 and would like to pay thanks to my predecessor Richard Veal who took the Governing body from strength to strength, diligently supported all of us and oversaw the OFSTED inspection.

One of my first tasks as Chair is to undertake a Governing Body self-evaluation that encompasses the areas of Strategic leadership, Accountability, People, Structures, Compliance & Evaluation. This is being completed during the autumn term to ensure we reflect and highlight areas for improvement to make us a more highly effective governing body in 2023/24.

As a governing body we have many training courses available to us. With a recent reshuffle of roles and a Skills Audit, this has provided our governors the areas to develop and add the most value to their roles. Yearly we meet to complete a Full Governing Body training face to face and in the Autumn term we will be completing a course on data analysis to better interpret the school data to ask the right questions of the senior leaders.

To end this statement, I would like to thank Zoe & her SLT and all teachers & staff at HJS. Whilst it has been back to normal post covid this school year there has been a lot of work done to bridge the gap that covid left. As governors we were very impressed with the preparation and OFSTED result that shows HJS in a very good light.

We also thank members of staff that are leaving or have left HJS in the last year. Some have given many years of dedicated service who we fondly remember and wish those leaving us at the end of term the best for their future endeavours in new and exciting challenges in life and careers.

I would like to extend the thanks of the Governors to all volunteers, HSPTA, parents and carers for their assistance to the school which brings so much positive value.

Next year will see the school continue building community links and we've been impressed with all the events that have been put on this year to engage all aspects of our parent community.

How to contact us

We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents and all other local stakeholders – Please contact the Chair of Governors, Simon Haynes, via the school office.

Simon Haynes, Chair of Governors on behalf of the Hiltingbury Junior School Governing Body