



St John's Green Primary School

St John's Green
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Chair of Governors Report

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the first St John's Green School governor report to parents. Ofsted, as part of their current inspection regime, are placing increasing importance on the issue of school governance. Many schools are being downgraded from "Good" to either "Requiring Improvement" or occasionally "In Special Measures" because of judgments that include poor governance. As a consequence, St John's Green Primary School Governors have held a series of training sessions to improve our performance. It was from one of these sessions that it was decided that the Chair of Governors should report to the parents of our pupils. So this should be the first of many.

Who are we?

Currently the Governing Body is made up of

- The Head
- 3 Local Authority Governors appointed by Essex County Council
- 5 parent Governors elected by parents of pupils
- 2 Staff Governors elected by the staff
- 3 Community Governors co-opted by the Governing Body

The role of the Governing Body

- Set the strategic direction of the school and priorities
- Support the school in what it does but to act as a "critical friend"
- Hold the Head to Account for the school's performance
- Set the school budget and monitor the expenditure
- Review the pay and performance of the staff

What we do

The Governing Body meets at least 4 times per year. We have two standing committees: the Every Child Matters (ECM) concerned with the children's wellbeing, curriculum and performance and the Personnel and Resources Committee (P & R) that "does what it says on the tin". We also have a Pay and Performance Committee which looks at each member of staff's objectives and how well these have been met, as well as a committee that sets and monitors the Head's objectives for the year. This latter committee is required to have external expert advice to assist its deliberations.



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Planning for the new school site

The past year has been much involved with the preparation for the opening of the second site. Much of the Spring Term was taken up by the discussion and consultation on the arrangements for the running of the two sites, the initial staff requirements and the personnel profile for the expansion of the school to a 3 form entry. As well as the mechanics of this process the Governors have been most concerned with maintaining the school ethos and approach to our culture at both sites. We want the school to continue to be a single unit rather than two separate “schools” on two sites.

However, the arrangements are not set in stone. We have already decided to change the approach to the school lunch. Originally the kitchen at the St John’s Green site was to be used mainly for serving, with the bulk of the food preparation being done at the Abbey Field site. We are now going to keep both kitchens open for the cooking of food for each site. This was partly because of concerns to maintain the quality at each site but also because of the expected increases associated with the new government policy on Universal Free School Meals.

So if there are any problems with the way the new setup is working, whether to do with the catering, opening hours, travel between the two sites or any other problems then we need to know so we can make any necessary adjustments. Whilst we have been allocated additional resources because of the split sites, we will also need to monitor the expenditure to make sure that the logistical constraints placed on us can be covered by the school budget.

The new National Curriculum

The new National Curriculum becomes statutory from September. Alongside of this there are also changes to the assessment processes for each year group, with the requirement to report in National Curriculum levels being removed in 2015. We already have high expectations for the children with regards to their attainment and achievement and we set new targets for the school each year to help try and ensure that all our children are challenged to achieve the best they possibly can. To assist in monitoring and to act as a “critical friend” the Governors introduced a new monitoring arrangement for each assessment period.

Each Governor has been allocated to a particular class; mine is Roses. At the end of each assessment period the out turn and progress towards meeting the target for the year is discussed by the class teacher with the relevant Governor. The key questions include what is being done to help those not meeting expectations as well as ensuring all pupils are motivated to meet their potential. We also monitor the performance of certain groups (SEN, boys, girls, FSM) within each class. Each Governor reports back to the ECM and we look at what additional resources, including individual tutoring, may be necessary. We also visit the class and participate in their activities. I particularly enjoyed the recent trip of the Foundation Classes to Walton. As the school expands our governing body size remains constant, so as governors, from September, we will begin to take responsibility for year groups as opposed to single classes.

Changes to school governing bodies

New Government Regulations are being introduced to reduce the size of Governing Bodies. In future there will be 7 statutory Governors with 1 Local Authority nominee, 1 staff members, the head and up to 4 others of which at least 2 must be parents. Extra members can be co-opted to meet “skill” shortages. At the last meeting we decided that we would have 7 statutory members of which 4 will be elected parents and then a further 2 co-opted. The Deputy Head and Assistant Head-teacher will also attend ECM, P & R and Governing Body meetings.

Our aims for the future

Our biggest challenges will be the move to the 2 site setup; retaining the ethos and culture of the school and ensuring that we try to put in place the necessary “Quality First” Teaching and Leadership to move the school from Good to Outstanding.

Further information

Much of what we do, including the minutes of our meetings, can be viewed on the school web site and as ever we welcome any constructive comments. You can contact us by posting a note addressed to me in the post box in the school reception area.

Alan Short

Chair of Governors



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