

Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body of Old Palace Primary School July 2016

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the 3 core strategic functions of the Perfect Primary School Governing Body are:

- 1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;**
- 2. Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;**
- 3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.**

Governance arrangements

The Governing Body of Old Palace School was re-constituted in June 2015 and is now made up of 2 staff governors (including the Headteacher), 5 elected Parent Governors, 1 Local Authority Governor and 6 Co-opted governors. Co-opted governors are appointed by the Governing Body and are people who, in the opinion of the governing body, have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

The full Governing Body meets once each term, and we also have a number of committees to consider different aspects of the school in detail. At Old Palace Primary we have a Resources Committee, which focuses on finance, premises and some personnel matters; a Curriculum Committee, and a Pay and Performance Committee. We also have committees that meet if required to consider pupil discipline and staffing matters.

Attendance record of governors

Governors have good attendance at meetings

One meeting had to be cancelled in March, as it was likely this would not be "quorate" (the number of governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made). However additional full body governing meetings were held during the course of the academic year, as a programme of termly, rather than half termly, meetings was phased in.

Please see below for details of individual governors' attendance at meetings

The work that we have done on our committees and in the governing body

The Governing Body has had a particularly busy year. In May 2015 the governing body was reconstituted, which resulted in some members stepping down, including the previous chair. In July, Veronica Kennard was elected as the new chair and with the Headteacher carried out a review of practices and procedures. This resulted in some changes such as replacing one full governing body meeting each term with committee meetings. This has supported delegation, allowed greater opportunities for discussion and has allowed committee meetings to be professionally clerked.

Meeting arrangements and expectations were clarified and reporting arrangements by link governors were strengthened.

Following an audit of the skills of the remaining members of the governing body, in the Autumn term, the governors sought to attract and appoint co-opted governors who could add to their already wide range of skills and experiences. Prospective candidates were interviewed and 4 appointments were made at the November meeting, three co-opted governors and one associate member. In December we held elections to fill our one parent governor vacancy. This resulted in Shabana Begum being elected to the governing body.

This year the government released a White Paper setting out its future vision for education. The governing body has spent time discussing the implications that this may have for Old Palace. One of these is the reduced role of the local authority and the formation of the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership. A representative from THE Partnership delivered a presentation to the governing body, explaining how it was envisaged that the partnership would support schools. The governors agreed to commit to joining THE partnership for its first year. The governors also received a presentation on how to become an academy, delivered by David Waller & David Jenkins. The governors found this useful in extending their knowledge of the process. Although the governors do not have plans to apply for academy status at present, they are aware of the need to keep up to date with developments and to explore possible partnerships, to avoid a situation where the school is forced to convert without any say in the academy structure or its membership. The governors also received a presentation from the school's Attendance Welfare Adviser on changes to how attendance data is collected. This supported governors in ensuring that the school continues to demonstrate good practice in this area.

Another role of the governors is to review and agree school policies, some which, including Child Protection, Pay, Charging, Health & Safety & Whistle Blowing, need to be agreed at the start of each academic year. The governors receive a termly written report from the Headteacher. This includes an update on how the school development plan has been implemented and its impact, as well as information on areas such as Safeguarding, Attendance & Mobility, SEND, Discriminatory Incidents, Exclusions and Behaviour. Through questioning, the governors use this document to hold the Headteacher to account. A termly report is also received from the Health and Safety Governor following a safety walk; carried out each term with Mrs Rahman, who leads Health & Safety and the school's premises manager. This ensures that any potential hazards are identified and addressed.

The Curriculum Committee spent time considering the introduction of a new teaching and learning policy which sets out the school's expectations and guides practice across the curriculum. 2015-16 was also a year of great change in terms of assessment, including the introduction of new

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| | <p>statutory tests at the end of key stage 1 & 2. The committee kept a close eye on updates from the DfE and ensured that the school followed this guidance and adapted teaching to ensure that the children were fully prepared for the new tests. The committee also considered the way in which targets are set and assessed at the end of each teaching unit in English and Maths and how this information is used by subject and senior leaders to track pupil attainment and progress. The provision for pupils with SEND was discussed and a new Accessibility Plan was agreed. Time was also spent considering the school's Out of School hours learning to ensure a model was adopted that met the needs of parents, within the school's financial constraints, and enriched the learning on offer to our pupils. The committee also regularly discussed data related to the achievement and progress of pupils to ensure the school is on track to fulfil its ambitious targets for all pupils.</p> <p>The Resources Committee looks at the maintenance and development of the school premises, and makes decisions about how the school should use the budget. The committee closely monitors spending, periodically scrutinising end of month budget reports. The committee has also closely followed DfE discussions regarding possible changes to the funding of schools, including a move to a national formulae, which is likely to reduce the amount of funding that the school receives. In light of this possible change, the committee showed prudence when considering the staffing arrangements and budget for the financial year 2016-7, including agreeing an Organisational Change Procedure, to ensure the school was well prepared for any future cuts. Possible improvements to the building were discussed including works to the school roof, resurfacing of the KS1 playground, an upgrade to the schools wifi and telephone network and refurbishment of the school's KS2 playground toilets. Careful financial management allowed the school to carry over a small budget surplus, which has been used to finance these building improvements. The committee also reviewed the school's Data Protection and School Emergency Plans.</p> |
| <p>Future plans for the governors</p> | <p>The governing body is looking forward to receiving further guidance from the DfE on the measures to be used for pupil attainment and progress, so we can ensure that Old Palace continues to exceed national standards, in order to give its pupils the best possible start to their education.</p> <p>We are also looking forward to the launch of a new school website and prospectus later in the year, as well as to beginning work with the Tower Hamlets Education Partnership, to allow us to benefit from the support on offer and to share our good practice with other schools in the borough.</p> |
| <p>How you can contact the governing body</p> | <p>We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents – please contact the Chair of Governors, Veronica Kennard, via the school office. You can see the full list of governors and their attendance at meetings on the Governors' page of the school website.</p> |