

Draft Impact Statement

Lickey Hills Primary School and Nursery

November 2023

Governor's role

The role of the Governing Body is an intrinsic part of the leadership of the school, although often unseen by parents and other community stakeholders. This impact statement is one way in which the Governing Body articulates its role in school leadership, the impact which it has had on school improvement and is transparent about its activities.

The Governing Body is made up of a group of dedicated volunteers who all invest a significant amount of time, goodwill and hard work for the sole purpose of improving the education of every child in our school. The Government expects us as a Governing Body to be a dynamic group of highly skilled individuals which focuses on supporting the Head Teacher and wider staffing body to shape the strategic direction of the school. As Governors we are accountable for the performance of our school, and we are measured by three core strategic functions:

- Planning the strategic direction of the school, ensuring clarity of vision and ethos
- Overseeing financial performance of the school and ensuring money is well spent
- Holding the headteacher or school leadership to account

Training

All members of the Governing Body continue to receive training. The impact of this is that the Governing Body is kept abreast of their responsibilities with regard to the latest requirements and expectations.

New Governors receive induction training which includes both internal and external sessions, supported by the County Council. All Governors receive annual training on safeguarding. Other training is provided to reflect individual roles. We also attend external events as necessary to ensure that we are accessing current information as well as local and national best practice.

Overall impact of actions

Governors have a solid understanding of the school's current priorities and direction of travel. Our focus is not only on current performance but also where the school should be in the medium to long term, ensuring that we are making strategic decisions which support the longevity of our school for future generations.

We have school development priorities which are drawn from our self-evaluation and by linking these to the Head Teacher's annual targets, have seen progress against key areas in previous years. We take an active role in monitoring progress against action plans throughout the year and use our visits to the school to understand what is going well and why, what is not going well and why, and where additional challenge and focus is required. This informs our honest, insightful self-evaluation to be undertaken throughout the year, supporting continual improvement.

The Governing Body at Lickey Hills Primary School and Nursery is committed, proactive and supportive of the school's leadership, whilst also providing challenge and holding the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team to account. This extends beyond teaching to ensure that decisions around finance, premises and partnerships are maximised to benefit the school and the local community we serve. We have positive relationships with school leaders which are based on trust, openness and transparency.

Impact of the Full Governing Body meetings

Our governance model does not have committees, with the exception of the Head Teacher Appraisal Committee and Pay Committee, both of which are statutory requirements and set out in our Terms of Reference. This means that all governor business comes to our Full Governing Body meetings which are held at the end of each half term. Our aim is to ensure that we are efficient and effective in our use of Governor time, driving wider governor engagement and eliminating unnecessary repetition.

The focus of each meeting alternates between finance and standards of teaching. We also hold a meeting at the start of the academic year to:

- agree our Terms of Reference,
- declare any interests,
- elect our Chair and Vice Chairs,
- confirm membership of the Pay Committee and Head Teacher appraisal Committee,

- confirm lead responsibilities for monitoring, and
- confirm our understanding of Keeping Children Safe in Education and any annual revisions,
- agree key policies.

Our meetings are supported by our School Governance Professional which we employ from SIPS. Accessing professional clerking services allows us to ensure that we meet our statutory duties, meetings are well organised with clear agendas and focused discussions which keep to time, are accessing the latest guidance and that our documentation of meetings demonstrates constructive challenge and complies with legal requirements.

Throughout 2022/23 our constitution consisted of:

- 1 Local Authority appointed Governor
- 2 Parent Governors (elected by parents)
- The Head Teacher
- 1 staff governor (elected by staff)
- 6 co-opted Governors

We held two vacancies on our Governing Body throughout the majority of the year and were actively recruiting. These posts have now been filled.

What have Governor's done in 2022/23

Planning the strategic direction of the school, ensuring clarity of vision and ethos

Exploring partnership arrangements

The Government announced a new White Paper in May 2022. This document outlined immediate next steps towards the ambition for all schools to be in a strong multi-academy trust, or with plans to join or form one, by 2030. As a Governing Body we are keen to ensure that the school retains its identity and remains the school of choice for local children. As such, we have met informally with Senior Leaders to discuss strategic options and decide how the school should gather intelligence to inform any future decision.

The Head Teacher, along with the Senior Leadership Team and School Business Manager have undertaken a number of meetings with local and neighbouring schools already within academies to understand the risks and benefits of any decision made. This work continues and we are clear that we will not rush into a decision, but will seek the best opportunity for the school, its children, staff and the wider local community.

Inclusion Quality Mark

In July 2023 we were successful in achieving the school's Inclusion Quality Mark (IQM) status. This demonstrates that we are an inclusive school, giving all pupils regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, achievements or background, the equal opportunities to succeed. Governors were supportive of gaining this status and supported the assessment process fully. Since then we have now gained 'IQM Centre of Excellence' status and support other schools locally.

Overseeing financial performance of the school and ensuring money is well spent

Signing off the budget

Through the link Governor and School Business Manager, the Full Governing Body is presented with a draft budget and provided with opportunity to challenge. We invest in high calibre teaching staff and ensure that appropriate allocations are made to premises and other school priorities.

Reviewing and signing off the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

The schools financial value standard (SFVS) helps to provide schools with assurance that they are meeting the basic standards necessary to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management. As Governors we review and sign off our declaration each year. This provides us with assurance that the school is managing its resources effectively and identify possible areas for change to ensure that resources are being used to support high-quality teaching and the best education outcomes for pupils.

Monitoring financial performance across the financial year

Governors receive termly finance reports demonstrating performance against the budget and providing explanations for over and under spends. This provides an opportunity to understand financial pressures, challenge senior leaders on their decisions and ensure that the school's financial position is maintained on an annual basis.

Review of the school's financial position in 2022/23 highlights the impact of pay increases which were not fully budgeted for and the financial challenges from providing dedicated support for children awaiting Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), or where their funding allocation does not cover the support required.

However, overall, we have again delivered a small surplus, but the financial position remains challenging and we are not confident that we will deliver surpluses moving forward. This remains an area of focus for us.

Holding the headteacher or school leadership to account

Overall school performance

Each year the school administers SATs (Standard Assessment Tests) in Year 2 and 6, which are national curriculum tests that measure children's academic development in the United Kingdom. The ultimate aim of these tests is to hold schools accountable for the attainment of their pupils and the progress they make, measuring school performance on a national basis. As Governors we monitor performance and use data to question and challenge the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team on variances year on year and how strategic decisions impact the results.

Monitoring

There are Governor Leads across a wide range of critical areas as set out in our Terms of Reference. These include:

- safeguarding,
- SEND,
- Looked After Children (LAC),
- Pupil Premium,
- Health and Safety,
- Safer Recruitment,
- Finance,
- Wellbeing,
- Head Teacher Wellbeing, and
- The Hive (our wrap around care provision)

We also have allocated monitoring responsibilities to areas within our School Development Plan, and other areas which we consider are key to us delivering our strategic objectives. These include:

- Maths
- Reading
- Phonics
- Writing
- SPAG
- None Core Curriculum
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Behaviour & Attitudes
- Sport & PE Grant

These allocations mean that many Governors have responsibility for multiple areas. However, as much as possible, these are aligned and allow visits to serve multiple purposes. This means that Governors are viewed as critical friends and seen as part of the team when providing support and challenge. Monitoring took place throughout the academic year and was reported back to the Full Governing Body.

Of particular note is our commenting on and overseeing the embedding of the redesigned non-core curriculum which is underpinned by the National Curriculum. This reflects the local environment within which children learn and we are keen that pupils can build on their learning and make connections across the subjects, accessing a variety of learning styles to provide a sound base from which pupils can engage and continue their studies in the future.

As Governors, we are also keen that there is a drive to improve educational systems and processes to help the school run smoothly and efficiently. We have driven improvements in our administration processes, pushing for the implementation of a communication app to support parents and carers in engaging with the school. We have also moved to being a cashless school, reflecting the shift to online transactions and creating efficiencies for finance staff.

Post Covid-19, we have taken staff wellbeing seriously and conducted a number of short surveys to ensure that staff continue to feel valued, challenging the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team to reduce workload where possible, reduce unnecessary meetings and streamline processes where possible. The past few years have been challenging with disruptions to routines which all create uncertainty. We recognise the importance of having a dedicated and cohesive staffing body and value the commitment they have all shown over recent years.

Head Teacher appraisal

Members of the Head Teacher Appraisal Committee carry out the annual appraisal of the Head Teacher's performance against targets set in the previous academic year. This process allows Governors to scrutinise the performance of the Head Teacher in progressing developments required and raising and maintaining standards of teaching across the school. The outcome from this process feeds into the development of targets for the forthcoming academic year.

Recruitment of a new Head Teacher

In February 2023 we were informed by the Head Teacher that she was to retire in August. As such, we undertook a recruitment process for our new Head Teacher, working together as a Governing Body to draw on our skills and supported by a School Improvement Officer provided by Worcestershire County Council. We successfully appointed a new Head Teacher who started his role in September 2023.

Further information on the work of the Governing Body is available on our website or by contacting the school directly.

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