

Annual Governing Body Report

Bussage C of E Primary School

Mr. Edward Miller - Chair of Governors

2016-17

The academic year 2016-17 saw Bussage Primary School go through both OFSTED and SIAMS inspections, both of which resulted in the school being classified as Good. This is a credit to the hard work of both staff and governors at Bussage Primary School, over many years. The governing body has reviewed the recommendations and will work towards making changes and improvements where required as part of our strategic planning, which includes reviewing the School Development Plan (SDP) and Self Evaluation Form (SEF). The governor committees monitor the schools SDP, for progress towards stated goals, throughout the academic year.

During the year we said goodbye to our Ex-Officio Governor, the Rev Rosie Woodford. She helped greatly in our Curriculum & Ethos Committee and during the SIAMS inspection by the diocese. We hope to hear about her replacement in spring 2018. We have welcomed new Parent Governors Mrs Rebecca Lupton and Mr Mathew Symons in Autumn 2016, and the Rev Michael Clark as Foundation Governor. We are also pleased to have welcomed Mrs Belinda Cox as our new Clerk to Governors, and Mrs Emma Seabrook as an Associate Member, representing the PTA. Mrs Baldwin took over from Miss Corbett as staff governor at the end of her term of office.

The governing body take a strategic view of the running of the school and act as a critical friend to the school leadership. The full governing body meet several times a year, and in addition meet as committees covering various aspects of school life. The Committee Structure is available on the school's website, and is made up of the following committees:

Finance & Premises; Performance, Standards & Staffing; Curriculum & Ethos; Communications; Admissions.

Amongst many monitoring tasks, Committees work closely with the head to ensure all the school's policies are up to date. We also have various working parties, and governors who have special responsibilities for areas such as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Safeguarding, etc. Safeguarding is very important to the governing body, and annual audits are performed. The Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually against the latest government guidance.

Governors can attend training on various aspects of governance, and for particular purposes such as Safer Recruitment.

The Performance, Standards & Staffing Committee have been involved with analysing school performance data, which looks at the progress and attainment of all children in the school. We look at the data for individual cohorts, such as boys, girls, SEN, Pupil Premium, year groups, across the spectrum of abilities, ensuring that all children are doing as well as they can, that government money is being spent well to close the gap for those in receipt of the Pupil Premium, and between those of lower and higher ability. We look to see where improvements can be made and discuss strategies with the head for making those improvements where there is an identified need. One of the goals this year has been to see more high achievement in Maths; in past years, another example has been to improve outcomes in Phonic screening. Real improvements have been seen year on year as we focus resources on those areas which have been identified, and those improvements have been

sustained. The Committee has also been involved with book reviews, where with the help of our LA governor, we have focussed on consistency of marking, children's visible progress throughout the year, and to ensure that while the weaker academically are being supported and making progress, that those of higher ability are also being adequately stretched.

Every year the governing body, must review the Admissions Policy, prepared by the Admissions Committee and submit it to the diocese and LA for approval. It is the intention in the following year to put the proposed 2019-20 policy out for consultation.

The governing body creates a plan to visit each class at least once a year, and governors are assigned a class to visit. This allows us to get to know teachers and the school better, and to see what goes on in the classroom, and meet the children. It is always great to see the enthusiasm of the teachers and the children, and to see different aspects of the curriculum in action. It is a valuable time for us to listen and to speak to both staff and children, and this also provides opportunity for them to meet the governors.

A key aspect of this year's work by the Curriculum Committee has been the work on the Schools Vision and Values, and a workshop on this was held in June 2017, attended by staff, governors and parents. This was constructed around the new C of E Vision for Education (2016). The workshop was very successful and thanks to all involved, we are now close to being able to put out a Vision and Values document for consultation, which in time will feature on the school's website. The full governing body decided during the year to rename the committee as the Curriculum & Ethos Committee to highlight the work being done on the school's Ethos. In addition to policy reviewing, the following are key reference items for the committee regarding the SDP:

- Developing the curriculum for the year
- Tracking subject coverage within the curriculum
- International links (Kenya and Erasmus+ project)
- Understanding Christianity and Christian Values
- Promote PE and Sports participation (use of sports funding)
- EYFS Improvement Plan

There has also been focus on the school's online presentation of the Curriculum.

The Finance Committee oversees all matters of the school finances and budget. The Budget was presented and agreed at the full governing body meeting in May this year.

Whilst there has been much debate about Fair Funding in Schools, the reality of the situation is that the available budget remains challenging. After a drop on role numbers in the previous year, the 2017/18 budget that has just been agreed was based on a higher census number of 201, up 8 on the previous year. The baseline census number drives the initial budget allocation and the provision of the after school and breakfast clubs have been a factor in achieving higher numbers.

This has allowed a balanced and workable budget to be set to cover the next 12 months and provides the school with sufficient resources although cost control remains an important focus. There are no contingency funds remaining, so if something does arise then we will need to look at other options such as support from Governor funds.

The Premises Committee oversees all matters of the school premises, whose main focus this year has been as follows.

A full premises review was undertaken at the start of the year and a full report produced and reviewed to ensure that all issues are dealt with in a timely fashion. The continued support of the PTA has helped in further enhancing our facilities and this is very welcomed support. The committee has not overseen any major works this year with the recent work on the trees being the most recent focus. Discussions continue over the availability of LC VAP monies to develop a new school entrance and a feasibility estimate is now being drafted.

Under the SDP there were 3 specific items allocated which have all been completed. Under the SDP the wider role of the Finance & Premises Committee is also to support the other Committees with their SDP objectives by ensuring the best possible financial planning and the correct use of resources within the school.

- Manage Staffing in the face of a reduced budget
- Programme for Internal decoration
- Continue to manage Pupil Premium and Sports Funding and account for its distribution

The financial challenges will continue unless there are further changes to the funding of schools. This will mean a continual focus on maximising our resources and maintaining the fabric of the building within our constrained resources. The discussions around Academy status will also present a number of issues that the Committee will need to consider.

One of the focuses of attention of the governing body has been to monitor the government's plans regarding academisation for schools. Whilst this is not at present a mandatory requirement, some schools have taken the decision to become academies, and while Bussage Primary School has not yet made a decision on this, it has been thought prudent by the governing body to investigate and find out about this process, the benefits and potential problems. The governing body held a fact-finding evening in which presentations were made by the CEO of the Diocese of Gloucester Academy Trust, and by our LA governor. At the end of the academic year, the Head and several governors visited a school in Wiltshire which is about to become part of a multi academy trust (MAT) to find out about their decision-making process, their experiences and views about academy conversion. A report on this has been distributed to governors. Further discussions and fact finding will continue between the governing body, and with other schools.

The Communications Committee have performed a staff survey which was very positive and it is intended that a parent survey be carried out during the coming year. The committee are also involved with work associated with the school website, which has many mandatory requirements on it, stipulated by the government. The website work is ongoing, and it is intended this year that all school policies will be published in addition to the mandatory information, as well as other improvements.

If you have any queries about school governance please see links on the school website, or make contact via the school office.