Annual Statement of the Governing Body of Newport Infant School 2022-23

Introduction

The Governing Body has seen a number of changes throughout the year with resignations and terms of office coming to an end. One particular resignation was that of our Chair of Governors, Fiona Hand. I would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to her for her service and would like to recognise the positive impact she had on our school. Fiona always had the interests of the children at the forefront of all she did and was instrumental in the effective leadership of Newport Infant School and Nursery. On behalf of the governing body, I would like to wish her every success in her future endeavours.

This has resulted in new members being elected to the Governing Board during the year. Meetings have been mainly face to face this year and Governors have had many opportunities to come into school to support and monitor activities and learning. These have included Parents Evenings, overseeing the provision of Safeguarding, subject lead visits and attending financial monitoring visits with the Local Authority. Due to a recent resignation, there is a further vacancy for a parent governor from September and parents from school and nursery will be invited to apply at the start of the new school year if they wish to be considered.

Change to the Leadership Structure

The Governors have been instrumental in leading the changes to the leadership of the school from September 2023 as Mrs Pierce concludes her Headship in July and Mrs Heeley takes over as substantive Headteacher. The shared Headteacher role, supported by the Governors over the last academic year has provided an excellent succession model for the leadership of the school as Miss Russell will also take over as Deputy Headteacher in the new year. In addition, Mrs Gradwell has been successfully appointed as Assistant Headteacher to complete the Senior Leadership Team. Miss Harrow, who runs the SEND provision, will become the new SENCO for School and Nursery. The Governors are delighted that the school has facilitated the development of the staff and that this has formed the new leadership team who share all of the key values and ethos already embedded in our school culture.

Buildings

Following the DfE survey in the Autumn, it was agreed that the school will finally get new windows and doors to replace the metal frames found in the majority of the school building. This work will be completed during the summer with final windows in nursery being changed the following year. We have also authorised the refurbishment of the boys and girls toilets in the Reception area and we have used a grant to update and refresh the Reception outdoor learning area, making it an all weather surface. We hope that with these actions completed, we will be able to consider some internal decoration in the next year.

Nursery Amalgamation

At the end of the last school year, the school completed the take-over of the onsite private nursery and wraparound care. This year Miss Russell, our Early Years Lead and Assistant Headteacher has led this provision, developing the Early Years offer for the setting from 2 to 5 and aligning practice in the Nursery with that in Reception. The Early Years Committee has continued to monitor the offer in

Nursery and this along with the reports from the School Improvement Partner, evidence high quality provision which matches that offered throughout the rest of the setting. Miss Russell has worked to develop staff practice so that it is consistent and high quality alongside the creation of high quality environments for learning.

Outdoor Learning

This year the school have continued to work on their outdoor learning offer and have been pleased to send Mrs Magnier on Forest School Training, after the resignation of one of our forest school leads. Mrs Magnier has been taking nursery out to the Muddy Club area every week, and has supported the rest of school with ideas and planning, and they have also been out in the area or working in the outdoor classroom more regularly.

Curriculum and Outcomes

The Curriculum and Outcome Committee, supported by the link governors for subject areas have monitored the educational outcomes for pupils at the setting. They were delighted that the outcomes for pupils in Year 2 at the end of Key Stage 1 were in line with pre-COVID data. The School Improvement Partner for the school commented on the outstanding percentage of pupils who achieved age related expectations in Reading, Writing and Maths. Governors were particularly delighted with the high percentages of pupils who achieved greater depth in their learning, demonstrating the school's commitment to ensuring that all children reach their potential. The results of the Year 1 Phonics Screening were significantly better than last year and well above National but have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels due to the disruption in children's early school lives but the positive trend suggests that the strategies used this year to support accelerated progress are working and will therefore be repeated in the next school year. Phonics remains an area for development for the school until our aspirational targets are met and sustained. The outcomes for Early Years were higher than many previous years due to us being able to make a sustained offer to our children of our new curriculum. We are delighted with this upturn and hope that it will be sustained and built on in the future.

SEND Provision

We were delighted to open our own specialist SEND provision this year which is named 'The Den'. Miss Harrow and her team of excellent staff have created a safe, stimulating, nurturing, learning environment for children with complex needs from our cluster area and the children who have accessed this during the year have made some excellent progress. The provision has evolved over the year, with the addition of a sensory room, and during the summer, a fence was installed by the local authority which allowed the children to have safe, purposeful outdoor learning opportunities which mirrors our offer for the reception children.

Link Governors

Governors have met with subject leads over the year to support and monitor the curriculum and outcomes of the school. Key points were:

PE - The PE link governor met with the PE Coordinator to challenge and enhance the PE offer for our pupils and to oversee the PE budget.

Maths – The Maths link governor has completed lesson visits with the Maths coordinator across school and witnessed how well the children accessed their resources independently and their love of maths. As a result of using Minute Maths and the positive results on fluency, we have signed up to Number Sense which will be used across KS1 and EYFS to further improve number fluency for all our pupils next year.

Literacy – The Literacy link governor has been in school and monitored the provision of Literacy, including Phonics. She has met with the Literacy Coordinator and discussed how the actions in the SDP have been addressed.

Strike Action

During this academic year, we acknowledge that there has been disruption caused by the strike action taken by many teachers at Newport Infant School and Nursery. The decision to engage in strike action is not taken lightly by our teachers. Their decision to take action is a reflection of their genuine concerns and the need to address important issues related to their pay, conditions and well-being. As the governing body at Newport Infant School and Nursery, we hold the utmost respect and appreciation for the hard work and dedication of our teachers and staff members and fully support them in their action.

Whilst, we have tried our best to minimise the disruption this has caused our families, we understand the impact of this strike action has been felt by many of you. On behalf of the governing body, I would like to express my sincere apologies for the inconvenience and disruption to our students and their families and would like to thank you for your continued support.

Safeguarding and Vulnerable Pupils

Governors support the school in carrying out the annual Safeguarding audit, ensuring that keeping children safe is at the heart of the ethos and that procedures are followed rigorously. Governors challenge leaders about any child on child abuse and racial incidents and leaders report to Governors about vulnerable pupils in the school each term. The evidence provided demonstrated the school manages and supports the reduction of child on child abuse well and provides additional support for identified children. The governors were pleased to note that the Safeguarding Audit carried out by the Local Authority this year, identified good practice by the school in all areas.

Thank You Mrs Pierce

As you will no doubt be aware, Mrs Pierce is retiring at the end of this academic year, after serving as headteacher at Newport Infant School and Nursery for 7 years, however working at the school for 20 years. On behalf of the governing body and the entire school community, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to Mrs Pierce for her exceptional service as our headteacher. Her commitment, dedication and passion for education has profoundly impacted the lives of countless students and staff members.

Under her leadership our school has flourished into a nurturing and inspiring environment, fostering academic excellence, personal growth and a strong sense of community. Her ability to instil a love for learning and create a culture of inclusivity has left an indelible mark on all those who have had the privilege of being part of Newport Infant School and Nursery.

Mrs Pierce has always shown an unwavering dedication to the well-being of our students, instilling in them values of kindness, safety and readiness to learn. Her belief in the potential of every student has motivated them to dream big and aspire for greatness in their next steps.

As she embarks on her retirement, I want to extend our deepest thanks for the immeasurable impact she has made on many lives. Her legacy as Headteacher at Newport Infant School and Nursery will forever be etched in the memories of all those who have had the privilege of being part of our school community over the years. We are grateful for the countless hours she has invested, the countless lives she has touched and the countless dreams she has nurtured.

Thank you, Mrs Pierce, for your exceptional service. On behalf of the governing body, I wish you a joyful and fulfilling retirement, hopefully with some well deserved rest!

Governors wish to thank the staff for their continued hard work and parents and carers for their continued support during the year.



Emma Ordidge

Chair of the Governing Body