Annual Statement of the Governing Body of

Newport Infant School and Nursery 2024-25

Dear parents and carers,

I am pleased to present the annual summary from the Governors for this academic year.

Introduction

The purpose of the Governing Body is to have an oversight of the school and provide accountability. This is achieved working with the school's leadership team to:

- Set the school's vision, ethos, and strategic direction
- Hold the Leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and assuring high levels of value in the way it spends its money

These responsibilities are executed through Full Governing Board meetings as well as through delegated committees and visits to the school. These committees include:

- Curriculum and Outcomes Committee, chaired by Jackie Lewis
- Personnel and Finance Committee, chaired by Ollie Parker, Vice Chair
- Health and Safety Committee, chaired by myself [Jonathan Titmus]

The activities undertaken by these committees are outlined below for your consideration.

Curriculum and Outcomes Committee

Curriculum and Outcomes Committee members have this year been observing and reviewing changes which have been made to the curriculum offer as they are rolled out in this first year. Successes observed have included that children are now able to positively talk about, what for instance, 'History is' and are better at articulating what they know and remember.

October saw the first publication of the Research and Analysis paper **'Strong Foundations in the Early Years'**[1] by Ofsted. This has equipped us with greater information and allowed us to identify opportunities that have ultimately led to changes being implemented to further improve our practice, better ensuring that children acquire the necessary fundamentals by the time they leave year 1. This includes things such as being able to hold a pencil with a pincer grip, and form all their letters correctly. The committee have asked about the impact of this and have offered challenge on decisions which have been made.

One such instance has included the introduction a new handwriting scheme in September 25/26. Staff have been undertaking training in the new scheme this term, so that it can be rolled out in September. The scheme's philosophy is ***'Making handwriting automatic ...so all the attention of the brain can be on writing the content'.*** We look forward to the changes this scheme will bring next year and to reviewing its success.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school/strong-foundations-in-the-first-years-of-school

The committee have, and are responsible for, analysing data presented from across the school and challenge on areas where necessary. We are particularly proud of the attainment in Maths this year across the school, and regard this as a strength, which can be attributed to the changes we made to the maths curriculum this year, ensuring small steps are clearly identified.

Personnel and Finance Committee

This year has continued to be a challenging year financially for the school with falling pupil numbers and the budgetary pressures that this presents. This has triggered first steps toward a reduction in the school PAN[2] to 60 places. The committee and Headteacher have worked hard to make savings and reductions so that the budget is now in a more stable position. We have allocated more money for some of the maintenance work which is required, and we are hopeful will allow us to get a redecoration programme started to improve the school environment.

The Governing Body are extremely grateful to the PTA who have put on some fantastic events to raise money for school. Their continued commitment and fundraising pays for additional things, such as Christmas presents for every child, leavers presents and a disco for Year 2, paying for the coach for the residential visit, as well as purchasing other resources. They are currently fundraising for new adult chairs for the school hall.

Health and Safety Committee

This year the Committee have fulfilled their statutory duties with regards to safeguarding, prevent duty and fulfilling the equality act. Each meeting, the School Business Manager presents a Health & Safety Check and governors discuss any issues and priorities. The Site Security Audit was carried out, and when we consulted with parents, they raised concerns about external lighting. This has now been actioned, and new lighting is being installed over the holidays. The committee has followed up on a first aid complaint and new procedures have been introduced, as a result of this, for instance when a child is in a cast. Another key role of this committee is to monitor the wellbeing of staff. This is of upmost importance, and is taken very seriously. A survey was sent out to all staff members, with a series of new recommendations being identified, and have since been put in place.. These recommendations will be monitored and measured against future survey responses.

Special Events

Along with Committee meetings, the School also holds special events throughout the year which parents and governors are invited to. Some examples from this year have included:

Author Visit on Book Week

Author Lorna McCann [3]visited and completed workshops with the children.

Following her visit, she very kindly shared this special message:

'Many thanks to you, all the teachers and the children for making me feel so welcome today. I've had such a fabulous day and so impressed with all the ideas which came from the children. I hope they enjoy the rest of their book week and have as much fun with Felix and his next adventure as I will.'

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[2] Published Admission Number

[3] https://lornamccannauthor.co.uk/

Reception 'Tea with the Teacher'

Oliver Parker, Vice-Chair visited and said; *'It's good to see children perform what they have learnt and each child having the opportunity to showcase their learning in what can be a nervy environment. Children were well behaved, all children played a part in the play, saying a least a sentence each as well as singing along with the songs. The performance was well organised.'*

Year 2 Residential

As in previous years, our Year 2 pupils had the opportunity to attend a one-night residential visit to the Laches Wood Outdoor Education Centre in Coven[4]. Feedback from parents and children was very incredibly favourable.

'My daughter loved the trip, loved spending time with her friends, she called it a holiday with her buddies. She loved the food and the whole experience of sleeping away'.

Speaking also as a parent whose son was able to attend this year – he had an amazing time. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the staff who gave up their own time allowing for this amazing opportunity to take place each year.

Sports Day

Oliver Parker, Vice chair attended the morning and said; *"The change in format worked really well with the sports events first then the picnic after, as it was an all morning/day event (if you had children in different years) it prompted you to book the day making the most of the extra time you got with your child. The children all gave 100% effort and the weather also performed. A great day overall.*

Also having the opportunity to attend myself, it was wonderful to see how much effort the children put into their events, how much fun they had, and to be able to spend some time together for a picnic. Again, I would like to express my thanks to the staff for the incredible time and effort put into making it such a wonderful day, and to the PTA for making drinks and the odd ice lolly available on the day. I wasn't lucky enough to win on the tombola this year, but there's always next year I suppose!

Buildings/Volunteering days

Staff toilets have been refurbed this year following a donation of supplies from Keon Homes[5]. This has helped improve staff facilities in the school and to reduce costs for doing so, leaving only the costs of installation and decoration for the school to pay for.

The Hive outdoor building has been treated with a coat of wood preserver to protect it. We are particularly grateful to Mrs Heeley's Husband who was able to use a charity volunteering day from his work to make a start, then finish at a weekend. It looks fantastic now and will help to preserve it for pupils to use and enjoy for longer.

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[4] https://www.entrust-ed.co.uk/services/our-centres
[5] https://keonhomes.co.uk/

We are also very grateful for all of those who attended volunteering days, in autumn and spring, having been able to undertake tasks including clearing the pond, cutting back foliage, as well as general tidying of the externals of the school. Opening back up the pond area has allowed the children to see, first hand, the biodiversity and ecology that is right under our noses. The adventure playground is currently being repaired.

The Boiler House is having a refurb over the summer holidays, so we are looking forward to more reliable heating next year and hopefully some savings to our energy bills with a new, more efficient boiler.

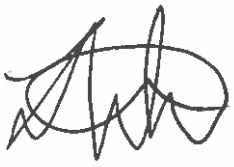
We are also having the hall redecorated in the summer, with new energy efficient lighting, so we can look forward to a fresh new look when school returns in September.

Finally, we are refurbishing a set of toilets in the nursery, to make them more suitable for our Year 2 children at the High Five after school club.

Our thanks

The Governors wish to sincerely thank all the staff at Newport Infant school and Nursery for their continued hard work in what remains a challenging economic and ever-changing environment. The Governors would also like to thank parents and carers for their continued support during the year. As the school ethos states "Working together to be the best that we can be".

Yours faithfully,



Jonathan Titmus

Chair of the Governing Body