

North Nibley Church of England School

Governors End of Year Report

2016

Yes, even the Governors get an end of year report at North Nibley! So, is it a case of 'Gold Star' or 'Must Try Harder'? We thought it would be useful for parents and friends of the school to find out a little more about what the Governors have done this year by reporting on the main areas of activity and what we hope to achieve next year.

The structure of the Governors committees is as follows:-



The intention of this report is to use the committee structure to illustrate the things we have been up to.

I feel it is important that we reflect on what we have achieved this year, where our focus has been and what we feel we need to concentrate on next year. This hopefully improves the understanding that people have of the work that Governors do and that also helps make us more accountable. School Governance is rewarding and we hope that anyone with the best interests of the School at heart and with a willingness to commit to being part of the team will consider becoming a Governor at some stage.

Please don't wait to be asked! If you are interested then please speak to Mr Batchelor, any of the other Governors or me at any time.

Roly Brown

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Chair of Governors

June 2016

Full Governing Board

Chair: Roland Brown

- **Membership and meetings:** The Full Governing Board (FGB) is the main committee of the Governing Board and is attended by all Governors. When all roles are filled, there are 14 Governors in total. We also have a professional Clerk who prepares and distributes all of the papers relating to this meeting. The FGB meets six times per academic year. This year we have had an attendance rate of 81%.
- **Purpose:** The over-riding purpose of the FGB is to monitor the proper operation of the Governor function at the School. That is to monitor all of the aspects of the School for which the Governors are responsible such as Pupil progress and attainment, Premises, Funding, Personnel etc. Much of this work is delegated to the other committees which you will read more on later but the FGB is ultimately accountable for the work of those committees. As a result, parts of the FGB meetings can sometimes feel like a rubber-stamping exercise for the work that the Committees have carried out but there is often robust discussion of the issues raised. Delegating things like the review of certain policies to the relevant committee ensures that the FGB can keep a broader eye on all areas of the School rather than having its time taken up by matters which are very difficult to discuss by a large committee. Perhaps the most important role of the FGB is, therefore, to ensure that the committees and other groups are appointed with appropriate Governors at the start of the year. These other groups include the Admissions Panel (which considers pupil numbers), the Pay Panel (salaries) and the Head's Performance Management Panel etc.
- **Main areas we have focussed on this year:** This year we have sought to slightly revise how the FGB operates to ensure that it, and the Governing Board in general, can be more strategic. This has been a key focus and setting up the Strategy Meetings has been a big part of this. The other main area of focus has been to delegate aspects of work to the committees where they can be considered in more detail. The delegation of policies to the committees has been important here. Another area of focus has been to consider the School's Vision (which was agreed upon in the previous year), how that is implemented in the School and what impact it has. Understanding how children understand and relate to the Vision and the Christian Values of the School have been a priority.
- **Main Achievements this year –** This year we have:
 - i. Discussed and approved the overall annual School Improvement Plan in our September Meeting;
 - ii. Reworked the agenda to ensure that meetings are an effective use of time;
 - iii. Delegated policy consideration to relevant committees;
 - iv. Received and reviewed written and verbal reports on the School from the Head Teacher;
 - v. Overseen staff changes;
 - vi. Successfully set up the Governor Strategy Meetings.
- **Next year –** In addition to our regular tasks we should:
 - i. Work on ensuring that we have a full complement of Governors in post;
 - ii. Ensure that the work of the Strategy Meetings continues and starts to take effect;
 - iii. Continue to make the meeting Agenda as effective as possible.
 - iv. Ensure that we are as informed as possible about Government policy on Academies so that we can make the best decisions for our School.
 - v. Focus on the School Improvement Plan so that it maintains momentum and achieves the intended results

Teaching and Learning Committee

Chair: Tas Stamatopoulos

- **Membership & meetings:** The Teaching & Learning Committee (TLC) is made up of six governors, including the Headteacher and two members of staff (a teacher and a teaching assistant). The TLC meet six times annually (once per term).
- **Purpose:** The committee's responsibilities are to discuss and monitor issues related to the quality of the teaching and learning that is taking place at North Nibley Primary School, discuss the progress of the teaching and learning related priorities in the School Improvement Plan, as well as to be given updates regarding recent developments in Education that may affect our school. TLC does not direct the way the curriculum is taught as that is an operational responsibility of the Headteacher and his staff. The committee is also responsible (as are all committees) for monitoring Safeguarding. Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.
- **Main areas we have focussed on this year:** During the early stages of this academic year, an emphasis was placed on creating a more focused and flexible meeting agenda to allow meetings to become much more efficient and productive. The new format has separated issues into those for discussion and those for information. The progress of the School Improvement Plan and Safeguarding have become permanent items and thus their progress monitored much more closely.
- **Main Achievements this year:** We have:
 - i. Adopted the new Meeting Agenda
 - ii. Visited the classroom to monitor the teaching and learning across a variety of subjects
 - iii. Monitored and discussed statutory assessment data (Raise online) trends relating to school performance
 - iv. Inspection Dashboard training
 - v. Revised and updated policies including English policy and Safeguarding policy
 - vi. Participated in staff sessions regarding the new assessment system
 - vii. Participated in staff sessions about the new curriculum
 - viii. Contributed in the profile of staff to be appointed.
 - ix. Update of 'Special Educational Needs and Disabilities' (SEND) policy is still to come his year.
- **Next year:** In addition to our regular tasks we will:
 - i. Add SEND as a regular item in the meeting agenda,
 - ii. Continue to perform school visit to ensure teaching and learning are of good or outstanding standard
 - iii. Ensure the successful completion of all Teaching and Learning related priorities of the School Improvement Plan
 - iv. Continue to monitor Safeguarding.

Leadership & Management Committee

Chair: Di Hay

- **Membership and meetings:** The Leadership and Management Committee is made up of five governors, including the Headteacher, and meets five times per year. At the time of writing, we have met four times and overall attendance was 19/20 (95%).
- **Purpose:** Our main responsibility is staff management, together with parent and community communication. We aim to be an excellent employer, ensuring that staff have good support and development opportunities.
- **Main areas we have focussed on this year:** We have to follow proper process in all areas of HR practice, so a number of our activities, such as ensuring that teachers' appraisals take place, are annual. We also review the school's staffing structure annually and undertake a survey of parents' views. This year has seen several new staff appointments, processes which take much carefully planning and understanding of both the market and our own school's future needs. This year's other key areas have been the well-being of our staff, and the development of teachers' subject leadership skills.
- **Main Achievements this year - We have:**
 - i. recruited a class teacher and a teaching assistant;
 - ii. ensured that teacher Staff Performance Reviews and the Head's Performance Management Review have taken place;
 - iii. undertaken a survey of staff well-being to get feedback from the staff on issues such as support, conditions, workload and training courses, and are starting to address issues;
 - iv. supported the enhancement of teachers' subject leadership skills;
 - v. reviewed and updated policies including Staff Capability, Teacher Appraisal and Data Protection;
 - vi. visited the classroom to help us understand and raise questions about progress towards the school's goals; and we will be considering the results of a parent survey shortly.
 - vii. Discussed possible options for the school should it be necessary to become an academy in the future.
- **Next year - In addition to annual tasks, we will:**
 - i. continue to work on addressing issues from the staff well-being survey
 - ii. continue to monitor the academy situation
 - iii. monitor the progress in subject leadership, and
 - iv. undertake more visits to the classroom

Finance & Premises Committee

Chair: Chris Huxley-Reynard

- **Membership and meetings:** The members of the Finance & Premises (F&P) committee as of May 2016 are Chris Huxley-Reynard (Chair), Jude Saunderson (Treasurer), Roly Brown, Sarah Aston, Paul Batchelor (HT) with Lesley Todhunter attending as school administrator/meeting clerk. The committee meets once per half term.
- **Purpose:** F&P's responsibilities are i) to oversee all aspects of school finances including setting and monitoring the annual budget, ii) to help ensure school premises are fit for purpose and to help determine where money should be spent on premises to the maximum benefit of children and iii) to monitor Health and Safety policy and practice within the school and help ensure we meet our legal obligations.
- **Main areas we have focussed on this year:** Regarding management of the school budget, F&P has helped to ensure the school continues to maintain a sufficient year-on-year surplus, against a backdrop of increasing national pressure on school funding. This has been possible due to diligent financial management by the HT and school administrator, effective use of diocese funding that can be accessed for capital expenditure on buildings (i.e. Elliot building), and the ongoing and valued support of FONNS. The refurbishment of the Elliot building has been a particular focus this year. There has been some discussion about Multi Academy Trusts and what the options might be for Nibley School if this happened in the future (at least the financial perspective). There has been significant change in the makeup of the committee this year requiring us all to get to grips with new roles fast.
- **Main Achievements this year –**
 - i. Completion of the Elliot building refurbishment as a place for children to cook and do a variety of other activities, and as a staff room. This has been a real success.
 - ii. Repairs to front of school including chimney stack, guttering, and brickwork pointing.
 - iii. Significant progress towards improving school broadband provision
 - iv. Ongoing H&S walkarounds and associated small improvements
 - v. Supported recruitment process for new class 2 teacher
- **Next year –**
 - i. Complete the upgrade to the school broadband including (hopefully) a radio link to nearby Berkeley
 - ii. Improvements to school playground equipment
 - iii. Ongoing premises upkeep and repairs

Further progress towards forming a plan for Academisation should it become desirable or mandatory to do so.

Steering Group

Chair: Roland Brown

The Steering Group is an opportunity for the chairs of the different committees, plus the Vice Chair and the Head Teacher, to get together to ensure that the general business of the committee structure is operating effectively. These meetings have become increasingly brief as tasks are delegated to committees and as the Strategy Meetings have taken effect.

Strategy Meetings

Chair: Roland Brown

Strategy Meetings have been a new concept for North Nibley School this year. In an attempt to address those important issues that do not get a proper airing at FGB meetings, invariable due to time constraints, Governors were asked whether they would be prepared to give up additional time for some blue sky thinking about the School. They wholeheartedly agreed and it is widely recognised that the Strategy Meetings have been some of the most refreshing and inspirational meetings that we have held in recent years.

The first meeting took place in September and, intentionally, had no formal agenda. Governor Tas Stamatopoulos has experience of 'Pack-Typing' which is a form of inward looking assessment based on the characteristics of certain dog breeds. It sounds odd and there was a certain amount of scepticism amongst the group but once the exercise was carried out everyone saw the benefits of it. We pack-typed the Governing Board to assess what sort of characteristics we have as a group. It turns out that we are a cautious but responsible bunch!



The Governors Pack-typing Exercise

This then led us to think more open-mindedly about the School and we carried out a SWOT analysis, brainstorming what Governors saw as the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for North Nibley School. This resulted in four flip chart sheets absolutely covered in post-it notes with all manner of thoughts, comments, suggestions and questions on them. Governors volunteered to take these sheets away and type them up so that we ended up with a very comprehensive SWOT analysis of the School. The comments made could then be categorised in to groups. Unsurprisingly, some of the themes were already covered in the School Improvement Plan so the focus on these areas was left as part of that process. Besides those areas, we ended up with eight core areas that we felt we could investigate and have some impact on.

These eight areas were as follows:-

- 1) Review of Governance/Governance effectiveness**
- 2) Head Teacher workload/delegation**
- 3) Loss of Pupils mid years**
- 4) Wraparound Care**
- 5) Parental Engagement with their own child's learning**

- 6) Insecurity of funding/consideration of other funding sources
- 7) Premises Issues/Weaknesses
- 8) Review of optimum School size and fluctuating numbers

Governors then volunteered to take on the various areas for investigation and reported back to subsequent Strategy Meetings. A lot of work has been put in to this process. More progress has been made on some areas than others but that is the nature of the areas being looked at. A comprehensive, confidential summary has been prepared for Governors to consider but a summary is as follows:-

1) Review of Governance/Governance effectiveness

Effective use of meeting time – effective agendas, developing chairmanship skills within the group, ensuring positive contribution from all members

Wider Strategic Perspective within Governors – Governors tackling through Strategy Meetings

Make Up and Skill Set of Governing Board and Training Needs – Skills Audit of Governors completed annually and used to influence succession planning

Ensure that Governors make positive progress in their role – produce annual report to review what has been achieved and encourage Governors by seeing their work in action.

Impact: Better run meetings, strategic view being taken by Governors and annual report makes work accountable

2) Head Teacher workload/delegation

Governors reviewed issue of Head's workload/work/life balance as they have a responsibility to support his wellbeing. To date the FGB has applied the following examples of good practice, where possible - Developing teachers' subject leadership; Teachers' leading some SIP priorities; Starting Governor meetings promptly and running them concisely and effectively; Recruitment of an experienced clerk; Circulating papers well in advance wherever possible and expecting members to have read them beforehand; Delegation of approval of policies to Committees; External adviser for Head's Performance Management; Booking of Governor visits delegated to Administrator.

Further ways of supporting the Head should be considered by governors, including - ensure dedicated headship time is identified and respected; consider the implications of requesting inessential data from the head teacher; consider delegating the administration of updating of policies; consider extending office cover at least to the end of the school day; consider providing website and IT maintenance support. Further progress to be delegated to the Head's Performance Management group and Chair. **Impact: Known issue of workload has now been investigated in detail. Ongoing improvements will be aimed for with Governors made more aware of how they can aid situation and ongoing review process through Performance Management Group put in place.**

3) Loss of Pupils mid years

Review of impact of children leaving before end of year 6. Research showed – There are many different reasons for movement; Leavers were balanced by Joiners; relatively affluent parish creates higher likelihood of movement to independent sector before 11 years old, School to take seriously if leaving is caused by a grievance. Parents who had moved children from North Nibley were interviewed by Governors with some excellent feedback to work with. **Impact: Governors have much better understanding of issue and are better equipped to monitor it when it arises.**

4) Wraparound Care

Governors assessed what types of care other schools offer. Good debate about pros and cons of different arrangements and discussion about what happened when North Nibley trialed this previously. Research continues including plan to invite care providers to school to better understand options. **Impact: Options have been scrutinised and clear understanding of next**

steps to investigate matter further. Visits by providers arranged and initial survey of parents underway.

5) Parental Engagement with their own child's learning

Governors reviewed the different types of communication that takes place with parents and the other options that could be open. Case study reviews of what has worked well and what hasn't worked well. Understanding of needs of Parents and needs of Teachers in the partnership of a child's education. Review of progress since this area was researched has been carried out. **Impact: My Plan strategies now issued in draft and agreed with parents before being finalised, individualised education is becoming a stronger theme, WOW cards used to good effect, email contact with teachers discussed in detail.**

6) Insecurity of funding/consideration of other funding sources

Since the initial Strategy Meeting, the Fairer Funding for Gloucestershire group have started to gain some traction. Any progress they make will have a far greater impact on our budgets than anything we can do at School level (except for the ongoing careful cost management that has to take place given the budgets involved). Projected pupil numbers are encouraging for North Nibley so recent budgets have been better but this has to be monitored carefully. **Impact: Governors have better understanding of funding sources and challenges. Governors better equipped to engage in Fairer Funding campaign.**

7) Premises Issues/Weaknesses

This area has only gained traction recently with a walkaround of the Premises to identify priorities for repair or improvement and strategic investment. There are complexities with building projects because of the lion's share of funding usually coming from the Diocese but the F&P committee are gradually understanding this area better. Staff have been canvassed for their opinions of how the School might be improved as a premises. **Impact: Strategic overview of Premises Improvements undertaken which will enable next year's F&P committee to develop costed and prioritised plan.**

8) Review of optimum School size and fluctuating numbers

Governors considered the optimum size of the School and whether, in the long term, there should be consideration for it getting bigger, smaller or remaining the same size; Impact of changing the school size was considered; Financial considerations were key and an understanding of the extent to which school size affects the budget was reviewed carefully; Different options for altering school size were considered e.g. increasing class size and staffing in proportion, increasing class size with current staffing levels, extending premises and increasing intake, consistently filling places available. Governors spoke to other schools that have expanded to understand the reasoning behind their doing so and the lessons to be learned from the process. Conclusion is that we should be sure to fill current places and be oversubscribed before consideration is given to changing the School size in any material way. **Impact: perennial question of optimum School size has now been researched fully. Clear understanding amongst Governors that current School size is appropriate based on current levels of demand.**

The Strategy Meetings have subsequently talked about other areas, such as Governor succession, and have been a very good forum for debate amongst Governors. It is hoped that, if Governors have the time to spare, these meetings will be continued in the 2016/17 academic year.

Conclusion

All in all it has been another busy year for the Governors of North Nibley School. A lot has been achieved and I think we have a good understanding of what we need to work on to achieve next year.

Whether we deserve a 'Gold Star' or a 'Must Try Harder' is for you, the children, the staff and OFSTED to decide but please rest assured that the Governors are committed to working hard to make the most of North Nibley CofE School.

Of course, the work of the Governors is minimal compared to the hard work that goes on each day by the Head Teacher and his equally committed team of staff. Whilst the Governors can hopefully provide a framework for that team to work within, the School depends on the levels of excellence and commitment which the teaching and support staff can give. The Governors are hugely indebted and grateful to that team. They, along with the fantastic children, make North Nibley School what it is; that is a place to:-

Inspire and Celebrate Learning, Achievement, Faith and Fun

Roland Brown

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Chair of Governors

June 2016

We would be delighted to hear about whether or not you have found this report helpful or if you have any other comments or suggestions about how the Governors communicate what they do. Please email chair@northnibley.gloucs.sch.uk or drop a note into the school office, marked for the attention of 'Chair of Governors' (this can be anonymous if you would prefer, unless you would like a response) and we can then take on board your comments.