

Governor Impact Statement – 2018/19

The Mill Primary's vision statement on its web site begins: "We want to be forever proud of our achievements by all our children past and present and all our staff past and present". Looking back over the year it is clear that progress has been made in meeting this vision. There have been a number of challenges facing the School, but continued high expectations and the dedication of staff have produced positive results in many areas.

It has proved to be a challenging year for the Local Governing Body (LGB) with a number of changes of personnel. These have meant that at times the role of monitoring the School's performance and progress has relied heavily on a small core of experienced governors. However, recent recruitment has changed this situation and the LGB is back to full strength with new members already making a positive contribution.

A key change was implemented this year in the way governors monitor performance and the implementation of the School Improvement Plan. Instead of individual governors coming into the School to look at a specific issue - in addition to reports provided at regular governor meetings – two "governor visit days" were organised in October 2018 and June 2019.

On both occasions four governors were able to attend and the Senior Leadership Team organised a programme of meetings and tours of the school. With four governors present it was possible to have more than one meeting or visit taking place at the same time – e.g. the Health & Safety governor was able to meet with the Premises Manager while other governors were undertaking a learning walk around the school, or two governors met with a group of children drawn from the School Council, Room 13 Committee and Young Interpreters, while the other two met with staff new to the School to find out what sort of induction and the level of on-going support they had received.

These latter two meetings proved very valuable as they gave governors an insight into how the School is developing both its pupils and staff. Governors were impressed at the children's enthusiasm for their roles and the way they answered questions, plus the positive way they had responded to being given responsibility. The staff were all very positive, both about their initial induction and the on-going support received. In both staff and pupils there was a clear pride in what they were achieving.

In recognition of the changing Ofsted focus, governors had asked to be given more information about the wider curriculum during the second visit day. This was provided via a presentation on how the School both is and will deliver this curriculum, including an in depth look at History. During the subsequent discussion the question of how the School will equip pupils with the necessary skills in IT for their future was raised by several governors. The School was becoming a Google school and Notebooks were available in classes, but it was clear much still needs to be done. In response, two governors volunteered to help support the development of this important subject area.

Governors' responsibility for three key areas has been a focus over the year.

(a) Health & Safety – the Health & Safety governor raised the concern at the first governor visit day that, whilst results from the TKAT H&S audit of The Mill were generally positive, there was insufficient focus on Health & Safety at the school. Governors ensured that this was an agenda item not just for the Resources Committee, but on all LGB meetings. By the second visit day the Head Teacher was reporting that there had been a significant culture change

(b) SEND children – at the first governor visit day the SEND governor challenged the Head Teacher about there being an impact from the recruitment of the (then) new SEND Co-ordinator – who joined as part of the Senior Leadership Team. By the second visit day the SEND Co-ordinator was able to show that the SEND register was an accurate record of SEND children in the school, that several EHCP plans had been achieved and others were in progress of application, that interventions by TAs were much better focused and that work was taking place – with plans to extend part of it – to support children whose emotional needs impacted negatively on their learning

(c) Safeguarding – the Safeguarding governor took part in an external safeguarding audit requested by the School and conducted by an independent company in November 2018. The governor subsequently followed up the implementation of the audit report with the newly appointed Safeguarding and Family Liaison Officer. No serious weaknesses were listed in the report and virtually all items had been addressed by year end apart from the installation of an electronically controlled gate for the pedestrian entrance to the school. Governors were told originally that this would be installed in the October half term, but this did not take place due to financial restrictions. This issue was raised with the Head Teacher on a number of occasions during the year and governors were pleased to see that it was installed during the Summer holiday.

Like many schools the annual budget for The Mill has been a major challenge. Due to major sickness issues and a maternity leave starting much earlier than expected, the “Supply” budget was overspent very early in the financial year. Consequently, the budget needed close monitoring throughout the year. Governors had had some concerns about the original budget figure for “Supply” and raised this on more than one occasion. They were therefore pleased to see that the figure for this item had been increased when they reviewed the budget for the new financial year in June. Whilst the final figures for the financial year are not yet available, based on all that they have seen, governors would expect them to show that the School has kept within its budget.

Ever since the appointment of the current Head Teacher governors have had conversations with the Executive Head Teacher and the Head Teacher about the management structure at The Mill. The major concern has been the lack of a Deputy who could take away some of the day to day tasks and allow the Head Teacher to focus more on strategic issues. This had not proved possible due to the tight state of the School finances; however, by the end of the school year governors were informed that a Deputy Head Teacher had been appointed with effect from September 2019.

This appointment, the high level of stability in the teaching staff, the continuing development of the curriculum and other aspects of School life give us confidence that the new School year will see more achievements by staff and pupils of which they can be forever proud.

The Mill Governors

October 2019