

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2021/22 SUTTON VENY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

As the Governing Body of Sutton Veny Church of England Primary School, a voluntarily controlled, maintained school within the Wiltshire Local Authority, we strive to support, and also to be part of the school's leadership, who are focussed on achieving the simple but challenging aim of ensuring that all children and staff flourish.

The 2017 Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools (SIAMS) assessed the school as Outstanding. The 2007 Ofsted inspection also assessed the school as Outstanding and since that date the results evidence it has generated indicates this standard has been maintained. However, acknowledging the time that has elapsed since that inspection and the considerable change in staff that has taken place (including the Headteacher), the Governing Body recognizes the increased importance of its challenge and support role, as well as the need to be able to demonstrate its own competence when the next Ofsted inspection takes place.

The three core strategic functions of the Governing Body are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

Governance Structure

The present Governing Body is made up of nine Governor roles as follows:

- 2 Parent Governors appointed by ballot of the parents at the school
- 1 Local Authority Governor appointed by the Local Authority
- 1 Staff Governor
- 1 Headteacher
- 2 Foundation Governors appointed by the Diocese of Salisbury
- 4* Co-opted Governors appointed by the Governing Body

*Recently increased from two co-opted governors to four in order provide increased flexibility. Not all positions have to be filled.

The Governing Body, which meets 6 times each year, appoints a professional Clerk who is responsible for arranging meetings, taking minutes and following up on all actions. The Clerk also advises on procedural matters and plays a key information management role in the work of the Governing Body.

Governors are volunteers who apply for and are appointed to their roles (except for the Headteacher), are independent and have equal status to each other. The Chair and Vice Chair are elected by the Governing Body and work closely together with the Headteacher and the Clerk.

During the school year 2021/22, the committee structure of the Governing Body has been retained but, where appropriate, the onus is placed on assigned governors to meet the requirements of tasks allocated within the Scheme of Delegation, which makes clear where decisions can be made without reference to the Full Governing

Body (FGB). The composition of the Governing Body and the assigned responsibilities of its members are set out in [the Governors' page of the school website](#).

Governance Method

Governors rely heavily on the Headteacher's Report, which is updated on a rolling basis for each FGB meeting, in order to understand the current status of the school. To set the scene for the Headteacher's Report and to draw the FGB's attention to key areas of concern, a traffic light report provides an assessment of each of the subordinate objectives that contribute to the attainment of the school's three core, enduring objectives within the School Development Plan (SDP), namely:

- To provide highly effective leadership and management to deliver outstanding outcomes.
- To secure high quality teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school.
- To create an outstanding culture and environment for personal development, behaviour, and wellbeing

Within the constraints of access dictated by the ongoing pandemic, Governors are also encouraged to validate these assessments and form their own opinions by undertaking occasional personal visits to the school, both in their capacity as a lead governor for elements within the Scheme of Delegation or as a link governor for a particular subject within the curriculum and also their assigned class. In all their doings Governors attempt to be mindful of the need to operate primarily at the strategic rather than the operational level. Governors are involved in shaping and monitoring attainment of the long-term objectives set within the Strategic Plan and the shorter-term annual priorities, which are derived from the preceding year's outcomes and the Self Evaluation Form (SEF).

Review of the preceding year

The Governors examine the data that covers the educational attainment and progress of our pupils. The results reflect the high standards set and attained by the school and its recognition by receiving a 'High performance letter' from the Local Authority and being named in The Times Newspaper's 2018 top ten list of highest achieving primary schools in Wiltshire is richly deserved.

Scores in tests are important, but not everything. We are delighted by the range of activities, visits and projects undertaken by our children and the links that the school maintains, often with Friends of School support, to foster a strong sense of community responsibility.

The resurfacing of the playground, which has increased its size and safety, was a first, external step in a longer-term plan to improve the arrangements on our space-constrained site. The re-roofing work that has been undertaken by the LA and the more recent installation of a canopy over the courtyard to improve the FS2 outdoor learning provision will stand the building in good stead for the foreseeable future. The re-location of the school office to the staff room has partially solved one problem but created another and the focus is now on relocating the Headteacher's office and creating a proper Staff Room as well as improving the school's overall accessibility.

The pressures of maintaining high quality teaching despite the changing pandemic environment has demonstrated the inherent strengths and resilience within the core

teaching staff and the efficacy of both well-established and pragmatically modified procedures.

At the moment the school's finances are broadly healthy, but the economic climate remains challenging and, with income directly linked to pupil numbers it is important to continue to attract pupils up to the school's capacity if possible. Staff costs are by far the major component of expenditure and the related commitment to maintain a seven class structure generates a deficit problem 3 years on that must be addressed through some difficult decisions.

Governing Body Skills & Knowledge Development

The Governing Body recognises that to effectively fulfil its role, it must ensure that all of its Governors have the required skills and knowledge to support the achievement of the school's priority objectives. Recognising the importance of training and development, governors have attended training courses and briefings that not only give them improved individual skills but also the opportunity to compare our school with others.

Governor Focus in Academic Year 2020/21

Throughout 2020/21 the Governing Body, recognising that its ability to provide strategic guidance became extremely limited due to the pandemic, provided support where possible to the dynamic operational initiatives that the staff were forced to implement in reaction to a constantly evolving situation. Communication and information sharing within the Governing Body was much improved by their adoption of the school-wide E-Schools platform.

Rachel Brotherton, the Headteacher for 11 years, departed at relatively short notice in December 2020 and the decision was taken to ask the Deputy Head, Adam Lewis to take on the role on an interim basis until the post could be advertised and a successor appointed on a competitive basis. The requisite procedures were conducted by a subgroup of the Governing Body and, after a day of rigorous interviews and with strong support from the staff, Adam Lewis was confirmed in post in mid-May 2021, providing much needed continuity at a stressful time for all schools.

The staff graciously accepted the loss of their Staff Room in order to relocate the administration area and school visitor's entrance to the car park side of the building. Later, a competitive tendering process and associated planning application was undertaken in time for the work to install a canopy over the courtyard to be completed in autumn 2021. The decision was taken to relocate the folding canopy from the courtyard to the East wall to provide a sheltered outdoor space for Brisbane & Canberra classes.

Governor focus areas for 2021/22

Within the continuing constraints placed upon the school by the pandemic, the Governing Body will continue to develop and work towards the longer-term strategy of the school, to closely monitor financial status and progress against plan and to work closely with the Headteacher, SLT, staff and parent communities to deliver the best outcomes for our pupils.

The Governing Body remains focussed on providing appropriate support to the staff and all pupils, but particularly those who are disadvantaged in any way. Recognising the potential for progress to have been lost due to the Covid pandemic, close interest will be taken in how this will be identified and hopefully rectified.

An overriding aim is to maintain a seven-class structure if possible. It is appreciated that this presents a significant challenge, particularly in view of the additional financial constraints resulting from lower pupil numbers, brought about principally by demographics and the vagaries of Service family moves.

It is recognised that with a new Headteacher in post and the lengthy period that has elapsed since its last inspection, an Ofsted visit in the near term is highly likely. Ensuring that governance aspects of such an inspection are at least at a Good standard will require some self-examination and where necessary improvement by the Governing Body.

Similarly, as a church school, a Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools (SIAMS) will take place in 2022 and work is underway to review and revise the school's Vision and Mission. The Governing Body has a role in shaping this work and ultimately approving its product.

Physical improvements to relocate the Headteacher's office to be in the proximity of a further improved entrance and school office need to be pursued thereby enabling the much-needed restoration of a proper Staff Room facility. Shortcomings in the school's accessibility (e.g. door and passageway widths for wheelchairs) also need to be addressed.

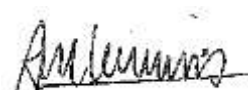
Acknowledging that the rural charm of Sutton Veny school could also be considered a shortcoming in terms of providing pupils with a broad ethnic and socio-economic exposure, opportunities within the curriculum to broaden pupil's perspectives will be pursued where possible and consideration will be given to the identification of an appropriate link school.

Thus far the school has, for sound reasons, resisted moves to become part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). However, the Governing Body, needs to assure itself periodically that these reasons remain valid and that continuing its Voluntary Controlled status is in the best interests of both pupils and staff. Accordingly, a review will be taken in Term 4.

In conclusion, Sutton Veny School is exceptional in many ways. Academically strong, it achieves outstanding results. However, it is its ethos, often referred to as 'the Sutton Veny way', that is perhaps its greatest strength. It is an honour to serve this school as its Governing Body.



Tom Finnie
Chair of Governors



Adam Lewis
Headteacher