



Local Governing Body Annual Report for academic year 2019 – 2020

September 2020

The events that have overtaken our country since March 2020 have had an unprecedented impact on our school community. The pandemic, lockdown and partial closure of our school have seen new and unexpected challenges for us all.

As Governors, our priority has been to support our wonderful school staff and leadership and we wish to extend to all members of our school family our heartfelt thanks for the courage you have shown in these past months supporting the school staff to do what is best for our children. We would like to take this opportunity to highlight what a wonderful place New Siblands School is, and some of the key moments from the past academic year – before and during COVID-19.

It is re-assuring to know that throughout the past year, we have been able to live and breathe our Vision of:

Achievement, Belonging, Celebration

Term 1, September - October 2020

Returning to school we had a full roll of 125 children. The senior leadership continued to work on developing the curriculum in line with the new national requirements and make our provision innovative, exciting and purposeful. There were challenges to provide the correct level of support within our existing budgets, but the Trust made further funds available to ensure we could support the health and safety of both staff and pupils.

The new Term saw the re-opening of our swimming pool, after extensive repairs, and the successful introduction of the sensory Emerald class, based at the secondary site. We also welcomed our newest Parent Governor, Alastair Wilkins.

Term 2, November - December 2020

Governors carry out many of their monitoring visits in this term; these visits allow us to see the school at work and the progress the children and young people are making and the evidence to underpin that. This understanding was strengthened by a leadership presentation on pupil progress. The school continued to take part in a wide range of inclusion activities including a fresh burst on engagement with our friends at Gillingstool. Local Governors have a strong focus on staff, as well as pupil, wellbeing and this term we looked closely at how our staff felt and how to be an even better employer.

The Friends of New Siblands yet again delighted pupils with an amazing Christmas fair, raising a fantastic amount for all those 'little extras.



Term 3, January – February 2020

The Curriculum development continued apace this term and the Evidence for Learning App was rolled out to the whole school with staff working hard to iron out any quirks in the system. Quality of Education is a key component of the new Ofsted framework that came into use in September 2019, with a higher benchmark than the previous framework. As Governors, we continued to closely monitor the development of our curriculum Intent, Implementation and Impact.

Term 4, February – March 2020

This term we welcomed Governor Kevin Simpson and focussed on our Behaviour strategies with a presentation from our school behaviour lead. Due to changes within our Board of Trustees, our long serving Chair of Governors, David Tubb, stood down, replaced as Chair by Vice Chair, Sue Fairhurst. Annually, Governors consider their own skills and knowledge to ensure we are equipped to provide the support and challenge required of us; with the changes to our Governors we decided to revisit this at the start of next academic year.

As the threat of the pandemic and a national lockdown came ever closer, we had concerns over some pupils exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms and the decision was taken to close both school sites on the 17th March, just prior to the national closure date.

Term 5, April – May 2020

Over what would have been the Easter break, school staff worked diligently to ensure our most vulnerable children were safe and that parents had access to increasing resources to allow them to provide activities for their children at home. One of our Staff Governors, Steph Legg left the school for pastures new and we will have an election among staff to elect a new Staff Governor in September.

As the days of lockdown became weeks and months, Governors continued to hold meetings – virtually – to support the school leadership in the continuing work to maintain the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff. As demand for places for key workers' children increased, we were able to open the Primary site, once strict risk assessments and safety protocols had been put in place, to a few children.

As Government guidance continued to evolve, we began to consider how we could open the school wider and forensic planning and risk assessments were carried out to allow us to welcome more pupils back in Term 6.

Term 6, June – July 2020

This term we were able to open both school sites to a larger number of children, according to the individual risk assessments that were carried out, while our home learning teams continued to offer support to those staying at home. The staff and children rose to the challenge and feedback from parents was positive. While it was a very different Term 6, the atmosphere in school was amazing and staff continued to provide support to all our children and families whether in school or not.



We welcomed a new Governor, Emily Pitt and said thank you and goodbye to our long serving Vice-chair, Sharon Lynas, who is moving to focus on her role on the Board of Trustees and Governor Stan Rodliffe who has left to concentrate on his retirement.

Towards the end of term the school leadership, supported by colleagues within the Trust, updated plans and revised risk assessments to prepare us to welcome all pupils and staff back in September as Government guidance continued to be updated.

Conclusion and looking ahead

We are conscious that we are very privileged to be volunteer Governors for our school. Our school community is awash with Superheroes and our staff and leadership have proved in the last months, as never before, that they are marvellous and dedicated educators.

Most of us will feel glad to say goodbye to the past academic year, but it has taught us that we are resilient, we are creative, we do value our education and that together we can succeed.

All the Governors feel profoundly grateful to have been able to help in some small way to make possible all that the school and its pupils have achieved in 2019/20. The road ahead is likely to present us with more challenges as our staff work to bring all our pupils back to school and re-engage them through our recovery curriculum, but we will do it, together.

Sue Fairhurst
Chair of Governors,
September 2020

Breakdown of the Local Governing Board, at the end of 2019/20:

Sue Fairhurst, Chair
Ms Osmond, Headteacher
Gillian Foxton, Local Governor
Colin Pike, Parent and Health & Safety Governor
Alastair Wilkins, Parent Governor
Kevin Simpson, Local Governor
Emily Pitt, Local Governor
Katherine Ball, Staff Governor, Safeguarding Governor
Tracey Douglas, Associate Member, and parent.

Vacancies: 1 x non-teaching staff governor (election in September 2020); 1 x Local Governor