



Crich Carr Church of England Primary School

Governors' Annual Statement

September 2020 - July 2021

Overview

This past academic year has again proved to be extremely challenging for the school. After the shutdowns, closures and severe disruption caused by Covid-19 during academic year 2019/20, the school reopened fully on 2 September, 2020, for all pupils from Nursery to Year 6, albeit operating within carefully planned and risk assessed safeguards.

The Governing Body wish to extend its heartfelt thanks to the Headteacher and staff for their unstinting efforts in again keeping the school operational during another difficult and demanding year.

The Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body of our school endeavours to fulfil the roles defined by the Government's Department for Education and is supported in this by the Local Authority, Derbyshire County Council. It seeks to ensure the school provides the best possible education for all its pupils, its three core responsibilities being:

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

How the Governing Body is structured

Our Governing Body comprises 12 members, as follows:

- 4 elected Parent Governors
- 1 Local Authority Governor, appointed by Derbyshire County Council
- The Headteacher
- 1 Staff Governor
- 2 Foundation Governors, appointed by the Diocese of Derby
- 3 Co-opted Governors, appointed, as appropriate, by the Governing Body

In addition, an Associate Member, appointed by the Governing Body, supported its efforts over the period.

A list of our current Governors, the Governing Body's subcommittees upon which they sit and the subcommittees' roles and responsibilities can be found on the school website.

We currently (November, 2021) have a vacancy for a second Foundation Governor, to be appointed by the Diocese of Derby.

The Governing Body's Operation

The Governing Body plans to hold six meetings every academic year – two per term. Due to Covid-19 constraints, it was not possible to hold these meetings in the school building as previously. However, all six meetings were successfully held remotely, using Zoom technology.

The use of Zoom also proved to be extremely valuable in enabling meetings of the four sub-Governing Body committees (Finance, Curriculum, Safeguarding and Buildings and Health and Safety) to continue as planned.

Prior to the start of the academic year, the two Co-chairs, who had been in position for over four years, stood down. It proved not to be possible to replace these from the Governing Body members. As a result, the Governing Body adopted a 'rotating chair' approach whereby two nominated Governors become responsible for chairing the two termly Governing Body meetings. One of the Governors takes the lead in the hand-over from the previous Chair and the second in ensuring an effective hand-over to the incoming Chair. Over time, all non-staff Governors will have the opportunity to chair Governing Body meetings.

Usually, regular school visits by Governors play an important and integral part of the Governing Body's responsibilities. However, Covid-19 restrictions, unfortunately, made Governor visits impracticable during the academic year.

Governors undertake regular training, ensuring their knowledge remains current and an annual skills audit identifies any skill gaps or training needs.

The work of the Governing body is recorded in approved minutes which are available to view on request.

The School's Academic Year 2020/21 – a Governors' Overview

School Leadership

Covid-19 restrictions and the size of the classrooms meant that the class structure was altered slightly from the previous year. The new structure was as follows:

- **Class 1 – Year 1, Reception & Nursery:** Vicki Holmes (Headteacher)
- **Class 2 – Years 2 & 3:** Angie Smithurst
- **Class 3 – Years 4, 5 & 6:** Rosemary Fothergill

The class structure worked well over the year with each class teacher continuing to provide excellent teaching to all children either in the classroom, or by carefully planned home school lessons, via zoom.

Inspections

The last Ofsted inspection was in January 2018, followed by the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) a month later. In its inspection report, Ofsted concluded: 'The school continues to be good. The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection'.

Both inspection reports are available on the school's website. Further Ofsted and SIAMS inspections are not anticipated before 2022.

School Numbers and Finances

The total annual cost of running the school is of the order of £300k (of which some 85% is attributable to staff related costs). Almost of all of this is funded by Derbyshire County Council (DCC) as by far the most significant contributor to the school's annual budget. The funding we receive from DCC is primarily a function of the number of pupils attending the school. As such, the school's continuing financial viability relies heavily upon being able to attract parents to choose Crich Carr as the preferred school for their children.

Against this background, we experienced a very worrying fall in pupil numbers between 2015 and 2018, with total pupil numbers falling to the low 40s. However, this decline has been reversed, with currently a total of 55 children in Reception (9), KS1 (15) and KS2 (31). In addition, we continue to offer a very active nursery section, attended by 10 children.

This healthy turnaround in school numbers reflects the way in which the school, with its unique 'family' ethos and excellent academic record, appeals to and attracts prospective parents. It is worth noting that almost all of the growth in pupil numbers results from children living outside the immediate Whatstandwell catchment area.

Academic Results and Progress

The Curriculum and Standards Committee continually monitors the academic performance and progress of the school on behalf of the Governing Body. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, there was no statutory testing for children in 2021. In general, children returned to school eager and ready to continue their learning. As you would expect, following such a disrupted year, there were gaps in the children's knowledge and understanding, identified through ongoing internal assessment. Catch Up funding, along with 'normal' school resources, was used to provide individual and small group interventions to address the issues identified. This has helped to minimise the impact that Covid-19 has had on the children's learning and progress.

Safeguarding

The safeguarding of all members of our school community is of the utmost importance to the school. Rigorous, robust and effective procedures are in place to ensure the safety and

wellbeing of our children and staff. The Safeguarding and Wellbeing of Pupils Committee meets on a termly basis to discuss any issues or concerns and have undertaken the annual S175 Safeguarding audit. The Committee has used this to develop an Action Plan to adapt and improve our policies and procedures to ensure continual improvement and compliance.

Christian Distinctiveness

We are a voluntary controlled Church of England primary school. As such, the school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian values and practice. We pride ourselves on being a fully inclusive school, where everyone is welcome and will be shown care, understanding and respect.

We provide the children with the opportunity to develop their spiritual awareness, their understanding of Christian beliefs, respect for those with other faiths and those of no faith.

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the St Mary's church and the Diocese of Derby.

The Governors November 2021