



Kingswood, Leeds and Broomfield CE Primary, Platts Heath and Ulcombe CE Primary Schools.

Chair of Governors Annual Report 2022-2023

December 2023

This academic year the Governing Board has seen many changes and in 2023 we now have an almost complete Governing Board with the exception of one Foundation Governor.

As I look back at the last academic year, we have seen an abundance of improvement amongst our children's self-confidence and social interactions, and we look forward to seeing this develop even further over this academic year. The numbers within our Schools remain variable and our Leaders continue to develop strategies for improving attendance which has seen some positive results in 2022-2023.

We remain passionate about our inclusivity across all of our four small rural Federation Schools and the pupil numbers in all our schools continue to rise slowly. We have also seen an increase in children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) within all our Schools.

We have been challenged again by the loss of some valued Governors during the year who had a high level of experience and provided both challenge and support across the Federation Schools. Thank you to all those who have moved on for their tireless support, we will undoubtedly miss the skills, professionalism and companionship of those Governors leaving us. We look forward to welcoming our new Governors and I believe with our Aspire Induction we will be able to fully utilise the new experiences and skill sets they bring to the Board.

The new Governors will be supported by the existing team and I think a good balance has been reached with the pairing of Governors and organising monitoring visits. We are also doing more collective training sessions in house in particular around Financial challenge and preparation for both Ofsted and SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools) in our two Church Schools.

However, by the clear evidence from all the strategies developed by our Senior and Subject Leaders around Deep Dives, we are well positioned to keep striving for excellence across all areas of our Schools. We anticipate one Ofsted inspection this academic year and consider the work undertaken in both the Schools and with Governors will put us in a good position when the inspector arrives.

The core functions of the Governing Board have been met throughout the year with a focus on providing challenge to the Leadership team recognising the pressures and time constraints faced by the staff as the curriculum continues to evolve.

We have continued with the Circle Model of governance as it provides the Board with the best opportunity to meet collectively and align our strategy for and help new Governors with their

monitoring roles. Our monitoring and evaluation is undertaken by questioning, examining and reporting the progress in any given area, by referring to the key targets and milestones, in the Federation and four Individual School Plans. Then reporting back at the next Governing Board Meeting where it can be discussed and challenged.

We are also aware all our Schools are all going through the Nurture Programme although the principles have been embedded within our ethos on a daily basis. We have had discussion at our GB meetings thus ensuring we are aware of the mood meters in classrooms, worry monsters and quiet areas etc thus ensuring we understand, Nurture - means to care for and protect something or someone while it is growing. We also acknowledge the Wellbeing initiatives, including the regular termly Wellbeing letters for Parents and Carers and for Staff.

All designed to keep everyone in our Federation Schools healthy and safe, showing kindness so everyone feels happy and supported, where we celebrate achievements, no matter how big or small and thus follow the six principles of Nurture.

A brief outline of Governance particularly for our new parents:

- 1) The purpose of governance is to provide confident and strong strategic leadership which leads to robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.
- 2) All Governing Boards, no matter what type of school or how many schools they govern, have three core functions:

- **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;**
- **Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and**
- **Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.**

As you are all aware we are currently working towards becoming a Multi Academy Trust as we explained in our letter to you all in September. The Trust will be Governed by a Trust Board with seven representatives from the Governing Board and Canterbury Diocesan Board for Education. These will be appointed by five Members from the Canterbury Diocese and the larger community and Emma Hickling will become our Chief Executive Officer.

We will maintain our Governing Board and our hub will become the first Hub (the Maidstone Hub) of the Aspire Trust - exciting times ahead although in reality I doubt you will actually notice much difference. Please be reassured the children will always be at the forefront of everything we do in Aspire and we believe this development will help to ensure the future of our small rural Primary Schools.

Aspire Federation Governing Board Priorities 2023 - 2024

- * To support all Governors especially new Governors, to embed and develop their knowledge and monitoring skills, through mentoring and training including preparation for Ofsted and SIAMS inspections.
- * To maintain strong strategic challenging governance and continue to drive for constant improvement in all aspects of education within the Federation Schools.

- * To encourage a safe and secure environment throughout the Federation, ensuring robust accountability and where all including parents and carers treat each other with dignity and respect.
- * To establish good communication by regularly refreshing and updating the Aspire website and developing an Aspire Newsletter aiming initially for twice a year.
- * To secure good Governing Board succession planning including recruiting a Foundation Governor as we move towards Academisation.

Sadly, there were a number of incidents in our Federation Schools at the end of last year and already in this new academic year, members of staff have been spoken to or have received abusive emails written in an aggressive hostile manner.

Governors are therefore reminding everyone to please kindly think, before you pick up your phone, write an email or arrange a meeting and kindly treat all our members of staff with the respect and courtesy they show you.

Please note: The minutes of all the Full Governing Board Meetings are public documents and can be obtained on request from the School Offices. All the details of Governors attendance at meetings is updated regularly and available on our Federation Website.

We always positively encourage everyone to communicate with us and welcome comments and suggestions from parents, carers, staff, and other members of the school community. Although, we stress it really needs to be in an appropriate way.

As Chair of Governors, I can always be contacted directly by email or via any of the school offices.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all Governors past and present, our Executive Headteacher, four Heads of School, all our Staff and of course, our Clerk to the Governing Board.

**On behalf of all the Governing Board I wish everyone
a Very Merry Christmas or Enjoyable Festive Holiday
and a
🎄 Happy New Year 🎄**



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December 2023

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