

Brookside Primary School

Governing Body Annual Report and Impact Statement

2015 – 2016

Introduction

The world of education is constantly changing and this is exceedingly so in the current political climate. The expectations placed on schools and for children to succeed is increasingly high and it is for us as Governors to ensure that standards continue to be raised.

As Governors, we play a vital role in the strategic running of the school and in making sure that every child is enabled to reach their full potential. Our functions are embedded in the law, which states that the purpose of Governing Bodies is to *‘conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school’*.

We are very fortunate to have a dynamic body of Governors at Brookside who bring a wide variety of experience and expertise to the school. This enables us to carry out our role effectively and efficiently and to ensure that the school is moving forward. We constantly strive to raise standards in a way that is in line with our overarching ethos and vision, along with the statutory directives from the Department of Education.

This impact statement summarises our role in the development of our school and its pupils over the past year, and provides an opportunity to be transparent about what we do.

General

The Role of the Governing Body

The role of the Governing Body is key to the leadership of Brookside Primary School, and the Department for Education requires us to place strong focus on three core strategic functions:

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

Constitution of the Governing Body

The constitution of Brookside's Governing Body is made up as follows:

- One Local Authority Governor
- Two staff Governors
- Two parent Governors
- Nine co-opted Governors

Governor Meetings

Both Full Governors' Meetings and Sub-Committee Meetings take place once every term. The following two Sub-Committees are in place:

- *SD&P: Strategic Development and Pupils*: deals with matters pertaining to the strategic development of the school and the curriculum, as well as pastoral and safeguarding issues relating to the wellbeing of our pupils.
- *FGP&P: Finance, General Purposes and Personnel*: oversees the financial expenditure of the school and signs off budgets to go to the Full Governing Body. It is responsible for all matters relating to the school buildings and its contents, Health and Safety and staffing issues within the school

Working Groups also convene in relation to matters such as school development and funding on an ad hoc basis as the need arises.

Governor Training and Induction

Every Governor has access to comprehensive training opportunities, both when they first join the Governing Body and for more experienced Governors to continually develop their skills. This is provided by the local authority, through external providers and via access to online courses.

Our Governor Training Co-ordinator manages this and runs an annual Skills Audit to ensure that we stay up-to-date with our responsibilities with regards to the latest requirements and expectations in line with local and national best practice.

This year, we have produced a Governor Induction Pack and introduced a mentoring scheme for new Governors. This will mean that new Governors are given all the information they need about the school and gain a full understanding of their role, enabling them to fully participate sooner.

Link Governors and School Visits

As part of our monitoring role, each Governor takes responsibility for linking with a certain area within the school (e.g. Curriculum and Individual Subject Areas, as well as Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Health and Safety, etc).

This involves visiting the school to meet with the staff member responsible for that particular area in order to gain a full understanding, to monitor progress and to discuss any related matters. Feedback on all visits is submitted to the Full Governing Body so that all Governors are kept informed about progress, and are made aware of any concerns that need to be addressed.

Ofsted Focus

Following our Ofsted Inspection in November 2014, the Governing Body have continued to focus on the key priorities that were identified in the report. These were to:

- Make certain that work in Key Stage 1 consistently engages pupils' attention and builds upon what the pupils already know, understand and can do
- Ensure teachers in Key Stage 2 always set suitably challenging tasks for pupils in writing

Work scrutiny has continued in both of these areas to ensure that the pace of learning is good and that children are sufficiently challenged. Writing and mathematics have received particular focus and the quality of marking has consistently improved across the school.

We have also established an 'Ofsted Readiness' working group, made up of a core set of Governors who will focus on the Ofsted Framework and the preparations for our next Inspection.

School Improvement – Focus for 2015-2016

The Governing Body seeks to ensure that the School Improvement Plan is fully implemented and to monitor progress throughout the year. This year, the main areas for improvement have been:

- To continue consolidating the requirements of the new National Curriculum introduced last year
- To monitor the implementation of a new assessment model throughout the school and to support staff in implementing it
- To improve the quality of and progress in writing in line with Ofsted feedback, through aspirational teaching

- To increase the participation in sports for all pupils, rather than just high achievers
- To increase the use of tablet technology so that equipment is used more effectively throughout the school
- To raise the profile of e-safety across the school so that children are fully aware of the dangers of the internet

Other areas of focus for the Governing Body have included the following:

- To continue to oversee and improve pupil attendance
- To seek funding opportunities in order that we can improve and enhance children's experiences at Brookside
- To continue to work with Nottingham County Council on issues surrounding Brookside Development with current and future housing expansion in the village of East Leake
- To look at moving towards converting to Academy Status as required by current government policy and the implications for the school

Impact of the Governing Body

Personnel and Finance

Every year we agree a budget based on the funding we receive from Nottingham County Council and allocate spend in line with the priorities in the School Development Plan.

A Qualified External Adviser assists us in managing the school budget and supports our Office Manager on financial matters.

At the termly Finance, General Purposes and Personnel Committee meetings, we review spend against budget, in order to ensure that the priorities are being focused on and that the financial sustainability of our school is maintained. Although the budget has been fairly healthy this year, expenditure on the introduction of the National Living Wage, increased National Insurance and Employers Pension Contributions, is set to have a significant financial impact on staffing costs over the next two years. This will affect all schools and the current funding formula makes budgeting a challenge.

In an attempt to reduce spending on Financial Auditing, Governor Services, Clerking and Training, the Governing Body has moved from receiving these from the County Council to the City Council.

The School Audit for 2015-16 recommended that improvements be made to the procedures for approving invoices but overall, it was concluded that:

The financial procedures in place at the school represent good practice and provide sound systems in internal control.

We also plan and monitor capital investment in the infrastructure of the school. This year we have, amongst other projects:

- Improvements to IT and Wi-Fi across the school
- The purchase of new interactive whiteboards to be installed in each classroom, secured through a loan from Nottingham County Council for £14,000.00

We constantly review our policies, processes and systems in line with the recommendations set out in the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS).

Pupil Premium and Service Premium

The Pupil Premium and Service Premium are allocated by the Government to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are supported to achieve and fully participate in every aspect of school life. We received £34,900.00 in Pupil Premium for the year 2015-16.

Schools can decide how this money is spent, however, they must use it to 'Narrow the Gap' in terms of enabling pupils to progress and increase their levels of attainment in line with their peers. The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring the spending and interventions which help to enhance learning. At Brookside, we use the funding in the following areas:

- Trips and residentials for eligible pupils
- School uniform
- The acquisition of individual learning resources
- One-to-one learning provision to narrow the attainment gap between pupils
- Supporting the integration and learning of Looked After Children
- Extracurricular and enrichment activities, including school clubs, music and foreign language tuition

We regularly review the progress being made by our Pupil Premium children and data shows that some Pupil Premium children work below their peers, especially in writing, however, there is little difference in reading and mathematics. It should be noted that over half of our pupils on the Pupil Premium Register are also on the SEND Register.

Sports Premium

Sports Premium Funding is provided by the government to ensure that every child is given equal opportunities to participate in sport at school. £8,700.00 for Sports Premium has been received for 2015-16.

A large proportion of the money is used to fund an external provider for sports coaching to support teachers in delivering PE classes, to enable participation in competitions with other local schools and to buy equipment. Fitness testing is also carried out on all pupils in order to assist in devising appropriate planning and improvements in the fitness of children have been made in some areas.

One of our staff members who is a Co-opted Governor, is heavily involved in co-ordinating this and has worked closely with PE leads from other local schools to put together a programme of sporting events that will enable all the children across all the schools to represent their school in competition at least once during the spring and summer term.

The Governing Body are given termly reports on the impact that the Sports Premium is having on pupils.

Leadership and Management

Raising Standards of Teaching

At the Full Governing Body meeting we review anonymised data showing evidence pertaining to the quality of teaching within the school; this includes feedback from classroom observations carried out, reports on the progress of specific groups of children and scrutiny of the children's books. Overall, this allows us to track progress against our target that 100% of teaching is good or outstanding.

Last year, we replaced the Deputy Headteacher role with two Assistant Headteachers. Each were given distinct responsibilities and this has proved highly successful in supporting the Headteacher and for the whole school.

Headteacher's Appraisal

Two non-staff members of the Governing Body carry out the annual appraisal of the Headteacher and have received specific training to enable a thorough appraisal to be carried out.

With the support of an external School Improvement Consultant, the appraisal process allows us to look closely at the performance of the Headteacher, have discussions about areas of strength and weakness and set new targets against which the Headteacher's performance will be reviewed.

This process is a key component in improving pupil achievement, teaching standards and the overall leadership within the school and enables the Governing Body to hold the Headteacher to account.

Staffing

The Governing Body have been involved in staff recruitment, resulting in the appointment of two new teachers who started in September 2015 and future recruitment for September 2016. As with many schools, the recruitment of teachers due to a national shortage has been increasingly difficult and persistence has been necessary.

The decision was made to increase the hours of our two office staff to reflect their workload, however, this was considered in line with budget constraints.

Over and above the on-going review of staff performance, we pay particular attention to the performance and integration of newly recruited members of staff.

Attendance

Attendance at school is vastly important in enabling children to exercise their right to receive full time education and to fulfil their potential to succeed. We know from research that educational outcomes for children can be negatively affected by poor attendance at school and this continues to be an area of focus for the Governing Body.

Last year showed a marginal decline compared to previous years. Families where attendance had fallen were identified by the Headteacher who worked with them to help them understand the impact on their child's learning and to encourage improvement. This is closely monitored with regular reports from the Headteacher and next year, we intend to introduce an Attendance Link Governor role.

Behaviour and Safety

Pupil Discipline and Behaviour

Brookside Primary School has a reputation for instilling good manners and excellent behaviour in its pupils and this is underpinned by our strong Pupil Discipline and Behaviour Policy. We believe in rewarding and reinforcing positive behaviour and dealing with negative behaviour so that no child is prevented from learning by another and teaching is not disrupted.

Incidents of bullying, racism, homophobic and discriminative behaviour are recorded when reported and fed back to the Governing Body. Anti-bullying and respectful behaviour are promoted across the school along with the principles of equality and diversity.

Safeguarding

As a school, we take our responsibilities for safeguarding our pupils and protecting them from harm very seriously. Rigorous Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and procedures are in place and there is a Designated Governor for Child Protection, as well as two designated staff roles.

Governors are mindful of their duties in this area and the Chair of Governors is responsible for signing Nottingham County Council's Safeguarding Governors' Compliance Checklist each year.

Training is kept up to date for both staff and Governors and this year, we have undertaken training to include Safer Recruitment as well as the Prevent Duty in Schools.

Our designated lead on Safeguarding has received comprehensive Stonewall training to tackle homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying. This was later shared among the rest of the staff and will be used to promote British Values, a focus in this year's School Improvement Plan.

Our record keeping and management systems around safeguarding have been overhauled using guidance from Nottingham County Council and improvements to the induction of staff in this area have been made.

Pupils awareness of the safety of the internet was brought into question last year and following work being carried out around this issue, significant improvements have been evident.

Health and Safety

Last year, it was recognised that although Health and Safety is a priority within the school, monitoring by the Governing Body was identified as a weakness.

This has been addressed by re-establishing a strong Health and Safety Governor Link who has worked closely with the Headteacher and the Operations Manager to assist in improving the procedures that are in place.

A Health and Safety Audit showed that there were concerns around risk assessments and competency training and awareness. Both of these have been swiftly addressed. Progress is still required and the school will be working towards the SafetySmart Award during 2016-17.

Termly inspections are now fully in place and a new contractor for PAT Testing has been sourced through links with the Rushcliffe Learning Alliance. Play Equipment is routinely inspected, however, we are also looking for a new contractor to do this.

The Health and Safety Policy and the School Emergency Plan are to be fully reviewed to ensure that they meet the requirements of Nottingham County Council.

Weekly staff meetings now have a standing item on the agenda relating to Health and Safety, in order that concerns can be dealt with more efficiently. An Annual Report to Governors will also be routinely prepared presented by the Headteacher at Governing Body Meetings.

Curriculum

Achievement of Pupils and Raising Attainment

Our focus in 2015-16 has been on improving performance in Key Stage 2. Our 2014 Ofsted Report required us to:

- Ensure teachers in Key Stage 2 always set suitably challenging tasks for pupils in writing

Following a concentration of work to raise the quality of writing, we were very pleased to see that there was an increase in pupils achieving Levels 4 and 5 in the Year 6 SATs compared to the previous year. Various key assessments are used to monitor this including one called 'Being a Brookside Writer' to help children to understand what is expected of them.

Phonics Screening for Early Years and Year 1 were also very successful. Data shows that Year 1 achieved the 90% threshold last year compared to the national average of 77%. Time is put into children who do not achieve this and they re-sit the test in Year 2 to achieve 100%.

Through our Governor Visits, half-termly meetings, termly Headteacher reports and on-going review of the quantitative data (e.g. the School Performance data, Ofsted Dashboard and RAISEonline) we know how the children are performing and where there are issues that need our input to address.

We look at the school's academic performance against annual targets and longer-term trends, and benchmark our performance against national data and local schools as well as that of similar schools. We use this information to constructively challenge the Headteacher and other school leaders in order to ensure that any potential problems are addressed in a timely way and successes celebrated. This ensures that throughout the year we know how we are performing against our priorities and targets.

Levels for assessment have changed significantly and there is no longer a nationalised system. This means that each individual school has had to devise their own and a huge amount of work has been done by the Senior Leadership Team, ready for the beginning of this academic year. Governors have been consulted on this throughout and will closely monitor the implementation of the new system.

The levels that Brookside will now be working to are:

- A: Working above the expected level
- B: Working at the expected level, on track

C: Working just below the expected level

D: Working below the expected level

Our Curriculum Link Governor has seen evidence of how assessment and tracking works across different subjects with clear progress indicators on how children move through the levels, from B to A, or C to B etc. Booster groups have been put in place in order to help children to improve their progress.

We are unable to predict pupils' achievement for this academic year as there has been no national guidance on this and benchmarks for attainment will not be set until SATs results are in. Year 6 are having to work at levels formerly expected of Years 8 and 9 which has put enormous pressure on both pupils and teachers. The Governors have raised concerns with regard to this and the importance of ensuring a balance between attainment and enjoyment of teaching and learning.

We are also aware of the agenda on coasting schools and we received a free report via The Key, an online resource for schools, called the Arbor Coasting Report. Governors were reassured that this is not an issue for Brookside and we will continue to monitor our position.

Access to Technology

Last year, we purchased a set of Apple iPads to add to our existing Android Tablet collection in order to expand our use of technology within the school. We can see enormous potential in this, both for teaching and learning, and this year's School Improvement Plan stated that *"all pupils will experience greater diversity in the way that they use tablet technology including animation, multimedia, photo editing"*.

One of our staff members, who is a Co-opted Governor, has established links with Apple Education and we have been selected as a school to benefit from expert training to improve the use of the iPads. Each of our teaching staff have access to an iPad for use within their classroom as well as a MacBook to be shared between classes.

One area where this has already having an impact is that we have been selected to work alongside Nottingham University with a new initiative, the Unlocking Talent maths intervention app for iPads. The cost is £30.00 per iPad and early indications from the Summer Term have shown incredible results.

Wi-Fi connectivity and interactive whiteboard technology has also been upgraded throughout the school.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

SEND pupils include those who have learning difficulties or disabilities encompassing problems in thinking and understanding, physical and / or sensory

difficulties and problems with speech and language. It also includes emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Following significant changes last year in terms of categorising SEND pupils, with the introduction of a single SEND support category to replace School Action and School Action Plus, now means that any child with additional needs being taught without significant support is classed as a standard pupil.

The impact of these changes has been that our SEND Register has been significantly reduced. Many of the SEND children at Brookside who were previously classified under School Action have been affected, however the school now identifies them as SEND Vulnerable to ensure that support can continue as before, but more is financed from the school budget.

Another challenge has arisen from the removal of national levels for assessment and work is in progress at national level to address this.

Recordkeeping has been improved so that it is now standardised across the school to ensure that interventions for SEND pupils are tracked more efficiently. Regular meetings still take place between the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and parents as well as linking with the Local Authority and other support agencies. The SEND Link Governor monitors the work of the SENCo and feeds information back to the Governing Body.

Quality Assurance and Accreditation

Key Stage 1

For the third year running, KS1 has been moderated, probably due to the fact that we have had a new Year 2 teacher. The moderator was very positive and commented that the school was very thorough and well prepared with a good set of evidence.

Key Stage 2 SATs Monitoring

A monitoring visit took place for the KS2 SATs, carried out by a practicing Ofsted Inspector. We do not receive any notification of this and the purpose is to check the procedures for keeping the test materials secure. The Inspector was fully satisfied that procedures were adhered to.

Peer Supported Quality Assurance

Our association with the Rushcliffe Learning Alliance has brought with it the opportunity for our Headteacher to work in a triangulation with two other Headteachers to carry out a quality assurance assessment of the three schools. The findings within the report produced were extremely positive for Brookside Primary School, in terms of the accuracy of its self-evaluation and the learning environment that exists within the school.

The summary states that:

The monitoring activities undertaken throughout the day support the findings of the school's SEF and the focus of the Improvement Plan. It is clear that there has been continued improvement since the school's last inspection and that the school can go forward with great confidence. The children and staff were very welcoming and this reflected the very positive ethos and values of the school.

Brookside Development

School Expansion

Continued discussions have taken place between the Headteacher, the Governor who has lead the Working Party on Brookside Development and Nottingham County Council, with regard to local housing expansion and the need to increase school places.

Several options are being considered to extend the capacity of the school to increase pupil numbers but this is ongoing.

Academy Conversion

The government's policy on converting every school to academy status by 2022, has led the Governing Body to consider this for Brookside and to explore the implications. Several meetings and events have been attended by both the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and others, despite our reluctance in this area.

In the autumn of 2016, the government abolished the requirement and the Governing Body have made the decision not to take this forward at this time.

Strategic Vision

The Governing Body has set up a Strategic Vision Working Group to review Brookside's Vision Statement and to inform the future development of the school. We intend to consult the whole school community on their views pertaining to 'What Makes Brookside Great?', 'What Could Make Us Greater?' and 'How Do You See Brookside In Five Years' Time?' in order to inform our work.

Information will take some time to collate but this will be a focus for the Working Group over the 2016-17 academic year.

Inspiring Pupils

Brookside Primary School prides itself on affording our pupils with plenty of opportunities to grow by providing a creative curriculum. Our Governors strive to play an active role in this and have done so in a variety of ways over the last year:

- Brookside is the only school in the country to be participating in Apple Education's Outreach Training Programme to trial the logistics and impact of school based training. This is developing the staff in expanding the use of iPads in the classroom and we have secured this through the contact instigated by a member of staff who is a Co-opted Governor
- A German Club run by one of our Governors whose first language is German
- Stronger connections have been forged with the Goethe Institut, leading to obtaining funding for German resources and a day trip to London for some of our pupils
- The School Choir, run by two of our Teaching Assistants (one of whom is a Co-opted Governor), continues to grow from strength to strength with performances in the local community, on Gem 106's Christmas Breakfast Show, St Giles Church in West Bridgford and the national Young Voices event at the Genting Arena in Birmingham
- Our Chair of Governors ran a very successful Equality Week themed 'Not That Different', to raise awareness and share her experiences as a disabled person
- Outdoor Gym Equipment was purchased as a result of a funding application to Awards for All, through the National Lottery, made by a Funding Working Group of Governors. The £10,000.00 received has allowed us to purchase new equipment which will be made available to the Playgroup and the Girl Guides who use the school facilities, as well as our pupils
- The Funding Working Group have also secured a grant of £3,500.00 from iGas to enable us to greatly enhance the Wildlife Area in the school grounds
- The Councillor Divisional Fund was approached by our Vice Chair of Governors and £1,000.00 was awarded for the purchase of a set of Ocarinas, small wind instruments which are easy and fun for children to learn. These will be obtained in due course and used with Years 3 and 4