

Governors' Annual Statement: 2020

Those things we wrote in our Annual Statement at the start of the last academic year will still hold good for the year ahead. As a board we are continuing to work with our professional colleagues to build on the progress which has been made since our last inspection. Our leadership and management team has worked tirelessly throughout the last academic year prior to and following 'lockdown.' We have faced the challenges and impact of Covid-19 and our school team under the leadership of our Head, has planned to ensure that our school has been open and has been safe. A very high priority for us all, has been the safety, health and wellbeing of every member of the school community. Whatever happens in September 2020 at the start of the new school year, these things will still be our top priority. We will continue to follow government guidance as we have done in the past and work with our school team to ensure that the return to school is managed safely. Everyone is aware that learning since March has been 'different' so taking stock and assessing progress will be a priority. There is evidence to show the progress of all year groups prior to 'lockdown.'

The Head has responded to advice and guidance throughout the year and particularly since 'lockdown' and the plans for the re-opening of our school are well under way. There has been and will continue to be very effective communication between the Head and stakeholders. Everyone is in the loop and those who have needed support be they child, parent, carer or colleague, has received it and this will continue.

The following sections of our Annual Statement stand as they are still pertinent and relevant.

The School Improvement Plan/Post Ofsted Inspection Plan 2018-2019

Our Ofsted Reports and other documentation are found in the 'About Us' section of our website.

The school was inspected in January 2018 and again in September. Our new Head and her senior leadership team took up their appointments in September 2017 and immediately began the task of putting absolutely every aspect of the school's work under the microscope. Our inspection in January reassured us that we were on the right track. We were graded 'good.' The inspection report highlighted our strengths and areas for improvements which we were addressing. Just six months later and at the very start of the new academic year, we welcomed the Ofsted inspection team again. We were graded Requires Improvement and continue to be fully engaged in the task of:

- Ensuring that our professional colleagues receive positive messages, praise and encouragement as they continue to move our school on

- Ensuring leaders are supported in gaining the necessary skills to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility
- Ensuring that leaders and governors monitor and evaluate closely the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEN and/or disabilities so that these groups make stronger progress
- Ensuring we as governors, are skilled appropriately to be able to provide leaders with effective challenge and support, particularly regarding pupils' outcomes
- Ensuring that Leaders and governors rigorously and regularly review records for attendance and safeguarding concerns, making sure that they are precise, accurate and detailed. There are governors with specific responsibility for monitoring attendance and all aspects of safeguarding. They report to the board regularly.

We were very pleased to see that the September 2018 inspection report confirmed, as we do again now, that:

- Pupils take pride in their work. Leaders have focused on improving pupils' handwriting and pupils' books show demonstrable signs of improvement.
- Additional adults support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities with skill.
- Pupils are proud to be a member of the school. They are confident and self-assured, co-operating effectively with others and showing staff and their peers, equal respect. Equality and diversity are deep rooted throughout the school.
- At Mawsley Primary School all are made to feel welcome and people's uniqueness is celebrated. Pupils' learning regularly explores equality and diversity. Pupils are confident in challenging any intolerant behaviour or views. They are in no doubt that 'Everyone is the same and no one is better than another.'

We are continuing to challenge and support our professional team. We know we must focus on the progress of every pupil from the beginning to the end of their journey with us before they move on and take their next steps into secondary education.

It is reassuring to hear what Amanda Spielman, Her Majesty's chief inspector of schools said at the most recent NGA summer conference: *'While the new framework (for inspection) looks at what a school chooses to teach, standards still matter. However, children also need to learn resilience and one way to support this is by not always judging the outcome but by promoting schools as places where children can really learn. Inspectors will look specifically at the integrity of schools, 'recognising good schools as those that do best for their pupils.'*

She also acknowledged financial pressures and conceded that not all schools are equally funded, 'leading to difficult choices.' She assured those attending the conference that cuts to local authority support and reductions in service have been rebalanced in the new framework. *'Results should empower schools to put kids first,' yet holding leaders to account has led to an over-reliance on data which does not always reveal the full picture.'*

‘Delegates were told how data is not always balanced and goes against the drive to reduce workload by asking school leaders to do and provide more. Schools should be looking at low-stakes testing for lesson planning and understand where pupils sit but this should not put undue pressure on teachers’ time. School leaders should also tread carefully when looking at predicted grades: *‘They are just as likely to go wrong as they are to go right schools should remember that ‘flight plans’ are not linear and progress is never a straight line.’*

We know we have a duty of care to all who work in our community school and key to our future progress is the professional skill, energy, enthusiasm and buoyancy of our staff. We are very fortunate, given budget constraints, to be fully staffed though the complexities of ‘staffing’ have engaged our minds. We have an amazing and skilled Head, who in spite of her relatively short time as a head, has a clear vision for our school and every pupil. She, like us, wants every person to be the ‘Best that they can be’ and this includes all of us, pupil, parent, carer, colleague, friends of our school, those who are part of the wider village community and governors too.

As lay volunteers we will continue to fulfil and develop our role as critical friends of the school’s leadership team when challenging examining and interpreting data and formulating and monitoring the effectiveness of our school. It is important to point out that finding and retaining governors is becoming more difficult.

Governance at our school is going through a period of change. We will have a new Chair in September, two new parent governors, a new staff governor and hopefully new co-opted governors too. Our hopes and aspirations for every child will remain the same. We will demonstrate our school motto too and like our children, parents, carers and colleagues ‘Be brave, be kind and be ourselves.’ We are also evaluating and examining the ways in which we do our work and there will be changes.

Safeguarding

We continue to do our utmost to ensure that our policies and safeguarding procedures are robust and that the children and everyone who is part of the Mawsley Community Primary School family, is safe. Our nominated safeguarding governor and advisor will continue to be in regular touch with the school. All governors have undertaken Prevent training.

Finance and Resources

We continue to scrutinise all matters relating to finance and deployment of human and other resources to ensure best value. This year (2019-2020) has been a difficult one given the news we received about falling rolls in some areas of the county and in our school. We are working with the Head and her colleagues to determine the best way to manage this challenge.

Governors are responsible for the effective management of our annual budget. We have regular budget update meetings with the school's business manager, who also produces detailed and informative reports for Governing Board meetings.

We are also responsible for formulating the school's 'three-year plan' which takes a longer-term view of the school's finances. It is good to hear about the government's proposals regarding an increase in funding for schools and we are looking forward to receiving more detailed information.

We challenge and scrutinise how we spend the pupil premium funding and sports funding the school receives. We will continue to have named governors who are responsible for governor oversight of these areas.

We also receive regular reports on health and safety and all accidents (including all those playground bumps, slips and trips) to ensure that any necessary remedial or preventative action is taken. A nominated health and safety governor will continue to take a particular interest in oversight of this area.

Training

In previous years and before Covid-19, governors have attended finance training provided by LGSS Finance each year. This training is tailored to our school and explores matters such as benchmarking, enabling governors to fully understand the school's finances.

Up to the present time, governors have undertaken the following training: safeguarding, attendance, data, LAC, Ofsted Preparation, finance, support and challenge, SEND (review day), SIP and SEF, safer recruitment, governor roles and responsibilities, pupil premium provision, understanding FFT school data.

Monitoring Visits/Learning Walks

Once every term and depending on governor availability, we visit our school to see aspects of the school's work linked to the School Improvement Plan 'in action.' We visit classrooms, look at work and most importantly, listen to our pupils talking about their work and progress. We also speak to and question those who work with them. In the academic year just ended we have undertaken two monitoring visits and looked at 'Marking and Feedback.' Our 'book look' focused on Maths with samples of work from specific groups – SEND, PP, LAC – similar cohorts, different ages, classes and abilities. Our first 'book look' took place in February and our second in June. Our findings are with the head and will be look at in the context of other 'marking' monitoring which has been undertaken. The governors who undertook the 'book looks' could see progress over time and noted that there was a lot more evidence to show that pupils are commenting on their own work and engaging in dialogue with their teachers.

Our Governor Monitoring Opportunities for 2019-2020 included the following but had to be suspended at 'lockdown:'

2019

October: A journey through Maths – opportunities to see work in Maths across all year groups

December: Monitoring Visit - an opportunity to talk to specific leaders to discuss progress on priorities, look at books and carry out pupil voice – themes: spelling, reading and maths

December: Maths 'book look'

2020

January: Pupil Premium Strategy Review of the autumn term

January: EYFS, English and Maths Leadership of Learning Reports

February: Mid-year leadership of learning reports – review of the first half of the year

March: Monitoring Visit/Learning Walk linked to our SIP

March: English 'book look'

March: A journey through RE – opportunity to work in RE across all year groups

April: Pupil Premium Strategy Review, EYFS, English and Maths Leadership of Learning Reports

June: Monitoring Visit/Learning Walk linked to our SIP

June: Governor Curriculum Workshop – progress towards Curriculum for September 2020

July: Pupil Premium 'book look' or other curriculum area 'book look'

July: End of Year Leadership of Learning Reports.

Policies and Procedures

Governors are responsible for ensuring that the policies and procedures that the school is required to have in place – and there are lots of them – are regularly reviewed and that the school's practice properly reflects them.

Praise and Support

We continue to offer praise and support in order that professionalism is recognized, applauded and all worth is acknowledged as highlighted through the amazing number of rich experiences that make up a child's education at our school.

If you joined us at the end of term 'Party in the Park' in July 2019 you will have seen just how important Mawsley Community Primary School in our village. We were invited to share what each class had learned about different countries of the world – culture, music, dance, songs etc. One senior resident of the village I talked to said he hoped it was okay for him to be there with his wife. Their next door neighbours' daughter had invited them. Great!

Our Head has worked tirelessly and with great skill, throughout the last academic year. Every aspect of our work has been scrutinized and evaluated by those who have come to observe, guide and report on our progress prior to 'lockdown.' The Head, senior leadership team and everyone who works at MCP is very clear about our journey and should be very proud of the progress we have made to date. Our 'next steps' are clear too. We look forward to our next visit from an Ofsted Team.

Health and Wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of everyone who is a member of the Mawsley Community School family is a high priority for us and not just because we are living through and dealing with a pandemic. We monitor the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff when we visit the school and talk about work/life balance when working with our professional colleagues. Our own work/life balance is important too. 'Governance is the art of the possible.'

We now know that 'Mental health' is also on the list of things the government requires schools to monitor and support and this will become more and more important in the months and years to come.

And Come September next: 2020

We know that our pupils will have progressed in their learning and in many ways. We will be listening to them as they tell us about their learning journey through 'lockdown.' The environment to which they return – our school – and the people within it, will make sure that the children are safe, continue learning in a way which meets their needs and have fun too. Our Mawsley School Family which includes the village too, will be there for them.

We know there will be challenges to face along the way and we will all do our best to meet them and deal with them and we must ensure that our enthusiastic and focused Head and our school team are supported and praised and yes, we will continue to challenge.

And, as the Head recently wrote to parents/carers, 'Times like these bring out the best and worst in people. It has certainly been the best in Mawsley. Thank you for your continuing support.'

The Governing Board
September 2020