



## **Governance Statement for Staplehurst School for the Academic Year 2016/17**

### **Functions and Structure**

In accordance with the Government's requirements for all Governing Bodies, the three core strategic functions of the Governing Body of Staplehurst School are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the Headteacher 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.

The Governing Body of Staplehurst School is made up of 15 Governors including the Headteacher, one Staff Governor, two Parent Governors, one Local Authority Governor and ten Co-opted Governors. At the time of writing (December 2017) there were two vacancies.

The Full Governing Body (FGB) met five times in the 2016/17 school year. The FGB delegates certain functions to its four sub-committees – Learning & Development; Community, Engagement & Growth; Finance & Premises; and Staff & Pay. As well as sitting on one or more of these committees, each of our Governors is asked to take on a Link Governor role, i.e. responsibility for monitoring a specific aspect or priority of the school, such as Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs, Health & Safety or Finance. Details of individual Governors, their terms of office, attendance records, which committee(s) they sit on and their link roles can be found on the 'Governors' section of the school website alongside individual biographies.

### **Objectives, achievements and challenges for 2016/17**

One of our aims for the last academic year was to use the school's performance data to identify areas for improvement with the aim of raising levels of expectation, attainment and progress amongst the children. Governors worked with the Senior Leadership Team to devise appropriate formats for receiving and analysing the data and invited the Inclusion Manager, Core Subject Leaders and Early Years Leader to provide regular progress updates at its Learning & Development Committee meetings.

Governors were delighted with the SATs results for Key Stage 1, which were above the national average across all subjects (Maths, Reading and Writing) for children achieving the expected standard as well as those working at greater depth. The Key Stage 1 results also showed an improving trend from the previous year which is extremely encouraging. The results for Key Stage 2, however, were disappointing despite interventions being set in place throughout the year to address areas of concern. In order to help raise standards moving forwards, Governors supported the Headteacher in her drive to recruit Assistant Heads for the start of September 2017.

Governors reviewed the viability of establishing an on-site pre-school and extending the school's wrap-around care provision. After undertaking research amongst parents and the

local community and discussing the options thoroughly, the FGB decided not to proceed with the establishment of an on-site pre-school in the short to mid-term because the school does not have sufficient funds. Governors agreed, instead, to focus on extending its wrap-around care. An earlier (7:30am) and staggered start times were introduced for Breakfast Club and a timeline was agreed for setting up after-school care in 2018.

A working party was established to keep abreast of Government policy regarding academisation with a view to making recommendations about what would be best for Staplehurst School. A list of Multi-Academy Trusts located within the surrounding area was created and an initial review made in terms of their relevancy to Staplehurst.

This was the first full academic year with the revised Governing Body structure, which included the creation of a new committee – Community, Engagement and Growth – and a number of working parties to look at priority areas in more depth. Although this eased pressure on the Full Governing Body, enabling it to focus more on its strategic role and making its meetings more time-efficient, it did result in an increased number of meetings across the board. The structure will be reviewed again at the end of the 2017/18 academic year before deciding whether to continue with it in its present form or make adjustments.

As well as attending FGB, committee and working party meetings, Governors also came to one or more of the 'Governor Days'. These days give Governors the opportunity to meet and chat with pupils and staff, experience a typical school day and carry out their monitoring duties. Governors regularly say that this is their favourite aspect of governance and, in the reports which they submitted following their visits, gave feedback which was overwhelmingly positive about the children's behaviour and attitudes to learning. Governors also attended celebratory events such as Sports Day and the Christmas and Year 6 leavers' performances.

**Our key priorities for 2017/18 are to:**

- Challenge leaders on the actions being taken to address areas for improvement;
- Market and establish after-school care to commence in September 2018;
- Recruit new Governors to fill vacancies;
- Recruit a new Chair of Governors (the current Chair has given a year's notice in order for succession planning);
- Identify opportunities to engage with parents and other community stakeholders;
- Continue to assess the pros and cons of academisation.