



Annual Governance Statement for Benhall Infants and Pre School 2020-21

In accordance with the Government’s requirement for all governing bodies, the three core strategic functions of Benhall Infants and Pre School Governing Body are:

1. Setting the strategic direction of the school
2. Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school
3. Ensuring financial health, probity and value for money

Governance arrangements

In line with government recommendations the Governing Body is made up of:

- the Headteacher
- 1 elected staff governor
- 2 elected Parent Governors
- 1 Local Authority Governor
- 7 Co-opted governors appointed by the governing body who in the opinion of the governing body, have the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school

The full Governing Body meets at least six, and usually seven, times each year. Each meeting is preceded (usually 2 weeks before) by a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The Pay Committee meets annually to discuss and agree Pay and Performance, and whenever else it is required.

The Headteacher’s Performance Management Panel normally meets twice each year, the first meeting includes an independent consultant to help review and set new targets. The timings of these meetings were adjusted this academic year to accommodate the arrival of our new Headteacher in January, and the continuing response to the pandemic.

There are committees that can meet if required to consider pupil discipline and staffing matters.

See **Appendix A** for a list of Governors 2020-2021 and their responsibilities.

Attendance record of governors

Governors have excellent attendance at meetings and we have never cancelled a meeting because it was not “quorate” (the number of governors needed to ensure that legal decisions can be made).

See **Appendix B** for details of individual governor’s attendance at meetings.

<p>The work carried out by the Governing Body this year</p>	<p>The Governing Body is always very thorough in carrying out its strategic responsibilities, in particular focusing on the priorities of the school development plan, which is agreed by the governing body early in Term 1, and monitoring progress data to ensure that the pupils achieve the highest standards they can, made possible by the highest quality of teaching and learning, whilst also developing as independent learners. However, following on from the previous academic year and the impact of the pandemic, a large proportion of the school development plan was extended into the new school year since so much of our previous plans had to be partially or wholly set aside as the more immediate task of meeting the needs of our pupils within this much changed context took priority.</p> <p>In addition to the impact of the pandemic, the other major event in school this year was the retirement of Mrs Richmond after 14 years as Headteacher at the end of December. And the arrival of Miss Morris as our new Headteacher in January. However, this exciting event took less than a day to clash with the ongoing pandemic, as schools entered the lockdown on day 2 of term. The existing staff team at Benhall worked alongside the incredibly fast-learning Miss Morris to handle this situation, and to ensure that we offered an even better home-learning experience for many of our children, as well as maintaining the highest standard of in-school learning for the expanded group of children attending during this latest lockdown.</p> <p>From a governance perspective, our role was initially in supporting Miss Morris in her new role, ensuring she received the training and support that she required in these incredibly challenging circumstances, whilst also ensuring that we continued to meet all of the learning and well-being needs of our children, and our staff. This process continued through the various stages of lockdown and reopening. As government advice and instructions continued to cascade in, we maintained close contact in terms of overseeing risk assessments and ensuring we provided the best that we could for everyone, whilst protecting our staff and our wider community.</p> <p>As the year wore on, considerable pressures were felt. For some children, and families, the challenges were undoubtedly great, which had knock-on effects in school, especially on staff. We also had a small minority of parents who took an extreme view on matters related to dealing with the pandemic. Whilst their views were of course a private matter over which we had no opinion, their mode of expression of it, both publicly on social media and also directly at staff and especially Miss Morris was a matter of concern, and one the governors monitored, and continue to monitor, closely.</p> <p>One notable event in this process was a revised approach to school sports do, to be more inclusive than ever. Although this could not include parents, due to the pandemic, the day itself exceeded all previous experiences. A shining example of adverse conditions doing nothing to hinder our continued pursuit of being the best that we can be.</p> <p>More generally, the pandemic made governance a little more challenging, and a little more remote. We have three new governors (two elected parents and one co-opted member of the local community) all of whom have not had the chance to visit school properly when children and staff are in place. Something we dearly hope to remedy as soon as we can next academic year. And we held all of our meetings (and most of the final stages of the HT recruitment process) virtually. Despite this we maintained the processes of governance, seeking to maintain effective financial oversight and monitoring of progress, which has very much been assessment and re-assessment of baselines and impact of the last 18-months of changed circumstances. One area of especial focus has been safeguarding, because the changed circumstances have created the</p>
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	<p>potential for more concerns. Through both the Safeguarding Governor, and the Chair of Governors, we have kept in very close contact with the DSL, Miss Morris. However, whilst Miss Morris is a new Headteacher, she came to us with a considerable range of safeguarding experience, which has been evident in the handling of this area. In addition, we maintain our usual focus on pupil premium and sports premium spending. Each of these areas is addressed in every one of our meetings.</p> <p>In addition to our three new governors, we also had our staff governor away on maternity leave. She maintained contact across the year, but we were unable to find a staff representative to stand in for her at the meetings, hence we relied on input from the headteacher, plus wider links to other members of staff. We also co-opted the Head of Pre-School onto the Finance and General Purposes Committee to ensure that we had the best insights as to the operation of this key part of our institution.</p> <p>Looking ahead to 21-22, we will continue our search for new members of the governing board, especially as we are likely to see a number of long-standing members move on over the course of this next year. Change of headteacher to be followed by change of some governors! We will also look to get back to the much more normal processes of governance, including, we all hope, many more visits into school.</p>
<p>The work that we have done on our committees</p>	<p>The Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP) remains the sole regular sub-committee of the Full Governing Board (FGB). Its focus covers Benhall Infant School and the Extended Provision through Benhall Pre-School and After School Club with regard to finance, personnel and building issues. This committee feeds back to the FGB. The F&GP committee meets 2-3 weeks prior to the FGB meeting to facilitate communication of matters between the two bodies.</p> <p>Finance and General Purposes Committee: The Finance and General Purposes Committee Chair aims to meet with the Headteacher and the school's Finance Officer on a monthly basis to review the budget and the outcomes are fed back to the full committee. There are also meetings with the School's Finance Officer. The committee completes and submits to County the annual Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) report. It engages in benchmarking against statistical neighbours and this provides a positive view of the way the school is managed financially. The Committee remains aware of the necessity for prudence at a time of tightened school budgets. However, the focus is always on how to best manage the school's resources so as to be able to offer the best education we can to all of the pupils at the school in a way that offers most support to the staff of the school. At times this presents challenges, but the committee has throughout the year sought to balance this prudence with appropriate spending to support the school's Vision. Additionally, the impacts of the pandemic on the school's finances and the uncertainties around these remain an area of focus, and will do into the new school year.</p>
<p>Future plans for the governors.</p>	<p>2020-21 marked a significant year of change for Benhall. With Mrs Richmond leaving, and with Miss Morris arriving, and with Miss Bilton on maternity leave, things were always going to feel a little unusual. If only that had been the only cause, but as ever the pandemic dominated. However, as 21-22 begins, Miss Morris is far from new, and Miss Bilton is now back at her side. And hopefully the school will remain open for all pupils, so that we can resume a normal service and focus on the things we love to focus on.</p> <p>This year will also see changes in terms of the Family Engagement provision, and a return to wider Forest School provision. We will also be looking at how we best improve</p>

	<p>our focus on SEND provision. This on top of working to ensure that the negative impacts of the pandemic on the learning, and on the well-being of all of our children can be minimised as far as possible.</p> <p>As a governing board, it will be a period of re-establishment of how we best monitor, challenge and support the school. And how we fill our vacancies and look to our own internal succession planning. All done with an eye on the likelihood of Ofsted coming to visit us.</p>
<p>How you can contact the governing body</p>	<p>We always welcome suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents, grandparents, carers, neighbours and anyone else with an interest. Please contact the Chair of Governors via the school office or by email: Chair@Benhall.gloucs.sch.uk</p>

Appendix A Governor Roles and Responsibilities 2020-21

Governor	SDP Link	Committees & Panels	Roles	Status
Tim Aldred				Parent Governor
Rebecca Bilton (maternity)				Staff Governor
Dave Filipović-Carter Chair	New KS1 & EYFS Curriculum Governance Headteacher Induction	F&GP Staff Dismissal Cttee Headteacher Appraisal Headteacher Recruitment	Named Governor	Co-opted Governor
Chris Hale	Catch Up Funding	F&GP (Chair) Staff Dismissal Cttee Pay Cttee Headteacher Recruitment	Health & Safety	Co-opted Governor
Toby Lewis	Family Support/Mental Health	F&GP Staff Dismissal Appeal Cttee Pay Committee Headteacher Recruitment	GDPR New Governor Induction	Co-opted Governor
Pat Palmer Vice Chair	Curriculum Recovery Reading & Writing Pre-School	F&GP Staff Dismissal Appeal Cttee Pupil Discipline Cttee Headteacher Appraisal Headteacher Recruitment	Safeguarding	LA Governor
Judith Price	Pupil Premium/SEND New Headteacher Induction	Staff Dismissal Cttee Pupil Discipline Cttee Headteacher Recruitment	SEN and Pupil Premium LAC Catch-Up Funding Sports Premium	Co-opted Governor
Wendy Richmond / Nicky Morris		F&GP Pay Cttee		Headteacher
Amy Spring-Wallis				Parent Governor
Laura Stevenson	RSHE	Staff Dismissal Appeal Cttee Pupil Discipline Cttee		Co-opted Governor
Vacancy				Co-opted Governor
Vacancy				Co-opted Governor
Julie Evans		F&GP		Clerk

Appendix B Governors' Attendance 2020-21

	FGB - 8 October	FGB - 19 October	FGB - 30 November	FGB - 1 February	FGB - 22 March	FGB - 17 May	FGB - 5 July		F&GP – 25 September	F&GP – 16 November	F&GP – 11 January	F&GP – 1 March	F&GP – 26 April	F&GP – 14 June
Tim Aldred	☒	☒	✓	✓	✓	✓	☒							
Rebecca Bilton	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒							
Dave Filipović-Carter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	☒	✓	☒	✓	✓
Chris Hale	✓	☒	☒	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Toby Lewis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pat Palmer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Judith Price	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	☒							
Wendy Richmond	✓	✓	✓						✓	☒				
Nicky Morris				✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Amy Spring-Wallis			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Laura Stevenson	✓	✓	☒	✓	✓	✓	✓							

✓ = Present, A = Apologies, ✕ = Absent