

Sedbergh Primary School

Governors Annual Statement - August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

At the end of an academic year with Covid19 resulting in school closures across the country, we, as all others, faced many new challenges.

In accordance with Government's requirements for all Governing Boards, the three strategic functions of the Sedbergh Primary School board are:

- **ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction**
- **holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school**
- **overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent**

Governance

The Governing Board met six times during the year, with meetings from March onwards held virtually using video conferencing. There are two main sub committees, 'Finance, Buildings and Resources' covering; budget, facilities, premises and Health and Safety, and 'Curriculum and Staffing' that examines our curriculum, pupil progress, safeguarding and staffing. Both committees meet at least once per term. As well as these, other committees meet as required, including the Pay Committee responsible for staffing issues such as Pay and Staff Performance.

We have individual Governors linked to all core subjects, as well as Governors responsible for Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Health and Safety, Secondary School Liaison and Early Years Foundation Stage. These Governors visit school at least termly to discuss with subject/area lead teachers the developments and the varying aspects associated with each area. No governor visits were made after February for biosecurity reasons though we have been kept fully informed of developments in school, including reviewing the Risk Assessment documentation regarding pupils returning to school. Details of specific governor roles and their attendance records can be found on the school website.

The Year 2019/2020

At the beginning of the year we received from the Department of Education a letter confirming that school performance has placed us in the top 3% of all Primary schools in England, a superb achievement by all at Sedbergh Primary School.

September through to February went according to plan, mixed year groups settled in with both teachers and pupils, pupils progress scores were as expected, fundraising for the 'Big Build' continued and then in February coronavirus reared its devastating head resulting in the closure of all schools across England in March.

The school remained open for the children of key workers and vulnerable children and involved, work in ensuring a biosafe environment. From early June, staff welcomed back children from 3 year groups as well, this increased the level of biosafe requirements and working practices required. Staff, as well as the school remaining open, have provided support in many ways to parents home schooling their children especially through educational materials and regular contact. They have done all of this whilst meeting the needs of their own families in lockdown and putting themselves at risk.

Governors are fully aware of the additional stress this has caused and we commend our Headteacher, Matt Towe and all staff on their professionalism, care and dedication to the pupils and their families, not only during this challenging time but throughout the year.

Governors would also like to thank parents and carers for their support of the school throughout this year. We admire the way you have dealt with these unprecedented and worrying times. There are many examples of the successes of home schooling reflecting the hard work of parents and their children. We appreciate your understanding of the pressures on the staff and thank you for your positive feedback in so many ways.

Future Plans

The coming academic year, starting in September, will provide many challenges for both teachers and pupils after such a protracted absence from face to face teaching. The decision has been made to revert back to single year group classes for years 3 to 6 inclusive, allowing the focus to be on the reconnection necessary for all children. Governors are in no doubt that, provided no further interruptions to school attendance occurs, all children will be on track with their educational development by the end of the school year if not before.

Regrettably, the planned 'Big Build' alterations have had to be delayed until next July due to Covid 19. During this summer break, the school has made some alterations to the main entrance brought about mainly due the necessary controls surrounding access to school and enhancing our biosecurity measures. Parent Apps has provided detailed information to all, especially during the past months. The new school website will be launched during September 2020, which is more user friendly with regard to all the information it contains.

We have reviewed our School Development Plan along with the Senior Leadership Team and we will ensure that our Vision and Strategic Direction, which are already well established, remains as central to the life of the school.

Our role is to support the school but also to monitor and evaluate its work as critical friends, during the latter half of last year our emphasis was firmly on supporting through the current challenges. For the new academic year our focus, as well as providing support, will also be in ensuring that, through regular reporting, the progress and attainment of all our pupils continues according to plans that have been developed for their futures. We have an excellent team of teachers and teaching assistants led by Matt Towe, our Headteacher, coupled with the benefits of having a great local community.

We always welcome suggestions and ideas from parents/carers. Please feel very welcome to contact me, Peter Irvine, Chair of Governors, via the school office or email at chair@sedbergh-pri.cumbria.sch.uk

Kind regards

Peter Irvine

Chair of Governors