

## ST WENN SCHOOL

### ANNUAL REPORT OF CHAIR OF GOVERNORS JUNE 2020

Due to Covid-19 the year 2019-2020 has been completely disrupted and not like any other year we have experienced. I will split the report into two halves, the year before March 23<sup>rd</sup> and after.

#### **Prior to Lockdown**

##### **Governance**

Governors' attendance was good, no meeting has had to be cancelled because of lack of numbers. We were pleased to welcome a new parent governor – Kate Messenger who has already been active in governor business. At the beginning of the year we restructured our committees. It has always been difficult to find meeting times that suit all the members so we decided to streamline our system. We have reduced the number of committees but their terms of reference have widened. We now have Finance; Resources which includes Premises and health & Safety; and Standards & Curriculum. These are chaired by different governors to offer experience across the Board and to allow for succession planning. All committees were active during the first half of the year. Governor responsibilities were adjusted to fit more closely with Ofsted requirements. New roles of Curriculum, Attendance, Wellbeing and School Council (child's voice) were introduced. A skills audit was carried out to ensure the Board is appropriately qualified and to help identify any gaps in expertise that might need to be addressed. New governors have attended induction training offered by County.

The financial situation is currently very healthy. Finance committee and the Head have been closely monitoring the budget with the result that the school ended the financial year with total reserves of £53,695 to carry forward and a capital budget of £4,878 for the coming year. As the allocation for 2020 has risen substantially the school has a very sound financial basis for this year.

Following the introduction of a new school Vision statement the previous year the Governors revised their strategy. This is implemented through the governor monitoring plan, which ensures that governors keep an eye on the School Development Plan. (For details see Governor Strategy and Governor Monitoring Planner). An impact statement has been drawn up to demonstrate the effect of the governors' work.

Much of the governors' time was spent on being 'Ofsted Ready' in preparation for the expected visit which never materialised due to school closures.

##### **Training**

- Introduction to governance for new governors – four governors
- Safeguarding Responsibilities of the Governing Body with Helen Trelease – Wellbeing governor and another
- Health & Safety level 2 –one governor
- Ofsted Ready – three governors
- CAPH Ofsted training – Chair of governors
- Child protection with Helen Trelease – one governor
- Webinar Child Protection – Headteacher
- Webinar Governance during Covid-19 – Chair of governors
- Webinar Addressing the Attainment Gap - Staff governor
- Webinar on the Curriculum – Chair of governors

- Webinar on Employment Issues during Covid-19 – Chair of governors
- Webinar on Succession Planning – Chair of governors

### **Safeguarding**

- Safeguarding policies are in place and updated annually.
- Governors are aware of Safeguarding Leads.
- Health & Safety inspections take place termly.
- The Single Central Record is monitored termly.
- All governors have benefitted from safeguarding training.

### **Effectiveness of the Governing Board**

Impact can be seen in the reports of monitoring visits. These have been tailored to the success criteria for the target areas. The visits themselves provide a challenge which has the effect of keeping the school focussed on objectives in the School Development Plan.

Standards and Curriculum committee monitors performance data termly.

Governors actively challenge the Head at FGB where the clerk records challenges in red to be easily identifiable. Action points are also recorded and followed up at the next meeting. Challenges are noted at committee meetings and in reports from governor visits.

For details of full impact see the Governors' Impact report 2019.

### **Covid-19**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March St Wenn like so many schools in the country closed. Vulnerable children and children of key workers were identified and have been contacted either daily or weekly by staff. They had not requested to come into school and were happy to home school.

Home learning kits were photocopied and distributed from day one with teachers often delivering in person. All government guidance was followed. Consequently, the Safeguarding Policy, Video Conferencing and Acceptable Use Policies were updated and discussed by staff and governors. On advice from our technical support company it was agreed to use Microsoft Teams for governor meetings. The Head has kept the Chair and Vice Chair fully informed of school arrangements at all times during Lockdown.

Following advice from the NGA Governors focussed on the essential issues – safeguarding, budget and staffing. So far we have had 2 virtual meetings. The first set a budget for the year and covered Safeguarding very thoroughly. There were no staffing issues. The second was an extraordinary meeting to approve the arrangements for opening the school after Lockdown. Governors had the opportunity to comment on and assist with the school's plans. At this meeting we expressed our total support for the staff. Governors are now working on a strategy to reduce the impact of the school closure on the disadvantaged.

Since Lockdown governor training has been in areas related to managing the school during a pandemic. The chair and staff governor have attended NGA sponsored webinars and governors have updated their IT skills.

Governors would like to express their appreciation to the staff for the impressive way they have handled Lockdown and the new 'norm' in school since its opening. Home schooling was tackled with imagination and zeal while personal contact was maintained with all children and their families.

Despite the difficulties of social distancing, the school since its return has been a happy and safe place of learning. Mrs Berry remained throughout a tower of strength and has led the school with inspiration through these difficult times.

I would also like to thank governors and clerk for the ready way in which they have adopted the new practices of virtual meetings and have been willing to embrace the new with enthusiasm. 2019-2020 has been a strange year for us all, but as usual St Wenn has emerged as strong a community as ever.

Tessa Cubitt June 2020