

# Horningsham School Governors Annual Statement to Parents



Horningsham School is a flourishing rural primary school on the Longleat Estate with an excellent record of academic achievement, enhanced by the availability of a wide range of educational experiences, many developed in partnership with Longleat. This report aims to describe the work of the Governing Body in the academic year 2023-24.

## Who we are

Horningsham School is a maintained school within the Wiltshire Local Authority. The Governing Body consists of two parent governors elected by the parents, a staff governor, six governors from the local community and the Headteacher. More about the governors can be found on the school's website.

## What we do

The Governors are responsible for:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction
- Holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent
- Ensuring the voice of stakeholders is heard

The governors also ensure that the school complies fully with statutory safeguarding procedures. Safeguarding covers health and safety in the classroom and the children's physical & emotional wellbeing. We regularly monitor processes and procedures to ensure all school staff have been safely recruited; made sure that training of staff is up to date and procedures followed to maintain a safe environment for our children. We review the safeguarding audit completed by school which provides assurance on the robustness of systems and procedures. The lead safeguarding governor is the Chair of Governors, Stephanie Storrar. She meets at least termly with the Headteacher to provide support, to confirm that procedures are in place and being followed to keep children safe, and to complete the annual safeguarding audit. All Governors have attended online safeguarding training delivered by the Local Authority. All staff and Governors receive Part 2 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and a link to the full version. The Single Central Record is managed by the Admin and Finance Officer and is monitored by the Acting Headteacher every half term.

In carrying out these responsibilities, governors work with our experienced, dedicated, and enthusiastic staff team to support and challenge ideas to ensure the children's educational experience and achievements are the best that they can be. The Governing Body continually seeks improvement in the provision of education at our school. We are outward looking and take a holistic approach when considering the development of all our children. Working closely with the Acting Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and all members of staff, we are constantly striving to improve and develop the school in all areas.

This aim of this report is to share the strategic work of the governing body in relation to school improvement and the discharge of statutory duties. The day-to-day management of the school is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the senior leadership team.

## How we organise our work

The Full Governing Body (FGB) meets four times a year. In between there are three subcommittees who meet as often as necessary to cover the tasks the governors are expected to do and report back on their work to the FGB.

- **Resources:** Works with the Headteacher and the School Administrator to draw up the budget and monitor the finances throughout the year. The Sub-committee also keeps an eye on the school's premises ensuring that improvements and maintenance are completed efficiently and cost-effectively. It also supports the Headteacher and staff in communicating with parents and the wider community, monitors the website and organises the annual parent survey
- **Standards:** Monitors the content of the school's curriculum and the attainment and progress of the children
- **Staffing:** Oversees the recruitment of staff and any issues relating to pay and conditions

In addition, most governors undertake individual responsibility for particular areas of the school's work – special educational needs, safeguarding, health and safety and curriculum areas of maths and English. This work involves visiting the school and spending time with staff and children to understand more fully how these important areas are being managed and led. All governors are volunteers and give willingly of their time to support the school. Attendance at both FGB and the Sub-committees is excellent and reported on the school website

## Impact of the Governing Body 2023-24

- **Clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction:** The School Development Plan (SDP) sets out the strategic aims and objectives for the year. The main targets for 2023-24 were to: develop a culture of writing for pleasure to raise standards (this target was a collaborative one shared by all the Compass Group schools), provide pupils and staff with the knowledge to keep themselves and others safe online, embed, promote and educate a whole school approach towards supporting mental health and wellbeing and develop and finalise curriculum mapping to ensure content and sequencing allows children to learn effectively and deepen their understanding of subjects. All activities within the plan are fully costed and included in the budget. The governing body have regularly reviewed the progress of actions in the School Development Plan through monitoring visits and discussion in meetings.
- **Holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils:** The Governors look regularly and closely at the data which covers the educational attainment and progress of our children. At the end of Reception 80% of our children achieved a Good Level of Development, 12.3% higher than the National figures and 10.9% higher than Wiltshire as a whole. 92.3% of our Year 1 children achieved a score of 32 and above in the phonics screening test compared with 80.2% of schools nationally and 80.6% of schools in Wiltshire. Our Year 6 children achieved highly in reading, maths and grammar with 100% achieving the expected standard and 40% achieving the higher standard in reading and 20% in maths. 80% of children achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, 23.7% higher than Wiltshire and 19.6% above national. The governors would like to thank all the staff for their passion and hard work in helping the children to achieve these results. The school will continue to focus on improving outcomes in maths and writing throughout the school. This year, the SDP will include targets to: build on the progress made in writing during 2023-24, further develop the curriculum provision, build on the capacity of the Compass Collaboration, create a culture of attendance being everyone's responsibility and enable strong leadership throughout the staff.
- **A rich educational experience:** Scores in tests are important, but not everything. We are very fortunate to be able to work with staff at Longleat who visit the school, as well as providing opportunities to visit the estate and take part in projects such as the acorn collecting and planting for the Reception and Year 6 children. The school also provides a truly rich and rewarding programme of visits, activities, and projects to enhance their creative curriculum. The governors would like to thank the Acting Headteacher and all the staff for their commitment and hard work in providing such a wonderful experience for our children.

- **The effective and efficient performance management of staff:** Governors have overseen the operation of the school's appraisal policy considering the results of appraisals carried out by the Acting Headteacher and agreed appropriate salary progression for eligible staff.
- **Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent:** The Resources committee has worked closely with school to monitor income and costs against the budget which we approved at the start of the year, to ensure that our financial resources have been best utilised for the benefit of the children. The school's finances are carefully monitored to ensure that we minimise the risk of any overspends, which is a challenging factor given the shortage of funding. Our school has also continued to benefit in a significant way from the generosity of the Longleat Estate, who are also our landlord. This year, Longleat have also worked with Wiltshire to remove two buildings which were no longer fit for purpose, making the playground larger and more accessible.
- **Ensuring the voice of stakeholders is heard:** Governors worked with staff to devise the parent questionnaire which was completed by 40% of families. 100% of parents who responded strongly agreed or agreed that: they felt welcome when making contact with school, they found it easy to approach the school with queries, their child felt safe and happy, they were being taught well, their personal development was supported, the school met their child's needs, and that there was a varied range of clubs and enrichment activities. The questionnaire gives parents the opportunity to identify areas that the school could improve. In 2023-2024 the identifiable actions were providing more tailored homework activities and for parents to have more opportunities to engage with school on varying days and times. School will also ensure that parents are regularly signposted to eSchools class pages so that parents are aware of what their child is learning in the classroom each week. Termly staff well-being surveys were also conducted to ensure that all members of staff could help us to evaluate what was working well and what needed to improve. As a result of the surveys the Acting Headteacher implemented several measures, including the opportunity to take well-being days and for PPA to be taken at home. Governors recognise the importance of ensuring that staff well-being remains a high priority. Governors also talk to children on monitoring visits and once a year the Lead Safeguarding Governor talks to School Council about how the school keeps them safe. School has also worked closely with FOHPs again this year to provide more events for parents and children. FOHPs raised £9000 in 2023-24 and is hoping to provide more events in 2024-25.

## The future

Horningsham is a popular school as evidenced by the numbers of parents keen to get places. This is thanks to the commitment, enthusiasm and experience of the Acting Headteacher and the staff team who have nurtured and developed a successful community school with a strong family feel where children feel valued and safe. Governors are aware of the falling birth rate and the possible impact on the numbers applying to school. We will work with the Acting Headteacher to ensure that the school is promoted effectively, so that prospective parents have a good understanding of what our school has to offer. We look forward to a productive year ahead and will continue to work with the Acting Headteacher and all the staff for the benefit of all the children, staff and the school community.

Stephanie Storrar  
Chair of Governors



*Information about the use of Pupil Premium and Sports Grant can be found on our website.*