

WHA Annual Governance Statement For Academic Year September 2016 to August 2017

This annual governance statement gives a brief overview of impact of the governing body over the last year. It is intentionally a brief summary, as activities are reported as they happen throughout the year via the school newsletter, school website and publication of the minutes from Governors meetings in the governor section of the school website. The governor section also contains details of the governors during this period, their attendance at meetings and their pecuniary interests, if any. The statement is organised around the three primary objectives of the governing body – Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school, holding the school to account for the educational performance of its pupils and ensuring the financial well-being of the school.

Attendance at Governors meetings during this period was 85% but it should be noted that given the relatively small numbers on the Governing Board, one Governor missing a meeting can have a more disproportionate affect on the overall attendance percentage. Governors have sought to recruit new members and while this has not been easy, they welcomed one new governor. More members will allow for the workload to be shared and will make for a more effective team. If you feel you have something to offer, please contact the clerk on clerk2@andaras.org

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

The governors have supported the Head of School to ensure that the vision and ethos of the school is maintained, and the improvement plan takes the school in the right direction and is always at the forefront of minds. The Chair met with the Head of School fortnightly to ensure everything was running smoothly and that the staff had the support they needed to deliver the learning required. They have challenged the communication with parents to ensure that every avenue is used to its full potential. Governors always keep the school vision and ethos in mind, and ensure they are content with the 'feel of the school' when they visit.

Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation of its pupils, and the performance management of staff

Governors have also spent time monitoring the progress of children throughout the school – this has been particularly important because of the national change in assessment systems. Through the school performance data, Ofsted Dashboard and RAISEonline, the governors were able to see how the children are performing and where there are issues that need support to address. The governors added value to the debate about school improvement and ensured the right areas are covered in the improvement plan. They have monitored progress of students and checked that the improvement plan is fit for purpose. They have continuously challenged the HoS about what is being done to address weaknesses in the data.

All governors visit the school as part of the monitoring of the School Improvement Plan and for specific subjects areas. Governors lead on specific subject areas so that they can form closer liaison with the subject leaders, teachers or pastoral staff. Feedback on all visits is given to the Head of School to be acted upon and/or briefed at the Governors meetings. In particular, PPG provision has been challenged to ensure consistency in attainment and where this has been found wanting, the HoS has been informed so that action can be taken. Other regular visits included subject area specific visits such as math mastery and the impact it is having or could have across the school. A governor has also been involved in art projects in the school to help demonstrate the impact of the art subjects. Regular safeguarding checks have been conducted to ensure the safety of the children, and governors have confirmed that 'my concern' is being used effectively and is covered on staff induction.

One governor reviewed the provision of RE which included the scheme of work and action plan alongside the WHA Religious Education policy. The governor also observed the external talk on alternative religions and was impressed by the way the children were able to observe the similarities between the various religions rather than the differences.

Policies have been checked and challenged to ensure they are fit for purpose on a rolling programme throughout the year. The governors have challenged key policies such as homework policies to ensure that the marking of homework is worthwhile and meaningful (from both a child's and teacher's perspective), and that assistance is given to parents when required, particularly in the EAL community. Two governors have worked on the home-school agreement to ensure it is a meaningful document and the detail is much tighter. Governors have monitored the discipline and behaviour policies to ensure they are implemented

consistently across the school. Finally, the governors challenged data protection to ensure that it meets the high standards required in a school.

Certain governors have taken the lead for monitoring staff performance management and appraisals, and being part of an interview panel that aimed to ensure the right staff are recruited. They challenged the change around of staff to ensure what is best for the children. They have also taken an interest in the performance management and expectations of the TAs in order to ensure it is implemented fairly and consistently, making sure they are valued for their contributions to the education and wellbeing of the children.

Governors have become familiar with the Visible Learning initiative and some have attended a training session. They insisted that it be added to the agenda as a regular item in order that they can ensure it is delivering results given the costs that are involved in training the staff. They have continually challenged the implementation and progress of this initiative. Early days, but it is having a positive impact on the childrens' learning so far.

Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

Pressure on school budgets is greater than ever and as WHA is part of the An Daras MAT, the central team completes much of the budget planning. While the governors have less control with setting the budget, they are still expected to monitor the spending and ensure it is spent appropriately for the school to deliver results within budget, as well as apply pressure when additional funds are required for key work such as infrastructure repair or renovation.

The governors have supported the proposals for building repairs and maintenance to ensure the school remained fit for purpose. In particular they have lent support for the renovation of the Yr F Horsa Hut. Governors have also challenged funding for security and safety at the school entrance and gate, and dead ground behind the school in order to ensure to continued safety of the children.

Governors have monitored the spending plans for PE and PPG to ensure the funds are spent appropriately. A PE impact report was produced that looked at funding, equipment and activities, and the effect that they had. A governor has monitored and assessed the breakfast club to ensure it is financially viable.