

Priors Field Primary School

Governors' Annual Report to Parents

Autumn Term 2019

Message from the Chair

To the parents and carers of Priors Field Primary School, the aim of this report is to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Governing Body over the last school year in improving educational outcomes for children. It is also an opportunity for us to share some of our highlights.

As governors we recognise the strong commitment of all staff at Priors Field in contributing to the continuing progress and improvement of the school.

If you have any comments or questions on what you read in this report, we welcome your feedback. You can speak to any of the parent governors in the playground or contact us via the school office.

Ofsted Inspection Result

We are delighted following our Ofsted inspection on the 16th and 17th October that Priors Field is a good school.

This is especially pleasing as we were one of the first schools in Warwickshire to be inspected under the new framework. This new framework has a greater focus on the quality of education ensuring all pupils are given the best opportunities from EYFS to Year 6 through a curriculum that is broad, rich and deep.

Many thanks to you, our parents and carers, for completing the parent view survey. The ratings and feedback are an important aspect of the inspection and submissions were reviewed by the inspector.

Also many thanks to the pupils. It is their opinions, activities, teamwork, curiosity and enthusiasm for school life at Priors Field that gave the best evidence to the Ofsted inspector of how good a school we are.

As governors, we pay close attention to the opportunities for improvement identified in the report. Specifically, these were improvements to Reading:

- Early year's phonics and need to provide well-matched home-school reading books.
- Developing home-school links to ensure the school's approach to reading is clear to parents

Reading had already been identified as a priority in our school development plan this year and these Ofsted recommendations will be incorporated.

This year we will continue to ensure that our curriculum is broad (a wide range of subjects) and balanced (that they are covered in appropriate depth) with a strong impact on pupil outcomes.

We will also be focused on further refinement of our growth mind-set, resilience, behaviour and well-being approaches to ensure they effectively underpin school life and achievement.

School Decisions

As governors we endeavour to make the best decisions for the benefit of our whole school community: pupils, staff, parents and carers, and the local community.

Recent decisions communicated by the school, such as the promotion of healthy eating choices to pupils at some events, and parking arrangements in and around the school grounds, are a result of decisions made by the whole school leadership team.

2018 / 2019 Highlights

Last year, the focus in our school development plan was on the development of Subject Leaders, Maths, Writing in Greater Depth, and our Early Years provision.

Pupil Outcomes

Key Stage 2 SATS results

We are very pleased with the Key Stage 2 SATS results where at least 85% of pupils achieved the expected standard in writing, mathematics and GPS (grammar, punctuation and spelling). The results in reading (77%) and combined (69%) were both 4% above the national average. Overall, there was a reduction in the percentage achieving Greater Depth across reading, writing, mathematics, GPS and combined. This will be an area for improvement in this year's school development plan.

Progress for Key Stage 2 SATS is good, particularly for writing, and we are placed securely in the 'average' category for Reading, Writing and Maths when compared to other schools nationally.

Key Stage 1 SATS results

We are also very pleased with the results of the Key Stage 1 SATS tests. There were improvements in the percentage obtaining the Expected Standard in writing, mathematics and combined. 35% achieved greater depth in reading – a 5% increase over last year.

As with KS2, there will be a focus on improving greater depth results this year.

Phonics

The percentage of year 1 achieving the phonics screening checks increased again in 2019 to 93%.

Early Years

In Reception, 80% of pupils achieved a good level of development. We believe our EYFS provision to be outstanding when assessed against the Ofsted criteria.

Looking forward to this year

We fully support the school leadership and staff as they settle into leading their new classes. The school development plan continues to build on the successes of last year. Specific focus now on increasing the skills and knowledge of our pupils to achieve greater depth, address any gender gap and diminish the difference with our pupil premium support within the school.

Keeping children safe

Keeping children safe is the top priority of governors and senior leadership at Priors Field. We have a named lead governor for safeguarding (David Russell) all governors receive regular safeguarding training and a number have undertaken specific training on safer recruitment. We carry out routine monitoring of the school's safeguarding procedures, and regularly review child protection and other relevant policies to ensure they reflect the latest legislation and good practice. David Russell and Lindsey Popplewell are our lead health and safety governors who work with the School Business Manager to ensure rigorous health and safety practices are in place.

If you do have any concerns regarding the safety of children at Priors Field School, we would strongly encourage you to raise these with Mrs Gane and, where appropriate, the Chair of Governors or relevant lead governor.

Vision and behaviour

We have also been monitoring to see how well our school vision is being embedded, two years since it was launched. The words in our vision tree encapsulate the culture and ethos we want to see at Priors Field and we have seen plenty of evidence of our vision being brought to life in different aspects of school life.

Each week parents and carers will see a 'word of the week' profiled in the school newsletter and, when you come into school, the vision is hard to miss, with displays and examples highlighted in classrooms and around the school. It is used to inspire positive learning and social behaviours in school as well as a guide for restorative conversations when mistakes are made.

This year, governors were really impressed by the hard work of the Vision Detectives who help their classmates think about what the vision 'word of the week' means and shared with us many examples of where they have seen the vision being put into practice. We were delighted to award a new Priors Field Vision Ambassador cup to one of the Year 6 leavers, Emily, who had exemplified the school vision and ethos during her time at Priors Field. We look forward to awarding the cup to one of this year's Year 6 next summer.

Our 'growth mind-set' approach and 'restorative justice' behaviour policy both very much reflect our school ethos, and we have seen real evidence of the impact of these approaches in developing children who are resilient, motivated, aspirational, responsible, enthusiastic, caring and, above all, happy at Priors Field.

Finance

The school is predominantly funded by the Local Authority through the national funding arrangement. For 2019-20 this is set at a minimum of £3500 per child per annum, with additional funds made available to support individual needs, or drive particular initiatives for the example the PE Grant used exclusively on improving access to sport and sport equipment. We are pleased to report that the PE Grant is continuing in 2019/20.

We have managed to "balance the books" and closed the year with a small surplus. As you will be aware the funding is very tight and unfilled spaces on the pupil roll impact adversely on our ability to match our cost to revenue.

Nearly all of the income goes on staffing and maintaining the premises. Last year the Head and staff worked extremely flexibly to avoid excessive agency cost. We were frustrated that we were unable to secure funding to refurbish the toilets and changing rooms. This remains a priority and we are well aware that the existing arrangements are not pleasant.

We are grateful to the generosity of parents, both directly and through the PTA, enabling us to continue to invest in new technology to support the education and learning at school.

Our school in the community

Governors have worked with parents and the wider community on some key issues this year:

Pre-school

We have continued to press the local authority to secure pre-school provision on our school site. The local authority is now working with a local provider to actively pursue a business case for future pre-school provision on the site.

Playground

As governors we are acutely aware that the adventure play area is no longer fit for purpose, and a small working party has been meeting through the year to progress plans for refurbishment of the school playground. This has included consultation with children and parents about what they would like to see in the playground, and a homework project to design the new playground which resulted in some fantastic ideas and concepts. We used all of this as the basis for a brief for potential playground companies, and have met with several and asked them to submit outline designs and costs. We've already had some exciting designs put forward and are now beginning to prepare funding bids and make fundraising plans. It's not a small task and we think the most likely timescale for completion is next summer, but from the early indications we are confident it will be worth the wait!

Baginton Bus: We have lobbied councillors to urge them to reconsider the changes to the Home to School Transport policy. These changes mean that from September 2019 new pupils who register for Priors Field Primary School and who live in Baginton will no longer be eligible for free home to school transport if there is a space at a Warwickshire school closer to their home. There has been a significant campaign by parents on this and we recognise that this has caused distress in our school community, both for Baginton families and the wider school community, where we all feel a strong connection to this unique arrangement.

We have been informed by WCC that from September 2020 any **new** Baginton child joining Priors Field Primary School will not receive funding for the bus service. This is due to the financial cuts that WCC are having to make with school transport.

The commitment and support of parents and the wider community at Priors Field is an enormous strength of our school, and we know that this has been instrumental in achieving these positive outcomes for this year.

Who are the governors and what do they do?

The purpose of the governing body is to provide strong strategic leadership for the school and to ensure educational and financial accountability. There are three core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction through the delivery of school action plan.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

We do this in a number of ways at Priors Field;

- We meet as a full governing body, and in various committees, regularly throughout the year.
- We carry out monitoring visits in school with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders.
- We visit to monitor health and safety, safeguarding arrangements and financial management.
- We visit to talk to pupils and listen to their opinions.
- We monitor feedback from the annual surveys of pupils, staff and parents.
- We invite external educational experts and leaders from other schools to feedback on us as a school.

The Governing Body includes staff, parents and people from the local community and beyond – all keen to make a difference to the life of our school and working together to help improve outcomes for the children. There are currently twelve members, with experience in accounting and financial services, school business management, project and change management, assessment, legal, early years, teaching and coaching. We carry out skills audits of the governing body regularly to ensure we have broad coverage of all areas.

Last year two new governors joined the school, Lindsey Popplewell and Michelle Scott.

“My first year as a governor has been both challenging and rewarding. It has been a steep learning curve that has involved training, lots of reading, attempting to understand anagrams and studying and unpicking data. I enjoyed my school days and despite coming from a disadvantaged background, I managed to achieve educationally. Gaining a good education provided me with opportunities that I otherwise may not have had. To have an impact on the next generation is something of great value, and I wanted to contribute in shaping children’s futures in a small way. I have attempted to use the skills and experience I have gained from working within Higher Education and the NHS and bring this to the governing body. I am looking forward to really getting to know the school over the next few years so that I can more effectively and strategically serve the school and children to the best of my ability.”

Michelle Scott

Like Michelle, the last 12 months have been a steep learning curve, but I’m gradually getting to grips with the policies and procedures and learning all about what it is to be a school governor.

I changed my career path some 3 years ago to take on a role working less hours and wanted to use some of my new found free time to give something back to the community.

My background is in legal compliance and governance in the business sector and I’ve found that this previous experience has really helped me with my responsibilities as a Priors Field governor.

As a non-parent governor, it has been important for me to spend some time in school and over the past year I have visited to help monitor during the SATs and also for the Local Authority Health and Safety audit. I have been really impressed by the behaviour of the children in their interactions with staff and how polite and respectful they are to one another whilst still having lots of fun!

My kids are now young adults and have flown the nest and I’m hoping that in my role as a governor, I can help the next generation of Priors Field children be the best they can. I feel very proud to be part of Priors Field and I’m really looking forward to the next few years.

Lindsey Popplewell