

Priors Field Primary School

Governors' Annual Report to Parents

September 2018

Message from the Chair

This is our second annual report to parents and an opportunity to share with everyone in our school community some of the work we are involved in and our highlights from the 2017/18 school year. As I step down as Chair of Governors, it has been good to reflect on progress made and celebrate some real achievements over the past year.

As a governing body, we took an afternoon out at the end of last term to review where we are as a school and as a board of governors and think about what we want to do more of, and what are our priorities for the year ahead. We have tried to capture some of this in our report.

As always, if you have any suggestions or comments on what you read here, we would like to hear from you: feel free to contact our new Chair, Beth Milner (email: milner.b@welearn365.com) or speak to me, or any of the parent governors, in the playground.

School Leadership

We welcomed Mrs Gane as our new Headteacher last September and have enjoyed working with her in what has been a very smooth transition. Mrs Braley, in the new role of Deputy Head Teacher, has worked strategically with Mrs Gane to ensure the strengths of the school are maintained and continue to develop.

We are now looking to improve the middle leadership at Priors Field, with the appointment of Mr Marsh as Maths Leader, and additional investment in leadership of English, Early Years and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

School Vision

Just over a year ago, our new school vision was launched. As governors, we have been working with the senior leadership team to make the vision real. We think that the words in our vision tree encapsulate the culture and ethos we want to see at Priors Field and in our monitoring activities; we have been encouraged to see how the vision is being embedded in the school.



'Vision in action' days have been well-supported and when we have visited school, children of all ages have talked to us about what the words in the vision mean for them. At the end of last term we celebrated with new awards recognising children who had lived out the school vision through the year, and we plan to add an annual governors' award next year for a child who stands out as having exemplified our school vision during their time at Priors Field.

Our 'growth mindset' 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.

Finances

As we explained last year, most of the local authority funding the school receives goes on staffing and maintaining the premises. Despite the in-year staff changes we experienced and the costs that came with this, we still managed within our budget and the school closed 2017/18 with a small surplus which is carried forward into 2018/19. We were pleased that the designated PE funding continued this year, enabling us to support the children with dedicated staffing and new equipment and activities.

There are always a lot of projects we would like to carry out to improve the school facilities, but we are only budgeted £6k capital per annum. This year we had to replace our IT Server and have refurbished the staff room. The Governors are so grateful for the support from parents, both through the PTA and a number of employer schemes, that enables bigger investments in the school and grounds. The Edwards Trust funded the hall improvements including a new stage, IT/sound system and blinds and curtains. Reception has also benefitted from a new outdoor canopy and resources to support the Early Years provision. This investment has made these areas so much better.

We have ambitions to replace the adventure playground equipment, but that is estimated to cost around £30k so will certainly require us to find another grant or source of funding. We will be setting up a working party to look at this, so if you have any ideas or contacts, please get in touch with Mrs Gane or one of the parent Governors.

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, but all governors receive 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. We also have a lead health and safety governor who works with the School Business Manager to ensure rigorous health and safety practices are in place.

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

Pupil performance

2018 Key Stage 2 SATS results

We are delighted with the KS2 SATS results this year which show that 83% of pupils achieved the expected standard or higher in the individual subjects of Reading, Writing, Maths and GPS (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling). The overall combined score of those children achieving the expected standard across all subjects has risen slightly from last year to 77%, which is 13% above the national average. These results were accurately predicted by the school, which indicates that our systems for tracking the attainment and progress of children throughout the year are working well.

2018 Key Stage 1 and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The KS1 results show an increase in the number of children working both at the expected standard, and at greater depth, in all three areas (Reading, Writing and Maths). We are particularly pleased with the Maths score of 83% for those working at the expected standard which represents a 13% rise from last year, and the fact that scores in all subjects are above the national average.

The percentage of Year 1 children achieving the phonics screening checks increased from 83% to 90% this year, and in the EYFS, in line with 2017, 77% of children achieved a 'good level of development' at the end of Reception.

2018/19 priorities

Following the successful year on year increase in Maths progress scores over the last three years, we will focus on continuing this trend with our new Maths leader in post. We are also targeting an increase in attainment at greater depth in Writing by the end of Key Stage 1 and will be working to ensure that our monitoring activities are robust and consistently applied.

Parent survey

We had a record response to our parent survey last year – the simple online format seemed to be well received. The positive feedback reinforced our view of the strengths of the school and the outcomes and comments were very useful in guiding our decisions. It is our intention to repeat the survey again this year, and we look forward to hearing what you have to say.

Our school in the community

The commitment and support of parents and the wider community at Priors Field is an enormous strength of our school, most visible in the fantastic events we enjoy throughout the year, from the summer fair to the autumn 'outdoor fun evening' in our wonderful Environmental Area, and so much more besides. Governors have worked with parents and the wider community on some key issues this year:

- **Polling Station:** We were delighted to be informed that the campaign by parents and governors against the continued use of Priors Field as a polling station has been successful and school will no longer have to close on polling days. We think this will have a real impact on our children's learning.
- **School crossing patrol:** We joined with parents to push the Council to address, as a matter of urgency, the safety of our children as they cross Clinton Lane. We have seen real progress with plans for installation of a Puffin Crossing now being consulted on. In the meantime, we are grateful to the PTA and the Town Council for supporting the purchase of temporary signs to help alert drivers to the presence of the school.
- **Pre-school:** We have continued to press the local authority to secure pre-school provision on our school site. Unfortunately, the existing pre-school facility was unviable for future use and so, over the summer holiday, it was removed. The local authority are now working with a local provider to actively pursue a business case for future pre-school provision on the site. In the meantime, we are looking to make the most of the vacant area as additional play space for our younger children.

About the Governors

Our governors bring a wide range of experiences and expertise to the role. 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. We provide support and challenge to the school in its journey towards excellence through our core functions as governors:

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

We were sorry to say farewell to Bob Kelly and Richard Elliott (see below), who stepped down as governors at the end of last term. We are grateful to them for all the time and effort they have put into Priors Field as governors. This term we are pleased to welcome two new governors: Lindsey Popplewell, is joining us as a Local Authority governor and Michelle Scott, as a co-opted governor. We are excited by the new skills and experiences they bring to the governing body.

Richard Elliott: reflections on 10 years as a governor

When I applied to be a governor, probably like many parents, I had very little knowledge of what happens behind the school gates, which was one of my reasons to apply. During the past 10 years, I have worked with four Head Teachers, many fellow governors, and numerous staff members, all of whom had the same desire to have a positive impact on the pupils within the school.

The highlights for me have been

- involvement in the recruitment of the Head, which is time consuming, but essential to make sure the right person is appointed.
- seeing the school continue to improve.
- seeing the children grow into young people ready to take the next step in their education.
- the people – I include everyone who works at the school in this, the welcome you receive into the 'Priors Field' community, and the welcome from the children when you go into school.

The most difficult part of the role is trying to keep up to date on the acronyms, that change annually, from a LIP, to a RIP to a RAP (that should make sense to governors!), and the continuous changes to the curriculum and Ofsted.

Overall, the past 10 years have been enjoyable, educational and satisfying, and there is an element of sadness in leaving, but the time was right to bow out, with the school in good hands and continuing to improve.

More information about who the governors are and what they do can be found on the [school website](#).