

Hannah Ball School

Governor Impact Statement 2020 - 21

Despite the many issues and impact of Covid-19, school and governor development progressed during the 20/ 21 academic year.

Hannah Ball School was rated “Requires Improvement” by Ofsted during their inspection in December 2017. The Governing Body, together with the school leadership team, have been working continuously since then to address both the identified areas of weakness and to put in place exciting new initiatives to improve the education and outcomes for all.

The ten-strong Governing Board has 3 core functions.

- Establishing the strategic direction of the school
- Ensuring accountability
- Ensuring financial probity

Following a 2018 external review of governance, many changes were implemented. Four new governor recruits have brought added skills and experience to the team. The board has received training on Effective governance, Financial Management, Equalities, Child Protection and Safer Recruitment to develop and increase their knowledge and skills. The school has also welcomed additional support from partner schools and Buckinghamshire Council and has actively sought views and feedback from parents, staff and pupils through annual surveys and discussions. Improvements to the effectiveness and impact of governance were formally assessed and commended by an external adviser in December 2020.

1. Establishing the strategic direction of the school

It is a key responsibility of the governing body to determine the school vision and to ensure objectives, plans and resources are in place to support the school in achieving it. There has been a governor-wide review of the vision, values and ethos following feedback from staff, pupils and parents and the board believes it is now in a stronger place post-Covid to deliver its goals. Hannah Ball is a very inclusive school and strives to ensure as many of the physical barriers to learning are removed. This may include getting to school on time, being appropriately dressed and equipped, or being able to fully participate in the enriched curriculum. The pandemic has widened the gap in attainment that had started to close and the school has identified pastoral, behavioural, training and resource needs to address the issues. Of concern is the low starting points of new pupils and the reading support from parents/ carers.

The detailed School Development Plan identifies key areas of improvement and when and by whom the actions need to be achieved. All activities are costed and are rigorously monitored in committee meetings. In 20/21 a new SLT was put in place and SEND leadership was reinforced. The school has had a largely stable staff team and their mentoring, coaching and development has been a key priority. The focus has also been on the long-term development of an inspiring, comprehensive and accessible curriculum going forwards and much progress has been made in this area.

2. Ensuring Accountability

In addition to clerked full governing body meetings, the board has three committees to enable sharp focus on the school strategic priorities. All governors participate in at least one of Curriculum and Standards (including SEND, Pupil Premium and sports premium); Resources (including H&S and Premises); Pay and Personnel (including Pay Review) each committee has clear terms of reference; reviews, implements and monitors specific policies and procedures relating to its remit; and asks for and receives reports from external sources, visiting governors and school leaders. Meeting attendance and monitoring visits can be found on the school website.

All staff participate in a performance management programme and the anonymised conclusions are presented to the governor Pay Review committee annually.

During the last year there has been a specific emphasis on the risks and impact of Covid and lockdown on the quality of teaching and learning. The school has remained open throughout for vulnerable children and has purchased, used and trained staff, pupils (and parents) in a variety of new and existing curriculum packages. Meetings and monitoring visits have continued in a virtual format.

Progress amongst key vulnerable groups has not been satisfactory and has been a focus for all committees. Staffing and curriculum resources have been addressed to support accelerated learning. Pupil attendance, particularly amongst vulnerable groups has been identified as a significant barrier to progress and will continue to be a key priority. Quality First teaching, interventions and catch-up programmes are in place.

The Safeguarding Governor has met regularly with the headteacher and admin staff to ensure all safeguarding policies and practices are compliant including the Single Central Record, which records that all adults working with the children have an enhanced DBS and are fully aware of KCSiE. Reports go to all governors.

3. Ensuring financial probity

The annual school budget is related to the number of pupils on roll and the specific needs of some children. In 2020/ 21 additional funding was allocated to the school for Special Educational Needs; Covid catch-up; Pupil Premium and sports funding. Details of expenditure and impact of the last three can be found on the school website.

The Resources committee is delegated with setting and monitoring a 3-year budget and ensuring that the expenditure delivers the school's objectives as well as paying staff and ensuring a safe environment. The school has completed its SFVS return and received a good grading from the last external audit. It also benchmarks against other local schools. Hannah Ball currently has a budget surplus and governors have directed additional expenditure to support an enriched curriculum development and resources; improvements in the quality of teaching and in-class support; IT equipment for pupils and staff to deliver remote learning and a significant capital programme to upgrade outside learning areas and H&S issues.

Moving forward the school has undertaken a staff consultation and re-structure to support future education needs, particularly for pupil attendance and mental well-being. It will undertake a conversion of an onsite ex-caretaker's house into a creative curriculum and PPA hub. This is part of a 3-year development programme. Increasing NOR to 210 remains a priority.