

Felpham Community College

Annual Governance Statement from the Governing Body

This statement provides information on the governance arrangements in place and gives an assessment of the effectiveness and impact for the academic year 2022-2023.

After the disruption of the pandemic years, this has been a normal year with face-to-face activities to ensure governors continue to provide oversight and scrutiny of school issues. This has included full governing body meetings, visits, working parties, and briefings been held.

1. Governance arrangements

1.1. **Structure** – the governing body works through a monthly full governing body meeting without sub committees. With 10 governors involved, the format works well, and all governors are engaged in discussions on all aspects of the school governance. This gives good responsiveness and focus at meetings.

1.2. **Skills based approach** – an annual skills audit is conducted to map governor skills against those required by a high performing governing body and to help frame the governor training programme.

1.3. **Monitoring of school performance** – governors oversee individual thematic areas which cover:

- Careers
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Finance
- Inclusion and Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Curriculum and Pupil Premium
- 6th Form
- Health and Safety
- Mental Health and Wellbeing

Visit information and reports are shared and discussed between governors.

In addition, an annual Governors Day was held in April 2022 where governors spend the day in school together assessing the teaching environment across the school and discussing this with the senior leadership team.

1.4. **Task and finish groups (TFG)** – small groups of governors continue to conduct in depth exploration of issues. This year they include the four strategic priorities identified for closer examination by governors:

- **Strategy and visioning** - working with the leadership team to develop and monitor priorities and the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- **Music and drama** – reviewing the approach to these subjects, leading to a five-year plan for the Year 7-11 student journey.
- **Basics 4/5+ (Eng/maths) attainment** – developing a strategy for improving English and maths outcomes whilst retaining the broader educational experience.
- **GCSE 8/9** - exploring an increase in curriculum options from 8 to 9.
- **Measures of success** – identifying the unique features in the school experience and mapping these against the school's vision and values.

1.5. **Panels** – the governors have a number of ad-hoc working panels. These include:

- Governors Pay Committee – dealing with staff performance and pay issues

- Governors Performance Management Group – dealing with the Headteachers performance management arrangements.
- Discipline Panel – to consider any proposed permanent exclusions of students.

1.6. **Health and Safety & Audit Monitoring Group** – This group meets periodically to review and prioritise Health & Safety actions and receive progress updates. They also provide monitoring of all statutory audits covering finance and safety, to ensure implementation of actions, and to make recommendations on resource allocation to meet emerging needs.

2. The effectiveness and impact of the governing body

2.1. Most of the work of the governing body is addressed at:

- ensuring delivery of the vision, ethos and strategies of the school
- holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of students
- overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

Issues of note that highlight where the governing body have made most impact include over the year are:

2.2. **Mental Health and Wellbeing** – governors have maintained a focus throughout the year of mental health and wellbeing issues. A mental health audit was used to enhance the existing support provision, including appointing an additional member of staff, and the introduction of student “resilience ambassadors”.

2.3. **Specialist Support Centre** – governors have been involved with the development of a new facility which will meet some of the educational provision for Special Educational Needs students. The new building is currently under construction with occupation scheduled for early 2024.

2.4. **School Improvement Plan (SIP)** - this is the business plan that sets out the priorities for action and investment during the year. It also provides the framework for departmental Curriculum Plans. It is a crucially important document and governors have been engaged with it from the initial drafting stage and throughout the year monitoring it to the end of year sign off. It has given a robust structure to the school planning.

2.5. **Quality of the curriculum and teaching** – governors have had a continuous focus on ensuring there is a broad and balanced curriculum, combined with high quality and inspirational teaching. They focussed on the curriculum plan being delivered, CPD and the implementation of the Felpham 5 approach which provides a cultural approach to CPD.

2.6. **Progress to targets** – throughout the year governors receive detailed explanations of the progress students are making towards their expected targets. Governors are particularly keen to raise the expectations of students and set them stretching targets that encourage the best progress and performance. Governors kept a close sight on overall targets and the number of students being targeted and offered extra support. They monitored current data on ‘disadvantaged students’ and looked at evidence to show a continual narrowing of the gap between boys/girls and for other user-defined groups [nationally defined groupings of students within the school]. They looked at trend indicators in existing data from both internal and national sources. This allows governors to consider changes and to make improvements mid-year which will benefit students and their eventual results.

2.7. **Safeguarding** – Safeguarding has a high profile with governors and is discussed at most meetings supported by structured periodic and annual reports.

2.8. **Pupil Premium** – this funding is used to deliver specific curriculum initiatives and extra support for eligible students and makes a positive difference to the progress of students.

Governors have maintained a close interest in: the programmes and interventions; the cost set against outcomes produced; and the whole class benefit of correct interventions. Particular attention was given to the progress and examination results of Pupil Premium and other defined student grouping. This has allowed governors to be assured how well these students are doing in making the progress expected.

2.9. **School Uniform** – the arrangement for school uniform have been reviewed to ensure compliance with new Government policy and to ensure the standard continues to meet the needs of the school.

2.10. **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)** – Governors monitor the implications of SEND requirements on the school to ensure students can access support and achieve well. The governor with SEND responsibilities has maintained a close oversight and governors have closely followed individual cases and the accessibility plan to monitor the impact of measures taken. Through this, governors are ensuring that all students can enjoy a rewarding educational experience.

2.11. **Resources** – Governors are involved in gaining the best from the resources of the school, covering finance, human resources and the premises. This includes:

For finance - there are regular meetings between the finance link governor, the Headteacher and the business manager. In addition, governors received detailed information on the proposals for spending and the progress of the budget throughout the year. Budgets are forecast three years ahead and spending plans are linked more closely to the priorities of the School Improvement Plan. Benchmarking reports are received to compare with similar schools. The budget outturn for 2022-23 produced a small surplus and the projected budget for 2023-24 showed continuing good financial health. There are good levels of delegation to the leadership team and budget holders to make the best use of the available funding. Through this involvement governors have maintained a very sharp focus on the state of finances.

For human resources – governors monitored closely: staff vacancies; the rates of sickness amongst teaching and associate staff; and the performance management arrangements for teaching staff. This means they have a good strategic understanding about the application of human relations policies within the school and their importance.

For premises – the quality of the school buildings has been kept under review with governors receiving reports on proposed and actioned changes and conducting site visits. This has helped maintain the older buildings in a good condition, allowed improvements to be with the new stock, and has allowed the students and staff to benefit from an improved environment.

For health & safety – governors have maintained the focus on having risk assessments in place and receiving reports on injuries, accidents and potential risks. They have taken a close interest in planned trips out of school and the measures put in place to ensure they are delivered safely. This means that Health and Safety issues are given due consideration to help secure a safe educational environment.

2.12. **Headteacher appointment** – Governors devoted considerable time to secure the appointment of the right Headteacher to replace Mr Mark Anstiss on his retirement after 10 years in post. Governors were pleased to appoint Mrs Suzanne Pike with effective from September 2023.