

Annual Governors Statement February 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends,

The last twelve months has certainly flown by and it only seems a short time ago that we were reporting on the Governance of the school for last year. For me this emphasises how time passes so quickly whatever our age.

In September the new school year starts, with new children in Reception and children, staff and parents adjusting to new classes, new faces, different staff and new routines. Suddenly Christmas is upon us and as we wish for warmer days and lighter mornings and evenings, we soon find we are running through the spring and fast into the summer break.

Life is certainly busy and challenging with the increasing and concerning events in the wider world and within the UK, impacting on all our lives and our thinking. With a great deal to be achieved in a short space of time, as politicians are constantly reminding us, and time to learn and consolidate, to think and reflect the time to just be children, appears to have become a concession rather than a given for the present generation of pupils in schools. Constant changes in practice and expectations for school staff, pupils and Governance continues to move at a very fast pace and as Governors we all have a great deal of respect and praise for the continued commitment to children which is exhibited by the headteacher, her dedicated staff and all those involved with Chapmanslade School.

When parents are asked what they want for their children, the answer usually given is “to be happy”. As Governors we are truly privileged to be able to see children in a variety of situations at and around the school, and the constant factors that shine out are how happy and comfortable they are within their school community, how kind and thoughtful they are to each other and to adults who visit the school, how engaged they are in their learning, how much ownership they have of their own learning, how confident they are and how they are nurtured and supported by all the adults in the school. This is a community in which there is an enthusiasm for learning, both pupils and staff and one in which each individual is valued for being themselves and for a wide variety of strengths. We recognise that the role of parents in their children’s education has a big impact on their learning and are grateful for the time you give to supporting your child/ children in helping them to achieve their goals. Your partnership in their education is greatly appreciated as is your support in helping the school to enable the children to be the very best version of themselves that they can be.

As Governors we are expected to understand the impact of the teaching on children’s progress and outcomes throughout their time at the school and also be aware of their achievements when they leave the school. There is no formal mechanism for achieving this latter aspect. However, communications between Governors and the school leaders and receiving schools is strong and this, together with verbal feedback from parents, enables us to know that Chapmanslade children do make good progress and are well able to build on the foundation blocks they have been given, within their new learning environments.

As Governors we have opportunities to visit the school, see the children at work in their classrooms, be with them at lunchtime, join them in collective worship, talk with them about the work in their books, discuss their attitudes to learning, their likes and dislikes and sit in on conversations where staff talk about pupils’ progress. Some of our Governors are also members of the church community who lead “Open the Book” worship and lead collective worship. Other tasks in school can be varied from volunteering for listening to readers, to playing Games at lunch time, supporting whole school activities and to monitoring the safeguarding procedures in the school and the safety of the school environment. All these, whilst great fun, are also opportunities for us to gather an understanding of how the school functions, how well the pupils engage in tasks, to understand their motivation and enthusiasm and to ensure that the provision for all pupils is of a good standard.

Since September the prescribed approach to the curriculum, aims to embed knowledge and skills and enable all children to succeed understanding and applying how learning links across many aspects. The Government mantra when the 2000 Curriculum was introduced was “broad and balanced.” Changes over time since then have focused on standards in core subjects – English and Maths, leading to a narrower curriculum and a data

Annual Governors Statement February 2020

driven agenda. The latest review focused on what works in successful schools and led to the latest change in the Ofsted Framework and is refocused on embedding learning, enabling retention of knowledge and skills and ensuring that skills developed in core subjects are used within a wider curriculum. This is learning for life and there is no doubt that the children in Chapmanslade School continue to be given the opportunities to succeed both at academic and personal levels.

The Governors are also accountable for ensuring that funding is well spent by the school. The school runs on a relatively low budget and the extra ring-fenced grant for Sport Activities has enabled a wide range of physical activities to enable strong pupil participation in and out of school. This funding is not guaranteed to continue in the future but has enabled all pupils to engage more fully in daily outdoor activities including the daily mile. This physical activity also impacts on their ability to focus on the more academic challenges that they experience within the classroom. Some funding towards building improvements have also been accessed from the Diocese. Internal refurbishments are now complete for all classrooms and the new fencing has ensured greater security for pupils. There has been a greater need for supply staff over the last year and the school is very fortunate in being able to find high quality staff who have been prepared to work for extended periods of time. We are grateful for their commitment to the school and the pupils and for the hard work of the Headteacher and staff.

During last year the Governing Body continued with a strong team of Governors, with a wide range of skills to complement the work of the Governing Body. Two Foundation Governors renewed their training with the Diocese and the Foundation Governance and Academy Trusts Adviser, worked with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the school to discuss and understand the Churches Vision for Education and how together we can support the Christian ethos and values and how these can be developed throughout the pupils learning and in our own roles.

The Christian Values which the school focuses on and links within their learning are very evident throughout the school day and Governors in their discussions with pupils are fortunate to be able to experience those special moments, where care and thoughtfulness for others is very evident.

Recently the Foundation Governance and Academy Trusts Adviser, asked if the pupils at Chapmanslade could be involved in painting pebbles which would be given to Foundation Governors at a service of commissioning following their training. Three Governors worked with the children helping them to design and paint the pebbles and it was an amazing experience, watching the thought and care that went into the designs, listening to the conversations and their understanding of the Christian values that they decided to represent in their designs, their skills and care in painting the designs onto the pebbles and also their enthusiasm for 'helping Dan' and wanting to know how the pebbles were welcomed by the recipients.

These children are a strong example of "being the best versions of themselves that they can be" and are great ambassadors for all that is good. This is just a snapshot of what is very evident in children across the school.

Being a Governor at Chapmanslade is an honour, does require time and commitment and personally, as someone who has been a part of the community from a small baby, attended the school through my primary years, whose two children attended for their primary years, whose mother worked as caretaker for twenty-seven years and whose husband has previously served as a Governor and Chair of Governors, a genuine joy and pride.

If you have the time and commitment and would like to be part of supporting the school please let the school office know and I will be happy to meet and talk through the role of a Governor and expectations with you.

Minnie House
Chair of Governors.
February 2020

Annual Governors Statement February 2020