

Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

Dear Parents,

Over the last two years whilst we have all had to learn how to live with Covid, it has become very clear how important schools are, in being able to be fully manned and functional, in order that the daily routines of life can function.

What is also very evident is that so much has been achieved by you as parents in supporting your children and the school and also in what the Headteacher, and staff have continued to provide and improve in support of your children's education, safety and welfare.

THANK YOU to all parents for your continued efforts in supporting your children and the school and your tolerance when the "norm" isn't always possible.

The strength of teachers and those who work in schools is, that whatever the challenge they always knuckle down and get on with the task required of them. As Governors we are really grateful; for their commitment and tenacity, shown on a day to day basis but particularly throughout the last two years.

The challenges throughout this time for all schools have been hard and have been exceptionally difficult for a small school, with limited flexibility in finance and staffing, and where managing finance within the given budget and facilitating staffing cover, have certainly been cerebrally challenging at times.

Fortunately the school leadership and staff team have been strong in maintaining a focus on the pupils, and their needs. Remote learning has been well established and continues to sit in the background, the curriculum has continued to be developed along with changes in the EYFS curriculum, the safety of all in school has been strongly maintained and learning has been strongly focused and this despite cases having risen with the removal of restrictions.

THANK YOU to all the staff, permanent and temporary for all your efforts and engagement with parents, pupils, external advisers and Governors and your resilience in being able to keep focused on the needs of the children. A special THANK YOU also to Mr Cottrell for stepping up in Mrs Chapman's absence and ensuring business as usual or as near usual as possible and enabling the school to continue to move forward in Mrs Chapman's absence.

As we reflect on the last two years, the phrase – "how lucky are we?" consistently springs to mind. The school's core values of Participation, Determination and Success which complement the Christian Values of Community, Hope and Wisdom certainly came to the fore throughout the whole school community and beyond particularly through Lockdowns and the increasing impact of Covid, Brexit and ongoing present conflicts on everyone's lives.

As a small community we are exceptionally fortunate to have a thriving school within the village and also for it to be a Church school with a strong Christian ethos. The Altar cloth designed and made by the children, guided by an outside provider, with the support of Mrs Thackway, is a small example of how the Christian ethos reflects throughout this school. Mrs Thackway is also one of the Church Team who are now able to return to their weekly Collective Worship visits, which are greatly appreciated and welcomed by pupils and staff.

THANK YOU to the Church Team for their renewed contribution to the school.

The children were involved in naming the new roads on the Newlands development at Barters Farm with Honey Glade – one of their chosen names – being very visible on the road signs to the site. Their latest challenge was to design and build 'Bee Hotels' all of which have been placed at the entrance to the site. The developers have been engaging well with the school and I understand that other new projects are in the pipeline.

THANK YOU to Newland developers for their engagement with the school and for helping to renew the children's enthusiasm for and engagement with sustaining the natural environment.

The pupils' engagement in planting two Magnolia trees in cooperation with and sponsored by Greenhill Grange Residential Homes has been another project in which the pupils have been able to engage with the community.

THANK YOU to Greenhill Grange Management and Staff for engaging the school in this joint project to support the Queen's Jubilee Green Canopy Project.

The Friends of Chapmanslade School have been able to carry out varying fundraising activities and our thanks go to them for their continued commitment to supporting the school. Please see the school website for details of events or if you would like to be part of this group or help them in their efforts.

THANK YOU to them for all their efforts to support the school through fundraising and a range of activities.

During the last two years, the school has maintained a relentless drive to ensure the best possible provision for the pupils to “catch up” on lost learning and to continue to move forward on ensuring that the increasing Government pressures to raise standards in schools is met.

Parent evenings were maintained as face to face meetings in a secure environment and opportunities for parents to attend events such as sports day, Christmas Nativities and end of year events, were made. Extra-curricular activities have been re-introduced as providers have been more willing to return to work in schools and some external events have been possible where safe to do so. We were equally pleased to be able to meet and greet parents at recent parent evening interviews. These were very busy evenings, and it was good to see so many of you being able to attend.

The Governing Body is a small group of people with a wide range of skills, who “dig deep” and challenge school leaders continuously in understanding how the school functions, to ensure that leaders are held to account for standards of achievement and outcomes for pupils, that finances are managed appropriately and for the benefit of all pupils, that the vision and ethos of the school is upheld, and all within a safe and secure environment. Governance has continued to work remotely for meetings. The three Core functions of Governance have been maintained and Governors have been able to keep up to date on courses and complete monitoring of the remote learning provision, collecting parent and staff viewpoints, meeting face to face, with subject leaders to understand their roles in developing the curriculum and more recently to be able to talk face to face with pupils when they were able to share their work and learning in writing. Their ability to talk about their learning and share their thoughts was amazing and a privilege for us all to be able to question, when they were willing to give us a chance to do so, but more importantly a joy just to be able to listen. They were amazing and showed how proud they were of all that they have achieved.

THANK YOU to all the pupils for continuing to engage with your learning, for being good friends and caring for each other, for remembering to show the best of yourselves in your behaviour, for your politeness to all adults in school and visitors to the school, for the delightful and informative conversations you have with Governors and visitors and, for continuing to show your eagerness to learn and enjoyment in learning on a daily basis.

Our THANKS also goes to Mrs Chapman for her support for the pupils, staff and Governors and we wish her well and hope she soon recovers from her recent period of ill health.

During this week Governors have sat in on the SATS experience for Year 6, observing the administration of the process and ensuring that processes are followed appropriately. Those of us who have attended dutifully read the extensive guidance on administering the papers prior to the event. SATS breakfast certainly seems to have a calming and positive impact on the whole process.

The expectations of Governors and the Governing Board is high and continually rising and my sincere gratitude extends to all on the Governing Board and Sarah Andrews, the Clerk for all of her and their time, patience and commitment in ensuring, that we have fulfilled our roles and have had an impact on improving outcomes for pupils. In all schools Governors are becoming a rare breed. It is a very rewarding role and one that we hope does positively support pupils.

The Governing Board has 8 members at present. This includes 1 parent Governor, 2 Foundation Governors, Church appointed, plus 1 Ex-officio the vicar, 2 co-opted members, the Headteacher- Ex-officio and 1 staff member. There are vacancies on the Board. In all schools Governors are becoming a rare breed and the board certainly needs more Foundation Governor representation as well as Governors from the wider community and at present one vacancy for a parent Governor, plus one parent Governor vacancy coming up in September. It is a volunteer role, does require some time and commitment, is very fulfilling, is supported by training and is good experience and skill development to have when applying for any employment. We aim to meet at least 8 times through the year for full Governor Body meetings.

If you or anyone you know would like to join this amazing group of people as a volunteer, please do contact the Clerk or myself on the emails below and we will get back to you and arrange an opportunity to discuss further.

clerk@chapmanslade.wilts.sch.uk

chair@chapmanslade.wilts.sch.uk

Over the next few weeks there are two events in which the children will be engaged.

The First is the Queens' Platinum Jubilee, which the school will be focusing on with varying activities culminating in the Village Jubilee Picnic at the Village Hall Memorial ground on 5th June.

Following that, the school will be focusing on the School's 150th Birthday which is officially in August but will be celebrated in July - what, when, time and place yet to be confirmed. If you, or members of your family attended the school and have any memorabilia or just memories of your time at the school as a pupil, that you are happy to share with the school please let Mr Cottrell know. Hopefully a display of items will be able to be put together for others to enjoy. Please mark any items you share with your name and contact number so that it can be returned safely.

As we look towards the Schools 150th Birthday it is clear that over time the dedication to maintaining this school building within the community has been remarkable. It is a unique place to be and has a very welcoming feel within its structure. Yesterday, some necessary internal work took place to secure a water damaged ceiling. This room hasn't been able to be used for a while because of the damage but is now useable and will be fully functional after further work to repair the damage takes place in the summer. Lots of additions and upgrades have been carried out over the years with many new improvements been established through several initiatives over time and in recent years, through Mrs Chapman's drive to improve the environment for the pupils.

If you are interested in becoming a Governor please do contact our Clerk – Sarah Andrews
at: clerk@chapmanslade.wilts.sch.uk who will provide you with further information or myself
at: chair@chapmanslade.wilts.sch.uk

The Guidance on the role of Governance can be found on the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

Page 13-19 will give you the basic information leaving the remaining 182 pages for you to dip in and out of if you want to learn more.

Our final THANKS go to all who give of their time in a variety of ways to contribute to making the school the unique school that it is.

Minnie House
Chair of Governors.
May 2022