

Chapmanslade

Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Chapmanslade Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023

Reflecting on the last 12 months at Chapmanslade School, it has certainly been a very busy time for everyone including Governors.

July 2022 saw the school celebrating its 150th birthday, with a wealth of memorabilia to share. It was lovely to see so many past pupils at the event to help the school celebrate. Thank you for helping to make that day very special.

As the Governing Body of Chapmanslade School, we continue to be exceptionally grateful for the commitment of the staff team at Chapmanslade School, the support of the Church community and parents and the enthusiastic pupils who attend the school and always make us smile.

I am also truly grateful for the Governors we have had in place and for their time and commitment to the post.

It certainly hasn't been an easy year, with the ongoing impact of Covid and lost learning, continuing staff illness and absences and lack of finances. The LA and the Diocese have been very supportive, in their guidance for Mr Cottrell as the Acting Head and for Governance.

Finances are inevitably tight as with many schools and particularly smaller schools but equipment such as an IT server, is a significant amount of money that small school budgets do not allow easily and especially when increased energy costs and increases in staff salaries have also been added to the mix. However, moving forward whilst the budget is tight, a deficit budget has not been set for the forthcoming year.

After a long absence from the school the Headteacher retired at the end of December and the governors set out on a new experience of appointing a new Headteacher. This is without doubt one of the most important tasks a Governing Body must undertake, ensuring a fair process and in the words of the children- "the Governing body must make sure that they choose the best person for the job. "

Following consulting with representatives of the school community, parents, pupils and all staff and with the support from the LA and the Diocese we were able to set a date for interviews, prepare our advertising materials and prepare thoroughly to interview candidates in March. Little did we realise that the Ofsted call would come in the same week as the interviews were planned.

All credit goes to Mr Cottrell and his staff team for the "good" outcome and praise that they received from the Ofsted team following this full Inspection and without any doubt the

children were the most amazing advocates for the school and were praised throughout by the Inspectors.

These two intense days were followed by two days of interviewing and with two strong candidates. Once again, the children and staff were amazing throughout. The pupils involved in the interviews were clear on what characteristics they wanted in a new Headteacher, were exceptional in ensuring that they treated the candidates equally and were very clear on the strengths of both. The LA and Diocesan advisers who joined us on the day were also highly impressed by the interviewing pupils', 'professional' attitudes and behaviour throughout, as were the Governors. There is no doubt that the final decision in appointing Mr Cottrell as the Headteacher was well received and well deserved.

Fortunately, the school leadership and staff team have continued to be strong in maintaining their focus on the needs of the children throughout the year and there has been a great deal to celebrate.

The number of pupils in the school presently sits at 99 with the new intake at 16, one short of the PAN reached for the September 2023 intake.

We are also very grateful for the SEN support that has been able to be provided through Westbury Leigh School throughout the last year and were pleased to be able to welcome Mrs. Robertson, officially on to the school staff team in April.

Governance has continued to work remotely for meetings and face to face where practical to do so. The Team, although small, continued to be strong in its members and the skills they had to offer. Throughout the year we have been able to continue monitoring with pupils, parents and staff and supporting whenever possible and were able to start the year revisiting the school values and ethos led by Nicola Coupe from the Diocese and looking at Ofsted expectations led by Vicky Christophers, from LA Governor services.

A new Behaviour policy was put in place in September 2022 and Governors were able to talk with children across the school, about how this works for them and how safe they feel in school. Over time we have been able to see how this was working for all children and how the consistent approach was well embedded very quickly. Talking with and spending time with the pupils was and is always a pleasure.

I cannot emphasise enough that new blood is needed to ensure sustainability for the Governing Body. With an expectation of eight Foundation Governors (open to all faiths not just Christianity) we presently only have one. There are no parents on the Governing Body, but we do have two vacancies and would be very pleased to fill them.

We have two co-opted Governors having welcomed Ginny Garnett to the team last month and one LA appointed. With the Headteacher and one staff member we are a small group,

At the start of the 2023-24 Academic Year, we received three resignations from Governors, all with a huge strengths and commitment to the Governing Body and all who have individually and as a team player, been a valued asset in supporting the school throughout their time as Governors.

The Rev Pauline Reid is retiring from her post as rector later this month and moving away from the Parish. Her support and guidance over her time as a Governor has been greatly appreciated.

Maggie Thackway has been a Foundation Governor for more than 7 years and has been involved as a link with the Corsley and Chapmanslade Parochial Church Council and with the Church Community has been involved in delivering Open the Book sessions with the children, regularly leading Collective Worship, organizing special days with the RE leader and the Church Community, listening to readers as well as being a strong member of the Governing Body. Her term of office was due to end during this academic year but due to other personal commitments resigned at the end of the academic year.

Tom Dore was appointed as a Parent Governor and served on the Governing Body for six plus years. As a trained teacher he was a strong member of the team clearly understanding the educational expectations placed on schools, particularly in respect of curriculum, assessment and data. He also decided to resign at this point due to a change in his commitments. It has been a pleasure working with all three of these Governors over time. We thank them for their commitment, time and energy and support and wish them all well on their next journeys.

There are many of you who will know that I am a strong supporter of Chapmanslade School and ensuring that it is able to continue functioning within our community. We are very privileged within our village community to still have a school and a good one with links to the church. Many other small rural villages are not so fortunate.

The school needs a strong Governing Body which can support the school moving into the future. Please give some serious thought to becoming a Governor and being a part of that next journey. It is a very rewarding role, which gives participants endless skills for life and work. Training and support is provided and is easily accessible. **Please help those of us who are still standing to continue to support this very special provision and ensure continuity for the future.**

If you are interested in becoming a Governor as a parent, please do contact myself or the school. Equally if you know of anyone else within the community who might like to become a Governor, please do ask them to contact either myself or the school. To find out more about becoming a Governor please follow the links below:

<https://governorsforschools.org.uk/about-the-role/#> -an overview and light touch about the role can be found here.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook> - if you click on the link and click on the page numbers in the Index it will take you straight to the pages you might be interested in looking at. The Health Warning is not to be overwhelmed and that this is Governor guidance and whilst it gives you an overview of the role it needs to be read by dipping in and out over time not all in one go!!

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Minnie House

On behalf of the Governing Body.

October 2023