

Annual Governance Statement Summer term 2021

The Governing Body of Audlem St James CE Primary school is structured as detailed below:

- 1 x Headteacher
- 1 x LA governor
- 5 x Co-opted governors
- 2 x Parent governors
- 2 x Foundation governors
- 1 x Staff governor

Governors are Mr Andrew Perry, Headteacher, Mrs Janet Furber, Mrs Sonia Kay, Mrs Alison Rayne, Mr Nick Brennan, Mrs Sylvia Siddorns, Mr Morgan Davies, Mr John Williams, Mr Sam Jones, Mrs Sheetal Brown. In April 2021, Janet Furber stepped down from her role as Chair, and Sonia Kay was elected in her place. Mrs Furber remains a valued member of the governing board until December 2021. Governors give thanks for her superb leadership and skills.

There is currently one Co-opted governor vacancy on the Governing Board and one vacancy for a Foundation governor who has to be appointed by the Chester Diocese.

Governing bodies are the accountable bodies in law and as such must act collectively in the best interests of the children, ensuring the good conduct of the school and promoting high standards of educational achievement. As a Church of England controlled school, governors are also charged with upholding the Christian character of the school.

The governors hold a formal Governing Body meeting at least once during each term. Members of the Governing Body also serve on at least one of the two main committees which have responsibilities for different areas of school management.

These committees are Teaching & Learning and Leadership & Management. We also have a number of small committees relating to areas such as Performance and Pay review, GDPR, (data protection), and a SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) working party who meet regularly to update and review actions. In 2016 a SIAMS inspection graded us as 'outstanding' and we are due to be inspected again, although this has been delayed due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Detailed below are the main responsibilities of each committee;

Teaching & Learning:

- To promote partnership with parents to support their children's learning. To promote high quality displays of children's work and information that provide a stimulating learning environment and celebrate the work of the school.
- Monitoring standards of achievement, progress and attainment. Ensuring targets are set and monitored.

- Monitoring the use and impact of Pupil Premium and Sports funding. An annual statement for both is available on the school website.
- To ensure that the whole school curriculum is: broad and balanced; relevant to the needs of all children; provides continuity and progression; is adequately resourced and delivers the New National Curriculum and its assessment procedures are in line with the legal framework.
- Monitoring and evaluating sections of the School Development Plan relating to teaching, learning, SENd provision, and the personal development and well-being of pupils.
- Monitor and ensure that the school has robust safeguarding procedures in place and that policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (and linked policies) are in line with legislative requirements.
- To promote the school in the wider community (eg. Links with the Churches and Audlem on line website).

Leadership & Management:

- To plan staffing for the school, to determine financial priorities in line with plans contained in the school development plan and the Asset Management Plan.
- To draw up the annual budget plan for approval by the full governing body, and maintain a three year plan for such expenditure.
- To monitor expenditure each term.
- To comply with relevant financial legislation.
- To make arrangements for the annual Performance review for staff.
- To be responsible for staff development and well-being and to ensure staff receive appropriate training.
- To promote the school in the wider community (eg. Links with the Churches and Audlem on line website).

All committees have the responsibility for review and approval of a range of policies which are available on the school website.

This has been another challenging academic year for governors. Governors were delighted to see all pupils back into school in September 2020, and were pleased with all the measures that Mr Perry and all the staff put in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of staff and children.

The majority of governor business was conducted via Zoom or Teams, as face to face meetings have been deemed too great a risk. Sonia Kay was able to visit school at the very end of Summer 2021, and was delighted to see the children enjoying being back in school, and proudly displaying their work around the school.

During this academic year, the main priority for the governing board was to ensure that the Covid catch up grant from the government was being spent to the best effect, and that Mr Perry and the senior leadership team had an effective plan for helping children recover lost learning from the 'lockdown' in early 2020. The teaching and support staff worked incredibly hard in the autumn of 2020 and at our January meeting we were pleased to receive data

showing us that learning was indeed recovering to where it should be. However, by January we were already in another national lockdown, and the majority of children were remote learning again.

By this time the remote learning provision had been further refined by staff, and school were able to implement a very good remote curriculum at short notice, with lots of teacher contact to provide better engagement for the children. As was the case in the previous school year, children of key workers accessed school for face to face learning.

Both in and out of school the first priority has been to ensure health and wellbeing, and help the children maintain their readiness to learn. Once the children returned to school, the next priority was to re-establish where each child was up to in their learning, plan learning appropriate to each child's needs (including booster sessions), and also to reintroduce elements of the wider curriculum that were not accessible under remote learning. Again, we found that parents had done a tremendous job in supporting their children's learning, and we were pleased to see that almost all children made good or better progress in Summer 2021. The governors wish to thank parents for their remarkable resilience and support during such a difficult time.

No national assessments took place in the summer term, but the Senior Leadership Team collected assessment data and submitted this to Cheshire East for a voluntary comparison against other schools in the region. The lack of national performance data for the last two years will be a challenge for all schools in terms of monitoring quality of teaching and learning, so such voluntary schemes are a welcome support.

As you can imagine, during the course of the year the closure of the school regular discussions have taken place between Mr Perry and Governors, necessitating a number of extra meetings held by video conferencing to discuss actions for re-opening the school to various year groups and the required risk assessments which have been updated many times in line with new guidance.

Alongside this the Governing Board also progressed with the decision to join Brine MAT. A consultation was held, many thanks to those who responded with their positive comments. The due diligence for this transition took up a significant amount of time during the Spring and Summer terms. The formal conversion date is likely to be during the autumn term of 2021.

We are delighted to report the following impacts of our decision making for 2021;

The school has kept up to date with the changing recommendations relating to the Covid-19 Pandemic, and governors have received and approved regular risk assessments.

Along with many other schools we have found it very difficult to manage within the finances provided for the school, particularly with the additional pressures of cleaning and staffing. But we were able to take advantage of government grants and our own capital funds to

improve our IT infrastructure to better support remote learning. We continue to be cautious and closely monitor expenditure and value for money on a monthly basis, and have been able to set a balanced budget.

The governing body has again submitted its responses to the Local Authority's financial audit questionnaire but still await the final outcomes of the audit.

Governors are also responsible for Health and Safety and Safeguarding and have been reassured, by meeting with relevant staff and discussing and approving policies, that all is as it should be. Investment was made in new fencing to ensure that the school playground is a more secure environment for the children.

The Pay Review committee meets annually following a rigorous process to review performance related pay progression recommendations and evidence to support this. Governors are always pleased to reward success with progression up the pay scale and are delighted that once again our staff have excelled.

The SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) working party has not met this year, but instead the whole governing body has taken part in a series of strategy planning sessions, where we have reflected on our Christian values and what this means for our school and its community. We aim to consult with parents and other stakeholders on this in 2021/22.

All governors are linked with class and subject areas and have conducted virtual visits to school to be briefed on teaching and learning. It is hoped that face to face visits will resume in 2021/22