

2016 – 2017 Report from Governors, annual statement

During the year, Benson governors supported the school under the leadership of a new Head. Mrs Bridget Dennis.

In line with our determination to help children in Birmingham, the school continued to work with the local authority to offer more places in years where they are most needed so that children can go to school in the area in which they live. This required considerable flexibility from all staff and they rose to the challenge.

The school currently has 520 children in years from reception to Year 6, as well as a nursery department.

Inevitably there was pressure on the budget, and governors worked with the school to deliver a balanced budget. This required some cuts to resources, and people, and governors will monitor closely the effects of the changes.

Much work was done to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning at the school. Monitoring systems were developed further, and through these and visits to the school, governors were able to see how individuals and groups of children progress and the impact of their time at Benson. With pupils with such a variety of background and experience, flexible and nuanced tracking is essential, and the governors have worked hard to encourage this and make use of the data it provides.

Results improved over the year, and despite a difficult financial outlook, governors were determined to support the Head and her team with the resources needed to continue to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The building expansion project continues, and we are particularly grateful to one governor, Sam Towers, who is using his professional expertise to assist the governors in overseeing building development and refurbishment, which is a considerable extra commitment.

During June the Birmingham Audit team reviewed arrangements at Benson. It concluded that overall the school was well run with adequate and effective controls in place in the majority of areas... and highlighted the strong controls in place managing attendance and safeguarding. The audit enabled governors to carry out their own review and ensure that procedures and processes are the best they can possibly be.

SEND provision was closely reviewed to make sure that it was the best possible. Thanks to staff and governors for their hard work on this.

A new behaviour policy has been developed, and appears to be having a beneficial effect already.

Governors have met regularly, attended training courses and visited the school. The local authority governor's term of office ended, and a replacement is being sought. One parent governor resigned and elections will be held in due course.

During the year all policies were reviewed, and revised where necessary. A new schedule of review was drawn up.

The governors oversaw several staff changes at the school. Several long-serving members of staff retired, including the Deputy Head. A stringent recruitment process was carried out, and from a strong field of candidates, the governors were pleased to appoint Ms Svinder Rana who took up her post in September.

The use of Pupil Premium and Sports Premium was regularly reported to governors, who were satisfied that it was being used appropriately and effectively. In particular the governors are determined to offer wide opportunities to pupils in music, drama and after school activities.

The work of the Parent Partnership worker was valued by the school and the governors, and continues to be a crucial role; community school activities were encouraged by the governors who attended when possible.

Governors worked to oversee the Performance Management of the Head and Staff at the school; they reviewed the staffing structure to ensure it was fit for purpose, and they supported the school in its membership of the Greet Teaching School Alliance.

The GB fulfilled its role in terms of safeguarding – completing all relevant reviews and documents.

The GB reviewed the financial systems and carried out a full audit when completing the Schools Financial Value Standard document for the Local Authority.