

Devonshire Primary School

2023 - 2024 School Year



Annual Report by the Governing Body

Introduction

On behalf of the Devonshire Primary School Governing Body, as Chair, I'm pleased to share our short Governing Body Annual Report for the 2023-2024 school year. We produce this report to help keep the school community aware of the work that Governors do to support the school¹. We have made some further refinements to how we present this information to you all this year, we hope it is useful. It will be published on the school's website.

Every month we also highlight some of the activities governors have been undertaking in the Devonshire Dispatch 'Governor News' - please do keep an eye out for it!

If you have any questions about the work of the Governing Body or feedback on what you would like to see in this annual report going forward, please do reach out to me or any of the governors via office@devonshire.sutton.sch.uk (please mark it for the attention of Chair of Governors or Governing Body).

What does the Governing Body do?

The Governing Body is responsible for working with the school to ensure that it delivers a good quality education. Together with the Headteacher, who is responsible for day-to-day management, the Governors set the school's aims and policies. The key roles of Governors are:

- a) To ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- b) To ensure accountability for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff.
- c) To oversee the financial performance of the school and ensure value for money.

We provide support and challenge and undertake the role of 'critical friend'.

This school year, Governors have continued to focus on monitoring the delivery of the School's Development Plan priorities, in line with [Devonshire's vision and values](#). We have reviewed and monitored the progress made by staff and pupils via meetings and our visits to the school. Many of us also experienced a very useful child-led tour of the school in April which gave us an opportunity to hear from the children and see lessons and learning activities in action. We have also received regular reports on relevant performance headlines such as pupil progress, pupil attendance, behaviour and financial data. Monitoring of safeguarding arrangements and also inclusion are legal requirements and are carried out each term by the relevant Link Governors. New Link governors have also been in school monitoring behaviour and seeing many examples of the school's provision for child personal development including outdoor play and learning and

¹ Devonshire is a Local Authority maintained school and as such is not required to produce an annual report, however, the School Governance Regulations 2013 suggest that "It is good practice for the board to publish an annual governance statement (as academy trusts are required to do through the Accounts Direction) to explain how it has fulfilled its responsibilities – particularly in relation to its core functions, including: • the governance arrangements that are in place, including the remit of any committees; • the attendance record of individual governors at board and committee meetings; and • an assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the board and any committees with details of any particular challenges that have arisen."

the woodland project. I also recently met with some of the school's Reading Champions who are clearly very enthusiastic about both reading and children using the library space. As Chair, and Wellbeing Link Governor, I am in school every month meeting with Miss Oastler and also the School Business Manager. In January, I did a whole school tour focused on the curriculum implementation.

Who are we?

We are all volunteers, except the Headteacher who sits on the Governing Body because of the role they hold in the school. The Staff Governor is elected by staff but their time as a governor is not part of their school role. We contribute to the school community on top of other work, family and life commitments.

- **The most up to date list of governors can be found on the school website:** [Who's Who | Devonshire Primary School](#)
- Many Governors have a 'Link Governor' role related to a priority area for the school. Link Governors visit the school regularly to see their area 'in action' and to report back to the Governing Body. Find out about the Link Governor areas and which Governors are responsible for which areas here: [Link Governor Responsibilities | Devonshire Primary School](#)

More information about the Governing Body can be found on the school website - [Governors | Devonshire Primary School](#)

We have welcomed 6 new Governors this year and also said goodbye and thank you to 4 others. This has meant that we have been refreshing the membership of our Committees and our Link Governor roles. **We have 1 parent governor vacancy remaining, which we will seek to fill in Autumn 2024.**

Governing Body Highlights

Committees

A lot of work is covered each term in our Committee meetings and we are grateful to Miss Oastler, Mrs Mackinlay (School Business Manager), Mr Bettis (Site Manager) and the 3 Assistant Headteachers (Mrs Elsey, Mrs Love, Mrs Scrivens), as well as Lynn Atkins our Clerk, who provide support across our Committees.

Our main Committees are Finance, Personnel and Pay, Premises and Teaching and Learning, supplemented by the Head Teacher Performance Development Committee and various ad hoc working groups, committees or panels on a specific issue as required. To find out more about our committees please visit: [Committee Structure | Devonshire Primary School](#)



Finance

The Committee continues to oversee effective financial management and best value. With hard work and prudent financial management, the school continues to be in a strong position financially. However, with the majority of the school revenue budget required for staffing costs, overall budget management continues to be challenging.

- We work with the school leaders to ensure sufficient resources for teaching and support staff are available for the wide range of teaching and learning and enrichment opportunities the school seeks to offer children, as well as maintaining our strong pastoral and wellbeing support and dedicated interventions for those children who need extra assistance.
 - We are pleased that Mrs Mackinlay secured a number of grants that have enabled the school to improve facilities through matched funding from the local authority, making sure that capital/reserves expenditure really does benefit the pupils.
 - We received reports from other committees, noting any financial implications, and reviewed major contracts for goods and services.
 - We also looked forward to upcoming projects and noted/approved planned capital expenditure and use of reserves, reviewing longer term income and expenditure, and discussing risks that the school may face and how to mitigate these.
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Personnel and Pay

The Committee has been informed about, discussed and - where appropriate - approved the school's strategic and policy approach to a number of current and medium to longer term personnel and pay matters, including:

- Staff changes, resourcing levels and recruitment.
- Monitoring and implementation of Pay Policy.
- Staff attendance.
- Staff wellbeing and workload.
- Staff training and support.
- Staff engagement, including annual survey results.
- Completing the Headteacher's annual performance development discussion, objective setting and mid year review.

We are grateful to all the staff, for all that they do for the children and the school community.



Premises

This year the work of the Committee has included, amongst other things such as reviewing and agreeing appropriate risk assessments related to the school's premises and Health and Safety requirements:

- A review of Devonshire Primary Schools current position on sustainability, focussing on culture, campus, community, and curriculum with the aim of developing the ongoing strategy and getting feedback and input from the school community.
 - Overseeing refurbishment projects, including the installation of CCTV which alongside replacement or repair of doorways will enhance school security and safety. The second stage of refurbishment of toilets has been completed making a significant difference to usability and upkeep.
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Teaching and Learning

The key focus this year continued to be the ongoing monitoring of implementation and impact of the new curriculum and associated refinements to enable pupils to reach their full potential. We have:

- Reviewed priority aspects of the school's curriculum and curriculum development plans, in order to ensure that the curriculum is stimulating, engaging and informative, is in line with the National Curriculum and incorporates best practice based on the expertise of Devonshire's staff, and training that they receive.
- We have had tours of classrooms and reviewed samples of pupils' work, to see evidence of knowledge progression in line with curriculum objectives.
- Received focused updates from senior school leaders relating to specific areas of teaching and learning such as writing, phonics and science.
- Had termly reports on the delivery of pupil premium and inclusions strategies.

School Surveys

The most recent, and very positive, surveys of all parts of the school community will help us further support and challenge the School's Development Plan as we go into the 2024/25 school year and we appreciate the time that all respondents took to complete the surveys.

A note of thanks

We would like to thank Miss Oastler as Headteacher, the Assistant Heads, Premises and Office Teams, A-Z staff, the whole Senior Leadership Team and staff body at Devonshire and of course the children, for everything they do in and for the school community; Devonshire is very much a community and being a governor as one part of it and contributing to make it the best possible place to learn and work is very rewarding.

We wish all of you in the Devonshire Community a happy and healthy summer and look forward to seeing most of you again in September for a new school year. For those children and one or two staff moving on to the next stage of their education or life journey, please do take with you our best wishes for the future!

Emma Lavery

Chair of Governors, on behalf of the Governing Body

July 2024