

Governors' Report to Parents & Guardians

School Year 2019/20

The academic year 2019/20 was a year unlike any other we have faced in our life times. Lockdown due to Covid 19 meant that many of Seymour Primary School children spent 18 weeks (90 school days) “home schooling”. This produced immense challenges yet some incredible opportunities for both families and the teaching staff and the impact of some of these will no doubt carry into the new school year.

To use a well-known football phrase, for governors the year was very much like “a game of two halves”. Starting the year with our normal meetings taking place in school – including a governor visit day – like many others in the UK, we then had to adapt to “virtual meetings” using Google. This worked well and governor meetings for the foreseeable future will continue to use this format.

A key focus for governors during the first part of the school year was to ensure that we continued to raise educational standards for the whole school, especially in Phonics in year 1, and reading, writing and maths in Key Stage 1 & Key Stage 2. The other key focus was how school was how the school was delivering the broader curriculum – i.e. subjects other than Reading, Writing and Maths. This was the focus of the governor visit day **when Alysha Mitchell visited on 13th January 2020 and a report written and presented to the rest of the governing body on 21st January 2020**. Governors were pleased to see how there was a clear link in the subject content from one year to the next and that subject leads were monitoring how it was being delivered to ensure consistency.

Work on staff wellbeing continued throughout the academic year prior to lock down and Carol Collins (HoS) and Cat McKeever (Teaching and Learning lead) completed an action research project for the Department of Education. This was presented and celebrated in London on March 12th.

As we fell into lockdown some curriculum developments were accelerated dramatically such as the importance and use of Information Technology in relation to ensuring children had access to technological devices; that there

was a school platform to present home learning; and that they had the skills to access this. Seymour Primary School were ahead of the game in many ways having established a rationale for remote learning shortly after lockdown. The teaching of phonics in year 1 remained a priority and staff uploaded daily recordings of speed sound sessions. These were shared TKAT wide.

Leadership continued to be a focus and 85% of the leadership team have achieved or are studying for a professional qualification. The changing circumstances that the Heads of School, Carol and Emma, faced during the school lockdown certainly challenged them and governors feel they coped admirably with the wellbeing and safety of the children at the heart of what they did.

During lockdown the focus changed: Governors focused particularly on Safeguarding during the lockdown and were kept fully informed as to how the school was managing this. They also focused on risk assessments and checked in that these were being adhered to by all staff and regularly reviewed.

Governors have a responsibility to monitor the spending of the school budget and, like most aspects of school life, this has been a challenge this year. However, we are pleased to report that, at the date of writing, the school has kept within its delegated budget.

As governors, we recognise that the school staff and leadership have faced many challenges this year but feel that they have well and truly moved on and are clearly working strategically again for the benefit of all children and the academic year 20/21 should be a successful one.

Seymour Governors

October 2020