



## Thameside Primary School

### Annual Governance Statement 2022-23

#### The Role of the Governing Body

The core strategic functions of Thameside’s Governing Body are to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Oversee the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

#### The Board of Governors September 2022- August 2023

Our Instrument of Governance specifies that The Governing Body shall consist of: three parent governors; one Local Authority governor; one staff governor; the Headteacher and four co-opted governors. The total number of governors is 10. The term of office of governors is four years, apart from the staff governor whose term of office is two years. This year we recruited three new members to the board and have provided support, mentoring and training as needed to help them fulfil their role.

Name	Type of Governor	Term of Office
Elizabeth McCrum	LA Governor	09/19 – 06/25
Sophie Greenaway	Headteacher	01/19 – Present
Guy Bickertron	Parent Representative	10/22 – 10/26
Jo Cordy	Parent Representative	10/19 – 07/27
Paul Cowley	Co-opted	11/22 – 11/26
Ciara Finn	Staff Governor	04/23 – 04/25
Daniel Magson	Co-opted	01/17 – 09/24
Lata Parbhoo	Co-opted	11/21 - 11/25
Ingrid Burton	Ex-Officio	01/19 – Present
Mustafa Chaudhary	Parent Representative	10/18 – 10/22 Term Ended
Alison Harwood	Co-opted	06/19 – 06/23 Term Ended
Fiona Mulligan	Staff Governor	04/17 – 04/23 Term Ended

#### Clerk to Governors

Sue Witten



## Committees, Roles and Attendance September 2022 - August 2023

We operate the majority of our business as a Full Governing Body (FGB). We meet frequently; we held six Full Governing Body Meetings in 2022/23. We also hold an annual Governor Day where we spend a full day in school meeting staff and pupils, visiting classrooms, playgrounds and the dining hall and scrutinising the work of the school in action.

We have one sub-committee of our Full Governing Body. This is our Finance and Staffing Committee (F&S) which met six times in 2022/23. Its core function is to: ensure as far as is reasonably possible that the school finances and personnel are managed in the most efficient and effective way to support the strategic aims; and act as a critical friend and an advisor wherever possible.

The FGB convenes sub-groups for example annually a sub-group of three members of F&S is convened as The Pay Committee (PC) and a sub-group of three different members of the FGB is convened as the Head Teacher Performance Management Panel (HTPM).

Most members of the Board undertake a link governor role which provides a link between the governing body, committees and school staff. These are appointed annually in our first meeting of the year. Roles are assigned on the basis of those (e.g. Safeguarding) that we are required to have; those that support aspects of the schools' work and areas of development identified as priorities in the School Development Plan or from an OfSTED inspection report.

Name	Role on Governing Board	Committees	Sub-Group	Attendance at Meetings 2022-23	
				FGB	F&S
Elizabeth McCrum	Chair	FGB, F&S	HTPM	6/6	6/6
Daniel Magson	Vice-Chair. Chair F&S. D&I	FGB, F&S	HTPM	6/6	6/6
Guy Bickertron	Health, Safety and Premises	FGB	Pay	5/5	N/A
Jo Cordy	Safeguarding	FGB, F&S	HTPM	6/6	6/6
Paul Cowley	Curriculum	FGB; F&S	Pay	4/4	4/5
Ciara Finn	Well-being	FGB	N/A	2/2	N/A
Lata Parbhoo	SEND and Pupil Premium	FGB, F&S	Pay	6/6	6/6
Sophie Greenaway	Headteacher	FGB, F&S	N/A	6/6	6/6
Ingrid Burton	Deputy Headteacher	FGB	N/A	6/6	N/A



## Skill and Training

The governing body is made up of individual volunteers with differing backgrounds and experience. To ensure that the body as a whole has the right mix of skills to provide clear and consistent challenge to the schools leadership team, we undertake an annual self-evaluation of our effectiveness and regular audits of our knowledge, skills, competencies, and behaviours. These help to identify current training needs, and inform the recruitment of governors into co-opted positions.

We invest in tools and services to support effective and efficient operation of the Governing Body. We are active members of the Reading Governance Association (RGA), having had representatives attend numerous events across the year, including Directors Briefings and 'network' meetings covering finance, safeguarding and inclusion. We maintain a 'gold' membership of the governor services program operated by Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC), providing access to quality support and guidance as well as discounts on formal training and other support services.

In the last year governors have attended training that covered complaints management, performance management, data privacy, data security, e-safety and safeguarding.

We are currently recruiting a new parent governor to the board who will be given the opportunity to attend new governor induction training as well as role specific training covering finance, health and safety, and SEND.

## The Work of The Governing Body 2022-23

Our work is driven by our Strategic Plan which is available on the school website: [Thameside Primary School Strategic Plan 2019-24](#). This sets out our vision ethos and long-term direction for the school. We evaluated and updated this plan as part of our Governor Day in June 2022 and we review it annually. This plan is used to inform decision-making and to assess progress against our priorities. We also approve, evaluate and monitor the School Development Plan (SDP) a summary of which is also available on the website [Thameside Primary School - School Development Plan Summary 2023-2024](#)

### Attendance

The governing body receives regular reports from Mrs Greenaway and Miss Roseaman (the school's Emotional, Behaviour, Well-being, Welfare Officer) documenting the positive impact of the Family Hub in working with families to break down barriers to good attendance. A small number of children are persistently absent from school i.e. have attendance below 90% and the number of children this affects at Thameside is below the national average. At the end of 2022-23, our attendance figure was 94.3% which, although lower than 2021-22, is still above the national average of 92.5% for the academic year (*source*). In 2022-23, the school will return to working alongside Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) Education Welfare Service in its aim to prioritise good attendance for all children at Thameside.



## **Outcomes and progress**

Year 2 (KS1) and Year 6 (KS2) children took part in end of year statutory assessment tests (SATs) and Baseline assessments were made for children at the start of their journey in Foundation Stage. We have continued to monitor the use and impact of the remainder of the post-Covid 'catch up' left over from the previous year. The progress made by children who work with the school's catch-up tutor has been accelerated. Thameside's Performance Data can be found [here](#) on the school website.

Outcomes for 2023 were mixed with some good results in reading and maths, at the Greater Depth, across the school. Although improvements have certainly been made, writing remains a focus across the school. In line with the School Development Plan, writing is an area that the Governing Body will be closely monitoring over the coming year.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage - 73% of pupils achieved the Good Level of Development (GLD) and this is an improvement on the previous year (61%) and targets were met. The Year 1 Phonics result was 77% which, at just above the local authority average, is also an improvement on the previous year. In Reading Local Authority, 64% of pupils achieved the good level of development (GLD) and nationally the percentage was around 67% - Thameside being higher than both.

In Key Stage 1 70% of pupils were assessed as Expected and 32% at Greater Depth in reading. In Writing, 57% of pupils achieved Expected and 15% were Greater Depth. In Maths 68% were Expected and 35% Greater Depth. We will continue to focus on overseeing the progress that pupils make in writing to raise the proportion achieving the expected standard. In reading, writing and maths the school achieved above local averages for children meeting the expected standard. We were also above national for both maths and reading.

In KS2 48% of pupils reached the expected national standard in reading, writing and maths (down from 50% in 2022). In the SATs papers, 75% of children met the expected standard in reading, 69% in spelling punctuation and grammar (SPAG) and 52% in mathematics. In maths, we are below both local and national standards and this will be an area of focus for the school in the next academic year. Despite this, a quarter of our children achieved at the higher standard in maths. Following teacher assessment, 65% of pupils met the expected standard in writing. In writing, this is below the national (71%) average but matches local. The average test scaled scores were 105 in reading, 104.7 in grammar, punctuation and spelling and 100.7 in mathematics (with 100 being the expected standard). In reading, the school yet again achieved above both local and national averages for children meeting the expected standard.

## **Finance**

Whilst national funding for schools is increasing, continued high inflation and cost pressures have dampened the effect that any extra funding might have had on overall budgets. Couple this with the marked reduction in the number of children entering primary education in the area, and we are left with a particularly challenging financial landscape.



To ensure that Thameside has sufficient support to meet this challenge head on, the governing body appoints a Finance & Staffing (F&S) committee. This committee meets six times a year, with a focus on:

- Ensuring that the school's resources are being managed in the most efficient and effective way to support its strategic aims.
- Providing support and challenge to strategic investment decisions, making sure that they deliver good value both in the near and longer term.
- Monitoring income streams and looking ahead to potential opportunities or challenges that may be on the horizon.
- Benchmarking the school budget against similar schools locally and nationally.
- Reviewing staffing levels and the management structure to ensure that we have the right staff, with the right skills, in the right roles.

In last year's update we reported that the school would likely end the year in an overall negative position. Despite significant in year savings that saw our projected deficit more than halved, we are for the first time facing a situation whereby we start the year with a negative carry forward balance.

We acknowledge that this is not an ideal situation, however it is reflective of both a local and national picture, as schools balance the need to provide resources and support so that all children can be successful, with the realities of operating during a period of extreme financial pressure.

We continue to work with the school leadership team and the local authority to monitor this situation and deliver a long-term deficit recovery plan, with a view to returning to an overall positive position in the next three to five years.

## **Safeguarding**

This area continues to underpin work throughout the school and is the fundamental framework in which the school operates. As governors we take our responsibilities very seriously to ensure and verify that statutory obligations are being met, for example through regular meetings (three times a year) between the safeguarding governor and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), and also meetings with the School Business Manager (SBM) to ensure that the Single Central Record is being maintained. In 2022-23 these meetings included reviewing the annual audit of our safeguarding provision to be submitted to the Local Authority, and a separate audit of our safeguarding policies and procedures carried out in partnership with the School Effectiveness Officer from Brighter Futures for Children.

All governors keep up-to-date with safeguarding developments, for example with the Keeping Children Safe in Education framework and its updates for 2022-23. The safeguarding governor ensures that any relevant local or national developments are brought to the attention of the rest of the governing board.

As governors, we also ensure that a culture of awareness and vigilance is maintained across all aspects of the school's safeguarding provision so that we uphold our very high standards in this regard and there is no room for complacency. In November 2022 we added a [Governor Safeguarding Statement](#) to the school website, which sets out our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.



## **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Pupil Premium**

Whilst all of the governing bodies have responsibility for and interest in SEND, we also have a member of the governing body who has specific responsibility for oversight of the school's arrangements for SEND. They undertake two monitoring visits a year. During the 2022/23 school year, particular focus has been given to Thameside's alternative learning provisions - the Nest and Rainbow room, and to how well our Pupil Premium budget is being spent. This has included examination of evidence and outcomes for pupils throughout the school.

Particular strengths noted this year include: the addition of an inclusive, sensory-based, outdoor learning and play area for SEND pupils, the continued use of personalised learning through our catchup tutor in a number of settings, the use of 1 to 1 phonics tutoring and the positive impact of the school's Family hub worker, particularly on attendance. The link Governor has regular meetings with the Inclusion manager and reports back to the governing body on the school's SEND provision, budget and resources and the strategic oversight of the school's systems and processes for supporting pupils with SEND.

Schools receive Pupil Premium funding to help close the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. As a governing body we monitor the use of this funding to ensure that it is used effectively and has demonstrable impact.

## **The Curriculum**

This year the Governors have overseen the refresh by the school of the way several different areas of the curriculum are taught. You may have seen on Twitter (X), or heard from your children, the exciting, "hooks" for new books they are to study. Whether it's a mysterious lady visiting the classroom or a pirate adventure to the boat in the Quad these are all part of the new, 'Literary Curriculum' and are designed to engage and motivate pupils whilst ensuring all National Curriculum skills and objectives are met.

Term by term re-planning for Religious education focused on integrating the teaching of different faiths around common elements such as prayer. Greater use of artefacts and outside speakers to bring new perspectives to pupils was introduced over the course of the year. A full review of the way Music is taught at Thameside was also undertaken and there will be changes continuing this academic year.

In Foundation stage the drive to build writing skills again included exercises to build wrist and core strength. Interventions such as write dance were put in place to support children to develop the prewriting skills they need, and Challenge time activities were also carefully planned to provide opportunities for children to develop key muscles and core strength.

Continuous provision in Year 1 was in the second year of operation. The mix of Inputs, Challenge time and the tutor table continued to get positive feedback from pupils and staff. Delaying the introduction of more formal learning methods to Year 2 when children are better able to make the transition saw positive results again.



In all areas of the Curriculum, the Governors have sought to assure that the school continues its focus on well-being and ensuring that lessons are tailored for pupils with additional needs who may learn more effectively in different ways.

### **Well-being**

The wellbeing of both staff and children continues to be a priority at Thameside, particularly due to the needs of our children. This year, a well-being working party was created in which several members of staff focused on ways of improving the mental health and well-being of our staff and pupils. One of these members of staff was our previous well-being link governor, who also undertook training to become a mental health first aider.

As a governing body, we have been ensuring that structures are in place that allow both staff and pupils to work in a safe, healthy, and productive way.

The well-being link governor is able to consistently monitor the well-being of both students and staff and feeds back to the governing board all that has been put in place and its effectiveness across the school. The well-being governor has continued to monitor the impact of our Anna Freud approach to teaching children about mental health and this will remain a priority within PSHE lessons and assemblies.

### **Health and Safety & Premises**

Providing a safe environment for pupils to learn and staff to work effectively continues to be a key priority at Thameside.

As a governing body we ensure that all policies and procedures are being followed correctly, for example ensuring fire alarms are conducted periodically and all staff are effectively trained in Health and Safety.

Over the last year or so there has been lots going on including a complete refresh of the school reception area and the addition of astro turf in the quad to ensure children can play in all weathers. The school business manager has worked tirelessly to ensure the continued quality of the school, keeping on top of all improvements, be those planned or unplanned.

Lots more is planned for the year ahead to ensure our school continues to provide the best possible environment for educational development and staff welfare.

### **Contacting the Governing Body**

This report represents some, not all, of what we have done and what we have achieved this year. We are always happy to discuss aspects of our work further.

We always welcome suggestions, feedback, and ideas. Look out for us around school in our Governors Hoodies. You can contact the Chair of Governors, Dr Elizabeth McCrum, via the school office or by email: [chair@thameside.reading.sch.uk](mailto:chair@thameside.reading.sch.uk)