

## **Dovecote Primary School Governing Board Impact Statement 2021-2022**

The governing board has a wide range of skills, knowledge and experience, which in the academic year 2021-2022 have supported the school by providing strong strategic leadership. Our collective commitment to the school's values and vision have remained at the heart of all our decisions.

We are proud to have been able to contribute to some major decisions which will affect the school in the long term and to be part of the school's commitment to always seeking improvement. We are confident that, although the next year will continue to bring challenges, the decisions made in 2021-22 place the school in a strong place to write our school's next chapter.

We are ambitious for all children and for our staff. Mrs Guy-Clark was appointed as our Headteacher in October 2019 and we remain committed to providing her with the support she needs to continue the school's growth. We have great faith in all that she is doing to ensure our school is a wonderful place to learn and work, and are proud of all the school is doing to address the areas of loss of learning for children resultant from the pandemic. The hard work put in by both staff and children has seen marked improvements in attainment, with many of this year's results exceeding the National averages.

The governing board has introduced new ways of working. We have a Quality of Education Committee which meets with staff and children and helps governors to get first-hand knowledge of the school. We also undertake regular learning walks around school and have a system of "link" governors who focus on key areas of responsibility, such as safeguarding and finance. The reports brought to the GB have been reviewed and refined, with the format for the report on progress towards the school improvement priorities commended by the school's School Improvement Advisor.

The governing board recognised that over time the numbers on roll were declining, and had therefore looked into community perceptions of the school and at opportunities for marketing. The website was redeveloped and social media is now being used to celebrate the wonderful things happening in school.

The decline in numbers is due to fewer children being born in Clifton. Other schools in the area are seeing the same change, which reflects City-wide and national trends. The governing board carried out considerable analysis of the available data from the Local Authority and took advice regarding the ideal Planned Admission Number (PAN) for supporting children's learning. This all informed a decision to request that the LA undertake consultation for a reduction to the PAN. Even with this reduction, we are confident that there will continue to be a place at Dovecote for all children whose parents wish them to come here.

In light of the reducing numbers on roll and the need to ensure the school budget was balanced, a working party consisting of the Headteacher and governors worked on reviewing the staffing structure with the principles unpinning any decision being that there must be excellent provision, meeting the needs of children, and longer-term financial sustainability.

As a result, the governing board, with great regret, approved a restructuring of the staffing which resulted in some redundancies.

Governors were involved throughout the process, including in meetings with individual staff. We are confident that the process was completed with the utmost sensitivity and that there has been no long-term detriment to staff morale. We have been commended by both the LA and unions for ensuring that the process was not only equitable and fair, but that it was also undertaken with compassion.

The governing board recognises that there will be further budget challenges ahead, notably in costs for energy. We acknowledge our duty to act cautiously and responsibly to ensure the financial sustainability of the school, and will review budgets with the Headteacher regularly through the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Our focus will remain on supporting the school in providing excellence in learning however challenging the economic forecast.

The governing board has increased its visibility with pupils through the Quality of Education Committee by having themed meetings with children. We are passionate about hearing the voice of children and in ensuring they understand that the governing board is ambitious for every child. This will continue and develop in the next year.

Three members of the governing board are developing a Parent Staff Association, to enhance what school can provide and to develop our support for the wider school community. We also wrote to all families at Christmas and will develop governing board communication throughout 2022-23.

Overall, 2021-22 has been a year of challenges, which we have addressed systematically, always with minimising the impact on children at the heart of our decisions. It has been a year where the school supported children to make strong progress, with a commitment to addressing any deficits in learning from the pandemic. Alongside this staff development has continued as a key factor in our long-term aim to be the best we can as a whole school community.