



## Governors' impact statement: academic year 2016-17

### **Governors' Role**

The role of the Governing Board is an intrinsic part of the leadership of the school, although often unseen by parents and other community stakeholders. This impact statement is one way in which the Governing Board articulate their role in school leadership, the impact it has had on school improvement and is transparent about its activities.

In 2016-17 Governors have been proud to support the school in a successful Ofsted inspection resulting a "Good" rating which was well deserved and reflected all the hard work of the school leadership and staff since the previous inspection. Additionally the Governing Board have supported the school as it became part of a new multi academy trust called the "Exeter Learning Academy Trust" (ELAT). The change from being a state maintained school to becoming part of a MAT slightly changes the school's overall governance and more information on this can be found on the Academy Trust website: [www.exeterlearningacademytrust.co.uk/governance/](http://www.exeterlearningacademytrust.co.uk/governance/).

Bowhill's Governing Board is part of the Academy Trust governance. However members of Bowhill's local Governing Board are also represented in the MAT governance as a Director and Member. There is a strong commitment from the Governing Board and in an average month Bowhill Governors may attend 1-3 meetings, read multiple policies/papers to ensure they are informed and can make decisions and may also attend training courses. As well as attending the committees which are described later in this update Governors also have responsibilities i.e. lead for Safeguarding or Pupil Premium which require them to become a "subject matter expert" so they can offer assurance and advice to the school leadership and staff. Bowhill Governors share the various responsibilities and wherever possible have two Governors covering so there is capacity and cover. All Governors are volunteers from the

local community and the Governing Board includes some Bowhill parents/carers and teaching representatives.

### **Training**

All members of the Governing Board receive an induction, initial training and then ongoing training according to their roles. This has been significant in 2016-17 with all committee chairs receiving training as well as those with responsibilities for SEND<sup>1</sup>, finance and safeguarding. Governor training this year has also included understanding pupil progress data, the primary curriculum, and governance in a Multi Academy Trust. The impact of this is that the Governing Board are kept abreast of the latest requirements and expectations and are more effective as a result. There is a lead Governor for training and they and the clerk to Governors regularly update the Governing Board on new opportunities for learning.

### **Impact of the Full Governing Board**

#### ***Reconstitution***

In 2016-17, the structure of the Governing Board consists of 18 members.

#### **In addition to the Full Governing Board we also have 4 committees:**

- Teaching & Learning Committee (previously known as Personnel & Curriculum)
- Resources Committee (previously known as Buildings & Finance)
- Pay Committee
- Chairs' Committee

All members of the Governing Board sit on either Teaching & Learning or the Resources committee. In 2016-17 Governors elected a new chair and deputy chair of the Governing Board, and new chairs of the Teaching & Learning and Pay Committee. Supporting the succession of governors into Chair roles ensures that there is overall leadership capacity amongst the Governing Body and there will continue to rotation of roles in coming years.

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<sup>1</sup> Special educational needs and disability

At the time of this update there are currently five vacancies on the Governing Board. The Governing Board have been recruiting new governors over the past academic year and have confirmed one new governor in post in 2016-17. We also said goodbye to some long-standing Governors in 2016-17 who resigned due to personal circumstances. The Governing Board thanks them for the contribution and time they gave to Bowhill.

### ***Headteacher's Appraisal***

The Governing Board carries out the Headteacher's appraisal annually. Several Governors have undertaken Headteacher's appraisal training and expert assistance was also sought from an independent educational advisor. The appraisal process allows us to look closely at the performance of the Headteacher, discuss the areas of strength and areas for development in that performance and set new targets against which their future performance will be evaluated. This gives the Governing Board confidence that the school is being well led and managed.

Governors also gained greater understanding of the areas of strength and weakness within the school. This enabled them to challenge the Headteacher on how good practice within school is being shared for whole school benefit and how weaknesses are being addressed. The different sources of data enabled governors to triangulate information and ensure that conclusions drawn from various sources are consistent.

### ***Recruitment***

The Governing Board is involved in all areas of recruitment and this year have conducted interviews for teaching staff and SEND lead. A number of Governors undertake safer recruitment training.

Governors also supported the strengthening of the management capacity within the school with the establishment of phase leaders for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

### ***Governor Profile***

This continues to be enhanced in 2016-17. All governors have their photographs in school reception so they are more easily identifiable to parents and carers. Governors have attended

parents' evenings and school events e.g. merit ceremonies, school performances, and the summer fete. Governors have also more regularly contributed updates to the school newsletter. The governor section of the website has been revised and updated and continues to be improved into 2016/17. Governors have also taken an active role in the overall updating of content on the school website and this will continue into 2017-18.

Governors continue to actively engage in the school and have attended three specific "governor days" in 2016-17 which focused on: Pupil Premium, Aspiration and most recently English. In addition to these governors have continued to make separate visits to focus on pupil premium progress, safeguarding, school nutrition, British values, special educational needs, high attainers and school finance. Visits are either informal "drop ins" or can be more structured "Learning Walks". Governor visits are recorded and insights are captured in governor visit reports.

## **School Vision and Values**

The FGB reviewed the school vision statement and agreed changes and improvements to this to more clearly articulate Bowhill's key values "CARE"

[http://www.bowhill.devon.sch.uk/pagetmp\\_1.php?ID=A965F710-DFE0-4BB3-8191-99388402C3B3](http://www.bowhill.devon.sch.uk/pagetmp_1.php?ID=A965F710-DFE0-4BB3-8191-99388402C3B3)

Community

Aspiration

Responsibility

Environment.

## **Partnership & Collaboration**

In 2016-17 governors continued to play an active role in Exeter Learning Academy Trust (ELAT) and in the partnership of schools which will become the Multi Academy Trust. Governors participated in meetings with other local schools leading up to their recommendation that Bowhill become part of the MAT. As part of collaborative working joint governor meetings are planned for 2017-18 to share expertise and to create a network of governor capacity and capability for ELAT.

## **Impact of the Teaching & Learning Committee<sup>2</sup>**

### *Achievement of pupils*

Progress and attainment data for all children across the school, including vulnerable groups, is analysed in this committee. Data is focused on reading, writing and maths. Analysis is done at varying levels, including year groups, classes, pupil premium, high ability and boys/girls. The impact of this is that governors are aware of how children are performing, where there are issues and can ask challenging questions to ensure that any identified problems are addressed in a timely manner. This ensures that the Governing Board know throughout the year how the school is progressing towards the school priorities and targets.

Governors are familiar with Ofsted dashboards which enable them to benchmark the school's performance against other similar schools and nationally. They are also familiar with the RAISE online data for our school which again shows our performance in the national context.

There are Governors with lead responsibilities for Maths and English, High Attainers<sup>3</sup>, Pupil Premium, SEND and British Values. Governors have taken an active role in visiting the school and in tracking the progress of pupils and seeking evidence that appropriate intervention and support is being given where pupils are not on track to meet Age Related Expectation.

An internal governor review of how the school is promoting British Values was undertaken and the recommendations for this continue to be implemented into 2016/17.

Governors continue a focus on school nutrition in 2016-17 and this will be considered in the context of the school being part of ELAT now and the opportunities that may bring to help extend what is currently offered.

Governors have also kept up to date with curriculum change and the new approach and terminology of "greater depth" and how this is meant to be applied within school. Governors also made the decision to extend the successful mixed year group approach into upper Key Stage 2 and this was implemented in 2016/17 and has been successful

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<sup>2</sup> Formerly Personnel & Curriculum Committee

<sup>3</sup> Previously known as Gifted & Talented

## **Safeguarding**

Governors ensure Safeguarding responsibilities are met and that the welfare needs of the whole school community are addressed making Bowhill a safe and happy place in which to work and learn. Governors agreed funding and recruitment of specific resources to support family support and Safeguarding work with parents and carers. Governors place such a priority on Safeguarding that it is on every committee meeting agenda.

## **Broad and Balanced Curriculum Provision**

Governors review the curriculum provided to ensure it is line with that required and that our children are receiving a broad and balanced education within a financially considered strategy so resources are used in the most effective way.

## **Staffing Structures and Wellbeing**

Governors have been influential in supporting the Headteacher and leadership team to make improvements to middle and senior management within the school and to recruit additional phase and key stage leaders to further enhance the management and governance of the school.

Governors continue to view staff wellbeing as a key priority and to identify and enable ways staff can be supported with what are often heavy and demanding workloads.

## **Impact of Resources Committee<sup>4</sup>**

*This committee oversees the financial performance of the school and makes sure its money is well spent. It ensures our buildings and grounds are well maintained, fit for purpose and a pleasant place in which to work and learn.*

It considers financial issues, and in conjunction with the work of the Personnel and Curriculum Committee, ensure that the money is well spent by evaluating the impact of school spending on pupil outcomes. In particular this year, governors have a much clearer idea of how the pupil premium funding is spent and are able to ensure that it is targeted at eligible children in particular. Governors ensure that appropriate financial processes are in place and that any issues raised by the auditors are dealt with appropriately.

The risks and challenges to the school budget were examined in detail because of a forecast reduction in income for pupil premium as well as increased National Insurance and Pension contributions. Also the school's financial competencies were examined using the "SFVS" (School Financial Value Standard) which is a standard series of questions seeking clarification about the use of resources in the school's budget. Governors have taken a specific interest in how pupil premium funding and sports funding have been allocated and ensuring this has been used in the most effective way.

This committee is responsible generally for school "risk" and "health and safety" as part of its broad remit to ensure school resources are utilised in the most effective and safe way. The Resources Committee examined and updated the risk assessment for the after school club Kids Biz and agreed any necessary improvements to be implemented.

The committee also considered improvements to the school buildings and grounds. Investments were made for repairs to a broken canopy and a new canopy thus ensuring children can continue to play outside even in less than ideal weather. Other premises projects included the repairs to the electronic school gates (improved security) and CCTV. More quotes have been requested for additional minor works and these will progress only when sufficient budget can be allocated.

The committee also agreed earlier opening times for the school's breakfast club in response to parental feedback and are pleased to confirm that other parents have since acknowledged the helpful contribution this makes to ensuring they can better balance school drop off and the start to the working day. The committee also agreed a reduction in the daily charge to Kids Biz for use of the canteen premises for the after-school club. Kids

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<sup>4</sup> Formerly Buildings & Finance Committee

Biz enables Bowhill parents to have after school care within easy reach of the school and Governors felt it was important to support this.

### **Impact of the Pay Committee**

This committee oversees the staff appraisal and performance management processes. It routinely meets in the autumn term and occasionally throughout the year as needed. It reviews the salaries of all staff.

### **Impact of the Action Planning Monitoring Committee**

This committee was set up following the last Ofsted inspection in October 2014 as a focused time limited committee to specifically oversee the improvement of the school. It met monthly in term time and followed up on the matters raised at that inspection. It monitored the external input to the school and received data from the Headteacher which demonstrated the improvements in outcomes for our children which have resulted from changes in teaching. This committee formally came to an end at the start of 2016-17 and was replaced by the Chairs Committee. The impact of the very focused work that APMC did came to fruition with positive Ofsted feedback for the school and for the Governing Board. The Chairs Committee continues the momentum of the APMC and ensures the committee chairs are aligned in understanding which areas the committees should be focusing on.

### **Continuous improvement of our Governance**

Governors played an active role in the Ofsted inspection in November and were pleased with the overall findings which were:

“A review of governance was carried out after the school’s previous inspection. Governors have worked diligently to address all the issues the review raised and are now in a much stronger position to carry out their roles and responsibilities. They have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and work closely with the headteacher and other leaders to ensure that the school continues to improve. They are aspirational for all those involved in the school and uncompromising in their drive to ensure that all pupils achieve well. v Governors understand the school’s plans for improvement. Their monitoring of these plans enables them to challenge school leaders and hold them to account for pupils’ achievement.”

The Governing Body continues to focus on improvement and in March added a Governor section to the SMIP (school improvement plan). These “targets” for Governors set out measures that the Governing Board will assess themselves against. The focus is on improving development, being self-sufficient in finding and analysing data and in ensuring succession planning for the Governing Board:

1. All governors to take responsibility to ensure their continuous professional development i.e. attending training courses, governor network events, keeping up to date with DfE publications and updating FGB on relevant

changes Governors' training is arranged based on the following categories/needs: · New governors training · Roles/responsibilities related training such as Safeguarding, Performance Data, SEND, Finance for Academy Schools etc

2. Governors to become more self-sufficient in gathering, reviewing, analysing and querying progress data and using this to inform constructive challenge
3. Governors to establish a network of peers in the MAT
4. Governors to support the senior and middle leadership in ensuring staff succession and progression occurs successfully
5. Governors to support the senior and middle leadership

### ***Summary***

2016-17 was a year when the school and governors focused on maintaining the improvement which had followed the Ofsted inspection in 2014 and built on this resulting in a positive inspection in November 2016. The relentless hard work of governors, staff and pupils has resulted in a school which continues to grow from strength to strength and of which we are all proud.

July 2017