



Governors' impact statement: academic year 2017-18

Governors' Role

The Governing Board is part of the leadership of the school. This impact statement is one way in which the Governing Board articulate their role in school leadership, explain how they have supported school improvement and provide an update on their activity in the preceding activity year.

Bowhill's Local Governing Board and ELAT

In 2017-18 Bowhill's local governing board have continued to support the school in its second year as a member of the relatively new Multi Academy Trust "Exeter Learning Academy Trust" (ELAT). The change from being a state maintained school to becoming part of a MAT changed the school's overall governance and more information on this can be found on the Academy Trust website: www.exeterlearningacademytrust.co.uk/governance/.

Bowhill's Governing Board is part of the Academy Trust governance. Members of Bowhill's local Governing Board are represented in the MAT governance as a Director and Member. Representatives from the MAT management team (i.e. the School Improvement Lead) regularly meet with and update Bowhill governors so there is regular contact and communication shared between them and the MAT senior leadership team.

In addition, this year there has been closer collaboration between Bowhill's Governing board and the governing boards of the other schools in the MAT (Ide, Alphington and St Thomas). Governors attended a shared primary school data evening with governors from the other schools and there have also been meetings between the Chair of Bowhill's governing board and the Chairs of the other ELAT school's local governing boards. These meetings have been useful as opportunities for closer collaboration and support between the governing boards have been identified and will be further progressed in 2018/19.

Additionally, in 2017/18 two members of the governing board have attended Devon Association of Governors' events and governors intend to continue engaging in these local governance networks. Governors keep up to date with national governance initiatives and for example this year responded to two NGA surveys including one on pupil premium which resulted in this [report](#).

What we do as Governors at Bowhill

There is a strong commitment from the Governing Board. 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. as lead for Safeguarding or Pupil Premium. These responsibilities require Governors 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, teaching representatives and professionals from various sectors including finance, health, Higher and Further Education and teaching unions.

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 2017-18 with all committee chairs receiving training as well as those with responsibilities for SEND¹, finance, safeguarding and assessment. Governor training this year has also included understanding pupil progress data, the primary curriculum, safeguarding and e-safety. The governing board has also made use of the free online NGA training available for governors recruited via the Inspiring Governance website². 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. Governors are also identifying opportunities for collaborative training across the four local governing boards in the MAT and hope to progress these in 2018/19.

Impact of the Full Governing Board

Reconstitution

In 2017-18, the structure of the Governing Board consisted of 18 members.

In addition to the Full Governing Board there are 4 committees:

- Teaching & Learning Committee
- Resources Committee
- Pay Committee
- Chairs’ Committee

All members of the Governing Board sit on either Teaching & Learning or the Resources committee. In 2017-18 Governors re-elected a chair and deputy chair of the Governing Board, and chair of Resources committee but elected new chairs of the Teaching & Learning and Pay Committees. 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.

¹ Special educational needs and disability

² Only two governors recruited via the Inspiring Governance website were eligible for this

At the time of this update there are currently seven vacancies on the Governing Board. The Governing Board have been recruiting new governors over the past academic year and have confirmed three new governors in post in 2017/18 including a new staff governor.

We also said goodbye to some long-standing Governors in 2017-18 who resigned due to personal circumstances. The Governing Board thanks them for the contribution and time they gave to Bowhill.

Recruitment and retention of governors remains a focus for our local governing board as some long-standing governors have stepped down in the last two to three years and the board needs to ensure it continues to have enough members to share the various responsibilities it holds. The local governing board has used the school newsletter, professional networks and the online governor recruitment website "[Inspiring Governance](#)" to recruit new members. Out of the small number of potential governors on the latter (c25) we were very pleased to be able to recruit two! Efforts to recruit will continue into 2018/19.

Headteacher's Appraisal

The Governing Board carries out the Headteacher's appraisal annually. Two 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.

Recruitment

The Governing Board is involved in all areas of recruitment and this year have conducted interviews for teaching staff, including a new deputy Headteacher, phase leader for years 5 and 6 and other important roles. Nine of our governors have participated in supporting recruitment this year. Where relevant a number of Governors undertake safer recruitment training (i.e. our Safeguarding lead governor).

Governor Profile

This continues to be enhanced in 2017-18. 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 2017-18. Governors have also taken an active role in the overall updating of content on the school website and this will continue into 2018-19.

Governors continue to actively engage in the school and have attended two "governor days" in 2017-18 which focused on: understanding primary school attainment data and our school's attainment data and SEND. In addition to these governors have continued to make separate school visits to focus on Maths, English, assessment, pupil premium progress, safeguarding, British values, special educational needs, science, high attainers and school finance. Visits are either informal

“drop ins” or can be more structured “Learning Walks”. Governor visits are documented with insights captured in governor visit reports.

Impact of the Teaching & Learning Committee³

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 ASP online data for our school which shows our performance in the national context. Some governors can also access the school’s pupil tracker which enables them to look at (anonymised) pupil/class progress.

Across this committee and the Resources committee there are Governors with lead responsibilities for Maths, English, Assessment, High Attainers⁴, 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/expected progress.

Broad and Balanced Curriculum Provision

Governors review the curriculum provided to ensure it is line with what is required. We want to ensure Bowhill children are receiving a broad and balanced education within a financially considered strategy so resources are used in the most effective way to support their educational progress.

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. This year the school had a safeguarding audit and our lead governor for safeguarding was involved in this. The school was commended on good practice and only minor process improvements were recommended.

³ Formerly Personnel & Curriculum Committee

⁴ Previously known as Gifted & Talented

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. Staff wellbeing is discussed at every full governing board meeting.

Impact of Resources Committee⁵

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.

This committee considers financial issues, and in conjunction with the work of the Teaching and Learning Committee, ensure money is well spent by evaluating the impact of school spending on pupil outcomes. 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. Governors have also 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. During 2017/18 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 Biz enables Bowhill parents to have after school care within easy reach of the school and Governors felt it was important to support this.

⁵ Formerly Buildings & Finance Committee

This committee will continue to support the school's leadership team and MAT board in ensuring there is effective budget management and we will continue to identify opportunities to augment school funding and invest in improvements for the school in 2018/19.

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. Its main purpose is to review the salaries of all staff. This year the committee elected a new chair and membership.

Chairs Committee

This meets informally as a planning committee to prepare agendas for committees and to agree priorities for these to consider. During 2017/18 as there have been some changes of chairs (due to governors leaving/changing roles) there has been more of an external focus for the Chair of the full governing board to meet with other ELAT chairs. In 2018/19 governors intend to have this committee meet more often as well as engaging with the other schools' chairs.

Continuous improvement of our Governance

Governors continue to gain a greater understanding of the areas of strength and weakness within the school. This enables them to challenge the Headteacher on how good practice within school is being shared for whole school benefit and how weaknesses are being addressed. Governors use different sources of data to triangulate information and ensure that conclusions drawn from various sources are consistent. The Governing Body continues to focus on their own improvement and in 2017 added a Governor section to the SIP (school improvement plan). These "targets" for Governors set out measures that the Governing Board will assess themselves against. The focus is on continuous professional development, being self-sufficient in finding and analysing data and in ensuring succession planning for the Governing Board.

In summary 2017-18 was a year when the school and governors continued to focus on maintaining the improvement which had led to the positive Ofsted 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.

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