



Annual Governance Statement for the Governing Body of West Thurrock Academy 2017/2018

In accordance with the Government's requirement for all governing bodies, the three core strategic functions of the Governing Body at West Thurrock Academy are:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils;
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Governance Structure

The Governing Body is made up of 12 governor roles as follows:

- 2 Community Governors appointed by the Governing Body
- 1 Partnership Governors appointed by the Governing Body
- 2 Co-opted Governors appointed by the Governing Body based on a skills audit
- 3 Parent Governors appointed by ballot of the parents at the school
- 3 Staff Governors appointed by ballot of the staff
- 1 Headteacher

The Governing Body appoints a professional Clerk who is responsible for arranging meetings, taking minutes and following up on all actions. The Clerk also advises on procedural matters and plays a key role in the work of the Governing Body.

Governors are all appointed (except for the Headteacher), are independent and have equal status to each other. A Chair and Vice Chair are elected by the Governing Body and work closely together with the Headteacher and the Clerk.

During the school year 2017/18, there were no committees except for the Headteacher's Appraisal Committee, the Pay Committee and the Audit Committee, which enables the whole Governing Body to take both a broader and more informed holistic view of the school. Governors visit the school during the year to monitor key priority areas identified in the School Improvement Plan. Specific monitoring was undertaken for the areas of Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Finance. Formal monitoring visits allow governors the opportunity to communicate with staff and pupils and ensure that actions agreed in the School Improvement Plan are being actively undertaken by the school. Through this, the impact on the education of the pupils can be more effectively measured. After each visit, a report is prepared and presented at the next Governing Body meeting.

The Governing Body met 4 times during 2017-18, the Audit Committee met 2 times, the Headteacher's Appraisal Committee met once, and the Pay Committee met once. There were 6 formal monitoring visits undertaken. The Chair of Governors has regular meetings with the Headteacher outside of full Governing Body meetings.

The overall attendance record of governors has been good, and every meeting has been quorate during the school year. Details of the attendance of school governors are published on the school website under School Organisation/Governing Body.

The Headteacher's Appraisal Committee is supported by an external advisor. The Governing Body and the committees all have clear terms of reference and all Governors are required to abide by a Code of Conduct.

Governing Body Skills and Knowledge Development

The Governing Body recognises that to effectively fulfil its role, it must ensure that all of its Governors have the required skills and knowledge to support the achievement of the school's priority objectives. Skills audits are undertaken to identify and address any gaps together with an annual self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the Governing Body over the school year. Governors regularly attend training and the Governing Body is a member of the National Governors Association. This, along with other relevant information channels, is used to ensure the Governing Body remains abreast and up to date on relevant matters in the education sector.

Governor Focus in Academic Year 2017-18

The full Governing Body discussed and considered many issues over the course of the year, in particular those related to pupil achievement, so that they could be sure that the school was on track to fulfil its ambitious targets for all pupils. In addition to monitoring visits, the Governing Body uses other school data including, SATs results, Local Authority data, government data (Analyse School Performance), Phonics Screening Check, Baseline Assessment, the Ofsted Data Dashboard and regular internal school assessment data to scrutinise pupil progress and attainment. The Governors also examined the school's 'vulnerable groups' of children and focus was placed on how the Pupil Premium Grant was being spent by the school and what impact this had on pupil outcomes. The School Improvement Plan identifies the key areas which the school and the Governing Body wish to focus on during the academic year to improve teaching and learning outcomes for all children. Over the course of the school year, progress towards meeting these key objectives took place.

Governors also paid particular attention to safeguarding and child protection issues. The nominated Governor for Safeguarding regularly met with the school's Child Protection Lead. Termly reports were provided by the Child Protection Lead to the Governors about safeguarding matters.

The Governors reviewed a number of statutory and key policies and ensured compliance of the school's website.

The Audit Committee considered the latest budgetary information, as well as examining cash flow statements and the school's income and expenditure. Future funding forecasts were also discussed. The committee also considered and agreed the school budget for 2018/19. They also discussed health and safety and premises issues.

The Pay Committee met to consider the recommendations made by the Headteacher in relation to teachers' pay progression as a result of the completion of the 2017/18 performance management cycle.

Governor Focus Areas for 2018/19

The Governing Body will continue to develop strategically and work towards the longer-term plan of the school, to closely monitor the school's financial status and work closely with the Headteacher, SLT, staff and parent communities to ensure progress and delivery of the best outcomes for our pupils. Focus areas for 2018/19 are to:

- Recognise the importance of strategic training and development and appoint a Training Governor to ensure that there is a committed and consistent focus on the areas where the Governing Body needs to develop.
- Ensure Governors fully appreciate the need to question and challenge data, seeking clarification where necessary and looking at issues with insight and perception.
- Allocate individual Governors school improvement priorities to ensure purposeful and effective engagement within meetings, pertinent to the needs of the school.
- Ensure that the full range of skills and knowledge of Governors are fully utilised to meet changing requirements and increasing demands of governance.

Contact Details

The Governing Body welcomes suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents/carers. Please contact the Chair of the Governing Body, via the school office.