



# 2022 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT

Mat Parker  
Chair of Governors

Deep Roots for Future Growth

# Chairs Introduction

In 2022 I had the distinct privilege of continuing my role as the Chair of the local governing body since my appointment in 2021. As a local governing body, we enjoy a hugely fulfilling working relationship with our whole school community and we continue to build on our strong community links. Working as part of Corvus Learning Trust, our shared goal is to help develop through the delivery of a robust curriculum and a fully holistic environment of nurture our children to becoming not only global citizens but also the very best versions of themselves.

In our capacity as a committee of the Trustees within Corvus Learning Trust, our duty as governors is to support the school.

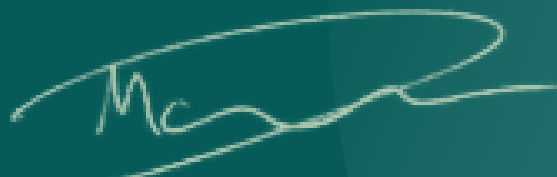
Our core functions are outlined in this document but the aim of this report is to provide parents, caregivers and the wider community with better information about the work of the local governing body in providing oversight, support and challenge.

My hope is that it will demonstrate how governors have been performing their statutory tasks and that they have had a positive impact in supporting our school.

The report is in three parts. The first explains the structure and function of the local governing body, the second highlights activities undertaken by the governors during the last year and the third outlines our strategic goals for the coming year.

I would like to take this opportunity to note that in the last twelve months, the dedication of our staff, teaching and non-teaching has been exceptional.

The last year has seen them rise to the challenges presented by a return to normality after COVID-19, a challenging Ofsted inspection and the departure of a Headteacher. Throughout all of this they have continued to be supportive of all pupils through hard work, dedication and a caring attitude and as governors, we could not be more proud.



# Introducing Your LGB

Governors hold an important public office, and as such they should be visible to their school and wider communities.



**Carole Barke**  
Vice Chair – Co-Opted Governor



**Michelle Presland**  
Staff Governor



**Kate West**  
Co-Opted Governor



**Chris Rossiter**  
Co-Opted Governor



**Harriet McAuley**  
Co-Opted Governor



**Kathryn Pierce**  
Co-Opted Governor



**Kevin Davis**  
Associate Member



**Sapphire Hill**  
Parent Governor



**Alun Hughes**  
Parent Governor



**Mat Parker**  
Chair – Co-Opted Governor



**Ellen Weston**  
Headteacher – Ex Officio

Clerk to Governors – Andrew Gorham

All schools are managed by a local governing body. As a school within Corvus Learning Trust and as delegated by its Trustees, the Oaklands Infant local governing body works closely with the Headteacher and senior staff to run the school in line with government requirements. The structure of the local governing body displayed above is effective as of January 2023.

### The Oaklands Infant Local Governing Body Constitution

- i. Eight Co-opted Governors – appointed by the local governing body
- ii. Two parent governors – elected by ballot of parents
- iii. Two staff governors – appointed after ballot of school staff
- iv. The Headteacher – ex officio

All governors with the exception of the Headteacher are volunteers who give their time and expertise to ensure that the school is run effectively, within budget and prioritises the needs and wellbeing of pupils and staff.

### Core strategic functions

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, ethos, and strategy for the school
- Holding Executive Leaders to account
- Overseeing financial performance

To ensure its success against its core functions the governing board considers standards, attainment and progress of all school groups, the School's Development Plan, pupil attendance, safeguarding, staffing, budget and finance monitoring, Pupil Premium allowance and its impact on pupils, the health and safety arrangements for premises and stakeholders and the wellbeing of staff and pupils.

## Governor Roles & Strategic Oversight

In 2022 each member of the governing body was assigned to specific areas of strategic oversight.

Governors are responsible for maintaining oversight of their respective strategic areas through monitoring visits, analysis of data and interaction with relevant school staff.

Strategic Oversight	Areas of Focus	Governance Team
Quality of Education	Curriculum (Intent, Implementation, Impact)	Kate West / Alun Hughes / Harriet McCauley
Personal Development	SMSC / British Values / Healthy Living / Attitudes to Learning / Behaviour	Mat Parker / Sapphire Hill / Michelle Presland
Leadership & Management	Governance / Vision & Ethos / Trust Engagement / Staff Wellbeing & Development	Mat Parker / Carole Barke
CPD	LGB & Staff	Angus Goodenough / Alun Hughes
Health & Safety	School Site	Kevin Davies
Policy & Compliance	Corvus Learning Trust Policy Adoption and Integration	Chris Rossiter / Sapphire Hill
Community Relations	Local Community & Business Engagement	Kathryn Pierce
Finance		Carole Barke / Angus Goodenough / Alun Hughes / Michelle Presland
SEND		Chris Rossiter / Kathryn Pierce
Pupil Premium		Harriet McCauley
Safeguarding		Kate West / Harriet McCauley
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage	Sapphire Hill / Kathryn Pierce
Equality Duties		Mat Parker

In the academic year 2021/22 the Admissions Committee of Oaklands Infant School was chaired by Mat Parker and consisted also of Carole Barke and Hannah O'Neill as Headteacher.

The role of the Admissions Committee is to ensure that school admissions are compliant with the admissions criteria outlined by Corvus Learning Trust and the Local Authority, manage in-year applications, and if necessary, the appeals process.

## Changes to Local Governing Body during 2022

In December we said farewell to Hannah O'Neill who stepped down as Headteacher. Angus Goodenough stepped down as a governor at the end of 2022 after a long and celebrated association with the governing body. We would like to extend our thanks to both for all of their hard work and dedication.



# How We Work



## Strategy

Working with other governors and Corvus Learning Trust to plan and monitor the school's strategic direction. Governors will use the schools development plan to closely monitor progress throughout the year.



## Finance

Overseeing the school's financial performance on behalf of Corvus Learning Trust and decide on how the school's delegated budget should be spent.



## Leadership

Supporting and challenging the school's senior leadership team. Governors play a crucial role in holding the Headteacher to account for securing the best possible outcomes for pupils. By challenging key decisions and asking pertinent questions about the school's performance data, governors aim to guarantee high standards in education.



## Curriculum

Scrutinising educational outcomes through analysis of data and in-person / virtual monitoring visits. By challenging key decisions and asking pertinent questions about the school's performance data, governors aim to guarantee high standards in education.

### Governing body meetings

Full local governing body meetings are normally held once a term and whilst there are many important aspects of the role, the most important is the business that takes place at these meetings. Details of meeting agendas and minutes can be sourced from the schools website or at request from the Chair of Governors.

A school's local governing body does not and should not be involved in the running of a school on a day-to-day basis as this is the job of the Headteacher and other senior staff members.

# 2022 At A Glance

## Ofsted Inspection

The school retained its “Good” status following the visit from Ofsted although the experience was challenging on all of our staff and its effects were still being felt at the close of 2022. A number of development areas were identified and are of key focus ahead of a scheduled return visit by Ofsted inspectors.

Ofsted acknowledged that we are a happy and nurturing school where our ethos of “Deep roots for future growth” is well established. They also made very positive comments around emphasis on reading, the design and teaching of our mathematics curriculum and the strong foundation our pupils receive during early years foundation stage.

95% of responses from the parent questionnaire stated that they would recommend Oaklands Infant to another parent.

The primary area for development highlighted in the report was centred around the teaching of phonics. The inspector placed a lot of significance on the fact that the school had yet to implement a “systematic approach” to the teaching of phonics.

At the time of the visit by Ofsted the school was using a blended approach which takes aspects of multiple teaching programmes that complement each other. As was evident from our published academic results at the time, this had been a successful approach to that point.

However, the government has called for schools to adopt a single validated systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) programme. The inspector was a strong advocate of the school adopting an SSP at the earliest opportunity. Fortunately, a significant amount of research and work had been undertaken by school leaders to select a programme appropriate to the school prior to the Ofsted visit so the process was already well underway.

The teaching staff began implementation of the “Sounds-Write’ scheme early in this academic year. We have been monitoring this implementation closely, please continue reading for details.

Another area for development was governance. The inspector noted that a number of governors were new to the role and placed emphasis on the need to ensure they were trained and comfortable in their roles as soon as possible. This document will elaborate further on efforts by the local governing body to increase its development and effectiveness across 2022.

## Systematic Synthetic Program

Systematic Synthetic Phonics is an approach which teaches children to recognise letters (graphemes) and their associated sounds (phonemes).

In 2022 following a period of significant research, school leadership made the decision to implement Sounds-Write, a program based on the science of reading. This multi-sensory, code-oriented, comprehensive approach to literacy has been designed by teachers—for teachers.

Taking into account the latest research into cognitive load theory and the principles of direct instruction, Sounds-Write has been specially designed to accelerate learning of all students.

Sounds-Write has been acknowledged by the DfE as having met all of their criteria for exceptional linguistic phonics teaching.

By the end of 2022, teaching staff had undergone initial training on this new scheme and it has been implemented into the classroom environment.

English leaders provided the governing body with an update on the new scheme focusing on the three I's (Intent, Implementation, Impact) during our last LGB meeting of 2022.

In addition to governors responsible for Quality of Education and Early Years Foundation Stage continuing to monitor its progress, all members of the governing body will have an opportunity to witness the scheme being taught in class first hand during the annual Governors Day in March 2023.

## Policies

Governors review all Trust policies on a regular basis to ensure that all local guidance is current and up to date. Our key focus with regards to policy review is to ensure that the school complies with the Department of Education's mandatory policies and the successful adoption of Trust wide policies.

## Wrap-Around Care Provision

To increase its ability to offer wrap-around care for our community the infant school expanded its relationship with The Beehive Club to include breakfast as well as after school club activities. Additional extra-curricular activities such as football and judo were also offered to the school community throughout 2022.



## Data and Curriculum

Data is made available to governors with both verbal and written presentations during local governing body meetings. Governors are given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the data or approach taken and pupil progress across all groups is how we determine the effectiveness / impact of interventions. Governors will also periodically meet with teachers, subject leads and observe pupils in a classroom environment.

The curriculum is delivered in such a way that it provides all children with what they need, regardless of starting or existing ability.

The school ensures the wellbeing of all pupils, and the curriculum supports their development, preparing them for both the next stages of their education as well as providing foundations for lifelong growth.

## Safeguarding

Safeguarding underpins everything we do at Oaklands Infant School. The safety of our pupils, our staff and our community are of the utmost importance and was found by Ofsted to be fully effective. The school's policies are reviewed by the local governing body to ensure that they meet the full requirements.

Our Safeguarding Governor Kate West meets with the Headteacher throughout the academic year to offer support, advice, and challenge on matters relating to Safeguarding.

All Governors have attended or are scheduled to attend formal safeguarding training.

## Finance

Members of the local governing body work closely with the school Finance Manager, Michelle Presland who joined the local governing body as Staff Governor at the start of this academic year. The school's budget is monitored effectively through regular review. I am pleased to report that our forecasted finance arrangements improved over the course of 2022. However, maintaining a non-deficit budget in these times of economic uncertainty remains a constant challenge. We are therefore hugely grateful to the PTA for the additional funds they provide each year.

We must also recognise the additional costs recognised elsewhere such as the new phonics scheme, staff training and reading books / resources required for its implementation.

## Local Governing Body Attendance

As a result of our shift to virtual meetings during the pandemic we continue to offer hybrid arrangements for meetings resulting in governor attendance being at its highest levels for a number of years. There is a very good level of commitment shown by all members of the local governing body who despite their own personal and professional circumstances give many hours of their own time to our school community.

## Staff Recruitment and Retention

Shortly after our last Ofsted inspection Hannah O'Neill informed us of her decision to relocate away from the local area with her family to enjoy a new venture.

Corvus Learning Trust made the decision to bring about greater collaboration and unity between Oaklands Infant School and Oaklands Junior School by appointing an Executive Headteacher at a mutually beneficial point for both schools.

Both schools will retain their unique ethos and culture but will work towards greater cohesion and collaboration. The Trust met with governors and staff from both schools to discuss their plans before releasing formal communication with our parent and caregiver communities. The earliest expected timeframe for the appointment of an Executive Headteacher and unified local governing body is September 2023.

Ellen Weston assumed the role of Acting Headteacher from January 2023.

Recruitment was undertaken in the autumn to backfill Ellen Weston in a teaching capacity once she assumed the role of Acting Headteacher.

Olivia Leatherbarrow was appointed as class teacher in Elm as a job share with Lisa Moore.

Laura Shrieve (class teacher in Elm) had a baby girl last year and is currently on maternity leave. We wish her and her family all the very best.

A number of teaching assistants were recruited throughout 2022 to support teaching staff and there is continued emphasis on recruiting Higher Level Teaching Assistants.

We have also recruited a new School Office Manager and School Secretary at the start of this academic year as well as a number of new Lunch Time Controllers.

## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Throughout 2022, the school continued in its commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers irrespective of race, gender, disability, belief, sexual orientation, age or socio-economic background.

We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and ability to participate fully in school life.

We tackle discrimination through the positive promotion of equality, having processes in place to challenge bullying and stereotypes and by creating an environment in which everyone can feel safe and valued.

In the classroom, staff ensure that pupils understand the importance of equality, the forms discrimination can take, and the impact it can have. Positive behaviour and attitudes are reinforced through the use of our school characters.

We maintain that our increasing diversity is a strength which can be recognised and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit the school.

## Sustainability

Sustainability is an important issue for our entire community. Through our curriculum, assemblies and visitors into school, we aim to raise further awareness of the effects of climate change and the need to protect our environment.

Throughout the school year pupils are exposed to events and learning interventions that increase awareness about waste reduction, littering and recycling as well as participating in national campaigns such as Bike and Walk to School Weeks.

## Community Engagement

With the appointment of a new Community Governor this year, we continue to forge stronger bonds with local businesses and associations.

The school continues to have strong ties to Pinehurst Care Home with pupils visiting its residents for key calendar events. Most notably in 2022, year 2 pupils and staff spent the morning engaging with residents to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee in May. The positive impact made by the children through their interactions is something we are very proud of.

# The Year Ahead

## Local Governing Body Self-Evaluation

At the end of 2022 each member of the local governing body undertook a self-evaluation. Using a template provided by the National Governance Association the exercise was aimed at identifying our key strengths and areas for development.

As a result of this exercise the local governing body views its key strengths as

- Having a clear understanding regarding the extent of its support and challenge role both within the school and the wider Corvus Learning Trust.
- Having a clear understanding of our role in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of pupils.
- Having a good understanding of how our school is funded and are actively engaged in the planning and monitoring of the school budget.
- The size and complement of the local governing body is sufficient to successfully undertake its strategic function.

The exercise also helped us to identify the following key areas of focus. These will be discussed early in 2023 so that training plans and areas of focus can be developed.

Our key areas of development for 2023 have been identified as -

- Conduct a skills audit to increase local governing body resilience and identify skills requirements.
- Increase level of direct engagement with Trustees.
- Review and develop our understanding of our scheme of delegation and challenge the Trust effectively on its continued support for the school.
- Continue to develop an understanding of curriculum matters including effective measurement of its implementation and impact.

As we move into 2023 the local governing body will commission an external review of governance to ensure that it is operating both effectively and efficiently.

### Key Objectives for 2023

I am asking the local governing body of Oaklands Infant School to focus on the following strategic objectives for the year ahead

- In response to the latest Ofsted report, continue to develop as a fully formed, engaged and proactive local governing body by
  - Ensuring that all training is attended, recorded and implemented in governance roles.
  - Working with the Chair of Trustees to develop stronger ties with Corvus Learning Trust.
  - Supporting the Acting Headteacher as she continues to drive progress and improvement within the school.
  - Supporting Corvus Learning Trust in developing a long term leadership plan for the school.
  - Continuing close oversight of Sounds-Write phonics scheme.
  - Increasing frequency of monitoring visits and understanding of how to measure curriculum implementation and impact.
  - Being more visible to our stakeholders.
- Work with the Headteacher and senior staff to ensure that Oaklands Infant School continues to offer the best education to all pupils and provide a holistic environment the entire Oaklands community.

For more information on Oaklands Infant School please visit our website at [www.oaklandsinfants.org/](http://www.oaklandsinfants.org/)

To learn more about the Corvus Learning Trust please visit [www.corvuslearningtrust.co.uk/](http://www.corvuslearningtrust.co.uk/)

