



22 July 2021

### **Governing Body Review of the Year 2020/21**

Governing Bodies exist in every school to direct and monitor strategic development and to act as a 'critical friend' to the Headteacher and staff to whom operational responsibility is delegated. They are not involved in the day-to-day running of the school but, are made up of individuals with a huge range of skills from the private and public sectors (some of whom are also parents/carers and staff).

As a Governing Body, we are tasked with the voluntary role of supporting and challenging the school to ensure that it continues to meet the ethos and the planning priorities that we have established. Fundamentally, it is our ambition to ensure that Greenway is delivering the very best it can for your child/ren and for you in the circumstances in which we find ourselves at any given time.

As parents/carers of Greenway it is fitting that we report to you about key elements of the work we have undertaken in meeting our obligations. As we approach the end of the summer term, here is a summary and review of the last academic year.

### **Governing Body Membership Changes**

Beth Baylay first joined the Governing Body in 2014 as a parent governor and then became a co-opted governor in 2018. She has decided to step away from governing to focus on her family and work. We are very grateful to her for her contributions to the Governing Body where she sat on the Curriculum and Learning Committee. Beth has supported the school with many initiatives including leading a number of parent and child annual surveys but, very specifically, was hugely instrumental in the development of the Daily Mile Track ensuring that many children currently and in the coming years will benefit from this. Thank you Beth - we appreciate all that you have done for Greenway over many years!

### **Actions taken by the Governing Body through 2020/21**

**Coronavirus:** At the end of the academic year 2019/20 we had hoped that we would return to some sort of normality in September 2020. As you will recall, the coronavirus pandemic gathered pace again after the summer holiday resulting in further disruption and a second major lockdown at the start of January 2021 when schools were closed until the start of March. We have remained very aware of the challenges faced by the entire school community during this difficult time. The amount of guidance issued by Government and the Local Authority has changed regularly (sometimes on almost a daily basis) and along with advice from the teaching unions has continued to arrive at an extraordinary rate and often very late in the day. As governors we have worked hard to keep abreast of this to support the school in adopting the right approach for children and

staff. We have continued to meet regularly on a virtual basis to discuss all relevant matters.

We had planned to reopen the school at the start of the Spring term in January, but a further announcement from Government required us to change tack again overnight and to close the school to all but vulnerable pupils and children of key workers. Governor Lou Collins supported school in surveying parents as to whether they would wish their child/ren to return to school during the second lockdown provided they met certain eligibility criteria. In the end we had a great deal more pupils coming into school during the second lockdown than during the first one and we are grateful to all staff for facilitating this.

Throughout the pandemic we have maintained a close eye on school's risk assessments and have ensured that to date Greenway has not had to send home cohorts of children to isolate – we firmly believe that this has been as a direct result of the stringent routines put in place to ensure that good hygiene is maintained within effective bubbles; visitors to the site are limited; and staggered starts are in operation. We are very grateful to parents/carers for supporting us so well with all of this. Your children have also been quite amazing – adaptable, responsible, generous and thoughtful.

**School Plan for 2020/21:** With the Senior Leadership Team and our School Improvement Partner, governors had contributed to and begun the monitoring of an ambitious school plan in 2019/2020 linked to the new Education Inspection Framework and the new curriculum. However, as a result of the pandemic our focus had to shift and much of what was contained within that Plan needed to be carried forward albeit modified to reflect the change in how learning was being delivered particularly during the Spring term.

As a Governing Body we contract with an independent School Improvement Partner (a SIP) to carry out independent inspections of school practice to support our monitoring function. We are also privy to feedback from other external professionals who come in to school, which together allows us to maintain appropriately robust oversight of the quality of education offered at Greenway.

Throughout this year, we have been reassured by inspection feedback from our SIP's visits and through an independent 'Brokerage Visit' organised through Herts. for Learning, that staff are doing all that they need to do to ensure that the children at Greenway are not disadvantaged by the pandemic and that they are successfully getting back on track. These visits have provided external validation to governors that the return to school had gone well in September 2020 (and then again in March 2021) with staff commended for setting high aspirations, with individualised reactivated learning. Governors have additionally been delighted by the extent to which the highly respected English and Maths educational consultants, (who are used by the school to support learning development in those areas), have been impressed with the teacher delivery and progress made by your children.

We have supported the school in ensuring that their delivery of remote learning has been developed appropriately, with feedback from parents taken on board, since the first lockdown. Homework has been delivered via Google Classrooms from October 2020 half

term to ensure that staff, pupils and parents were familiar with how it operated, meaning that by the time remote learning was required again in January 2021 there was a seamless transition. We have helped the school in developing a Remote Learning Policy and ensured that this has been communicated effectively to staff and parents.

During this time, we have also worked with school and Parent Forum in developing a Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy and Personal Social Health and Economic Education (PSHE) Policy in line with new Government requirements. We have been delighted at the positive feedback received from parents/carers and pupils around the Jigsaw programme used to deliver this in school and have noted the remote information sessions provided by the school for parents/carers around on-line safety and relationships and sex education.

**Standards:** Like last year, formal testing has not taken place this year although staff have run their own Year 6 SATs tests to help prepare those children for secondary school. Again, we do not have Year 6 data to share with you - testing is currently planned to start again next year. Regardless, all staff have continued to maintain ongoing internal assessments for their pupils, so they are clear about how each and every one is performing and to allow the Senior Leadership Team (and in turn we Governors) to be assured that all receive appropriately targeted teaching to enable effective learning. Internal assessments will have contributed to feedback you had at parental consultations and in your child/rens' recent end of year report.

Individual governors have been able to undertake training remotely throughout the year on a raft of topics such as Safeguarding, the Educational Implications of Covid, Understanding Assessment Data (and how to monitor teaching and learning when formal data is not available), Implementing the new Early Years Framework (from September 2021), Race Inequality in Education and Health & Safety.

However, it has been difficult for governors to undertake their usual visits to the school due to the school's (entirely appropriate) risk assessments. Prior to lockdown governors regularly visited the school to monitor areas of the School Plan but this has also been difficult to do this year. Remote meetings have taken place with members of staff and occasional visits have been made to the school by governors where this could be arranged safely. Topics covered have included statutory Safeguarding and Health & Safety Visits; Special Educational Needs Provision; Staff Wellbeing; Curriculum Recovery; PE, School Sport and Physical Activity (PESSPA) and attendance at staff training (behaviour) and parental workshops (PHSE). Feedback from each visit is always shared with fellow governors and has been the subject of discussion (including with the Headteacher) on agendas at relevant Governing Body meetings.

**Budget:** Throughout the year the Governing Body monitor expenditure against budget headings and prepare and submit an annual return to the local authority at the end of the financial year. Governors normally undertake regular visits to the school and are appraised of the administrative systems used by them but again this has been difficult this year. All schools are facing financially perilous times and Greenway is no exception. Whilst we were pleased that through prudent management and some unexpected support from the local authority (resulting in the in-year deficit agreed at the start of the

financial year 2020/2021 being reduced), we have agreed a budget with an in-year deficit for 2021/2022 which is covered entirely by an existing carry forward of funds. Governors continue to investigate how best to secure the long-term financial sustainability of the school.

**Pupil Premium/Catch Up Premium:** Governors monitor the spending of Pupil Premium and the new Catch up Premium to ensure that the money received is used in the most effective way. You will see Greenway's Catch-Up Strategy on the school's website along with a summary of how Pupil Premium money has been spent. We are delighted that external providers of support services used by the school continue to praise the school's exemplary approach in how pupils' needs at Greenway are supported – governor links Fiona Duck and Michelle Webb meet with the school's INCO Dani Roe on a regular basis to specifically discuss the provision for those pupils with additional needs. We have supported the school in undertaking a survey of those families with children with additional needs and are very pleased to see that the vast majority of children are happy at school and that parents/carers feel that the children are being supported appropriately with their learning and understand the adjustments that are being made for them to help them overcome any barriers to learning. We note that the school have listened to feedback and highlighted to parents/carers where they may find details of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy and the Local Authority's Local Offer.

**Premises:** We support the school in monitoring a rolling programme of improvements and Governor Nick Brown's expertise as a qualified surveyor on the Governing Body supports us through undertaking regular visits to monitor identified issues and ensure that they are swiftly addressed. Whilst we have had no major projects this year routine maintenance work has continued to be undertaken and we had also arranged for the installation of a new side gate and a small section of the perimeter fence, to support site security from vandals.

**Parent Forum:** We would like to thank all parents/carers who have been on Parent Forum this year and all those who have fed views to their representatives. The Greenway Parent Forum continues to prove an effective method of communication and feedback between school and parents/carers and we are grateful to Governor Fiona Duck for chairing this so effectively, albeit remotely this year.

**GSA:** Governors have been pleased to work with the school and GSA in supporting many fund-raising events. The money raised has been invaluable in supporting delivery to the children in a wide variety of ways including the Key Stage 2 music curriculum and the wonderful mural taking shape on the wall as you approach the school.

**School Website:** Governor Fiona Duck has supported school leaders with the development of a rejuvenated new look school website which can also now be viewed on mobile phone devices. We are all very grateful for her sterling work in this respect.

**Sport:** We continue to monitor the use of Sports Premium funding and provision of PESSPA (PE, School Sport and Physical Activity) across the school and as above, our plans and outputs are shared with you in detail on the school website. PESSPA is an area of significant strength for Greenway with pupils exposed to a very wide – and growing –

range of in-school, intra-school and inter school (even if virtually this year) sports and to targeted personal behaviour development that has been integral to wellbeing recovery and which we know contributes positively to their learning. We have therefore been delighted that Greenway's PESSPA Lead, Kai Lewis, was awarded the title of Active Sports Hero for the South-East Region and have our fingers firmly crossed for 20 July when the National Active Sports Hero will be chosen from the 9 Regional Winners (coming from over 900 nominations nationally).

**Music and Other Achievements:** We are delighted that notwithstanding the pandemic music has continued to take place within the school and Greenway's peripatetic music teachers continued to teach remotely during lockdown and we know the children and parents enjoyed Mr Pettifor and Mrs O'Brien's online videos. Weekly music sessions have continued, with Year 3 taking part in the national Sing Up programme.

**Greenway Summer Camp:** Governors worked hard with staff to provide an Easter camp for at least 71 Greenway families and more than 90 pupils over the Easter holidays and are looking forward to another Summer camp for at least 68 families and over 85 pupils. Governors Lou Collins and Pam Campbell have remained heavily involved in producing a survey for parents/carers to complete around your requirements and then worked up the business cases to support delivery of the camps to you. We wish everyone involved lots of fun over the summer!

We wish those staff leaving the school this year (Mrs Clerc and Mrs Lesley Popescu) the very best of luck in the future. As Clerk to the Governing Body and the font of all knowledge Mrs Popescu will be sorely missed.

We appreciate that this has been an extraordinarily difficult year for so many people and remain hopeful that with the vaccine things will get back to some level of normality in September. We are looking forward to working with the school, on behalf of your child/ren and you, in the new academic year.

Wishing you all an enjoyable summer.

Kind regards,

**Elizabeth O'Reilly MBE**

**Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body**

