

Trustees Report to Parents 2017-18

The Hillyfield Governing Body (Trustees) are pleased to present their report on governance at Hillyfield Primary Academy this year. Governors have very much enjoyed working alongside new Executive Headteacher, David Worrall and Headteacher, Pauline Casbolt, and the dedicated staff, as well as continuing to be actively involved in the life of the school.

Our governing body consists of eight members and from October 2017 has been chaired by Rebecca Lyons. In December former Chair, Roger Pryce retired from the governing body, and was thanked for his many years of service at Hillyfield. We also said goodbye to Executive Headteacher Anna Mackenzie, wishing her well in her move to the north of England. We were delighted to appoint David Worrall as our new Executive Head and thank him for agreeing to start mid school year, in January 2018. The Chair and Vice-Chair (Charlotte Hickman) visited David Worrall's previous school and met with him prior to his starting at Hillyfield to discuss priorities.

Throughout 2018 the Chair of Governors has met regularly with the new Executive Head, and the Vice-Chair with the Headteacher. These meetings have focussed on reviewing different aspects of the School Development Plan to monitor progress and to discuss priorities and strategies. Together and in agreement, with all staff and governors, we have prioritised raising standards, ensuring pupil attendance and school safeguarding processes, to keep all children safe and learning effectively and with enjoyment in school. We have also kept a focus on maintaining and developing a creative arts and sports curriculum. Overall we have been delighted to see this all on track by July, and importantly to see happy, confident learners in a great school, proud of their work and their behaviour.

The full Governing Body has met six times this year and each of the sub-committees - Resources (chaired by Helen Emara until April 2018) and Education and Standards (chaired by Charlotte Hickman) - has also met six times. Several school staff have presented to governors, keeping us up to date with developments in school. There have been numerous site visits to meet with staff and pupils, to focus upon specific areas of work including reading, maths, early years, pupil premium, special educational needs (with Oliver Benjamin as our SEN link) and safeguarding. These visits, across both sites, form a key part of our work, and also enable us to spend time in the school, seeing staff and children and reviewing aspects of the school's work that we have discussed in meetings.

Governors have conducted all statutory business, and discharged all responsibilities this year as required. Governors continue to review policies in a regular cycle of business, to ensure that all guidance is current, up-to-date and compliant. These are all available to view on the School website. A governors' working party was also involved in the reorganisation of school lunches and the appointing of a new catering company.

Governors undertook a skills audit this year to ensure that we have the necessary expertise to enable us to function effectively. All Governors have also taken part in a number of professional development training courses co-ordinated by Fatima Ba-Alawi. These have included safeguarding, finance, school data and pupil premium. We have attended briefings and local authority forums to keep up to date on issues affecting the borough and beyond. The Chair of Governors also instructed a legal review of the governance structure as a stand-alone academy trust. We have advertised for two new community governors, with a focus on finance, and had several applicants although none has yet taken up the role. Ensuring diversity as well as expertise is a critical focus of our recruitment drive, and we consulted on this widely at local and national level. We hope that new community governors will be in post for the next cycle of business in autumn 2018 and this will enable us to arrange to elect a new parent governor in the months following that.

We were also very pleased to be involved with appointing a new School Business Manager, Jenny Georgallis, who took up her post in April. We continue, with Jenny, to keep a close eye on school finance and expenditure. Governors are pleased to continue investing in the development of new facilities in the school and its premises, and in particular to have agreed to the funding of two new libraries and library staff to promote a diverse and rich selection of books and reading/literacy activities. This is in addition to money spent on classroom books as well. We have also agreed to fund some key works on the outdoor areas, particularly resurfacing and investment in the facilities at the Hill site.

The school continues to face a number of challenges as an outer London borough, but David and Pauline have managed to recruit and to retain a strong staff team for September 2018, dedicated to providing the very best for all of our pupils. Governors are determined to keep investing in staff and would like to thank all staff at the school for their hard work and commitment to the learning and development of the pupils at Hillyfield this year. We as a governing body will continue to make every effort to ensure the success of the school, and the flourishing of the pupils and I would like to thank my fellow governors for their commitment and dedication this year. We will continue to support and where appropriate to challenge. We look forward to continuing to work with you as parents and with the staff at the school to provide the very best education for the children of Hillyfield.

Rebecca Lyons, Chair of Governors
July 2018