



## **Governors' Annual Statement 2023-2024**

**The priorities for The Solent Schools this coming academic year can be summarised as “Aspiration, Equality, Justice for all through high challenge with low threat.”**

The major focus of the governors is to ensure that pupils at The Solent Schools progress appropriately in their education. The Governing Body appreciate that for this to happen the pupils must be supported by a well-led, enthusiastic, professionally competent and motivated staff all working together within a safe, supportive, stimulating environment.

Governors appreciate too the requirements of our children's parents and carers and their need to be satisfied about the overall leadership and management of the school and how it affects the safety, learning and enjoyment of their children.

To achieve their objectives governors must continually evaluate the role they have played within the life of the school and publish relevant information to all interested parties.

This statement is part of that evaluation and publication process.

### **School Improvement Plan (SIP)**

Governors work co-operatively with both the Executive Headteacher, Heads of School and Senior Leadership Teams (SLT) in contributing to and monitoring the SIP. This plan evolves and develops annually as the schools and educational demands change.

### **Governor visits**

Governors are invited to visit both schools as part of their monitoring of the SIP and gain evidence which can be fed back to the full Governing Body.

Throughout the year we also attend fun activities in which the pupils participate; sports events and class/school performances are always enjoyed. Guidance in terms of the roles and responsibilities of statutory link governors are provided to relevant governors and regular training is undertaken to up-skill our team.

### **Data analysis**

Governor plans this year will be based on the SIP and analysing pupils' performance across the whole school. This is done using a range of data provided from in-school progress reports and our annual test results.

### **Policies**

Governors review all relevant policies on a programmed basis to ensure that all guidance is current and up to date. Specific attention is paid to ensure that the schools comply with the Department of Education mandatory policy list and those required by The De Curci Trust.

## **Financial management**

Members of the Governing Body have been trained in school finance management. In addition, we have a CIMA qualified accountant on the governing body. School accounts are audited and scrutinised by the De Curci Trust and its Chief Finance Operating Officer (CFOO). Budget reports are drawn up and seen by governors on a monthly and termly basis.

The impact of the governors' role in the schools ensures that the budget is managed effectively; that correct purchasing procedures are followed; that improvements are effective and continuous.

## **Governor expertise**

The governors bring a wide range of expertise to the schools and this helps to ensure the schools continue to progress. Our members have a range of abilities including a background and knowledge in education, project management, finance, IT, and Human Resources. Examples of the impact of governor expertise on school improvement include:

- Funding for continued and improved staff CPD
- Evaluating and deciding priorities for Capital Project funding bids
- Programme of building work; for example, upgraded site security to ensure safeguarding compliance.
- Appraisal of Solent Schools Senior Leaders
- Evaluation and contribution to the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

## **Staff recruitment and appraisals**

The Executive Headteacher and Heads of Schools are trained in safer recruitment and are part of each recruitment process. They also carry out staff appraisals. Governors sit on both pay and appraisal panels and work with the CEO of the De Curci Trust for the Executive Headteacher's appraisal. The impact of this is to ensure all staff have targets which are evaluated, as well as having access to continued professional development.

## **Governor Meeting Attendance**

Governor attendance is at an excellent level, with any absences from meetings subject to being accepted and approved by the governing body. There are no causes for concern at the level of commitment shown by any member of the governing body. The impact of this is an engaged and knowledgeable team who work cohesively with senior leaders.

## **Annual Review**

The Governing Body, Executive Head teacher, Heads of School and all members of staff are constantly striving to improve and develop The Solent Schools. At both schools, this work has contributed to the 2020 Ofsted judgements that both schools remain Good with a number of areas highlighted as being extremely effective. Areas needing development are known and being focussed on. During the last school year, 2022-2023, the Governing Body focussed on:

Working alongside the De Curci Trust Chief Financial Operating Officer on Capital Funding projects to improve Solent Schools which culminated in the successful outcome of the project to improve and “future-proof” IT connectivity at both Solent Schools sites through the “Connect My Classroom” fully funded project.

- Continuous monitoring of the Solent Schools budgets to ensure money is spent as effectively as possible while protecting the future viability of the schools. This has helped to create specific roles at both schools to improve and implement an enhanced curriculum.
- Evaluation of different ways to improve Solent Schools' financial position.
- Continued evaluation of the SIP and ensuring governors have specific responsibility to monitor the impact in key areas. The specific roles assigned to individual governors are listed on page 5 of the Annual Statement.
- Attendance at Development and Inset Days and liaison with external moderators to validate the improvement processes within the schools. This has helped contribute towards cohesion, a shared vision and better understanding of the protocols and processes within the schools and how they work in practice.
- Providing capacity and opportunity for staff within Solent Schools to develop to ensure leadership is strong, driven and sustainable. This has helped give staff a progression route and opportunity to continue developing professionally within both Solent Schools and the De Curci Trust.
- The De Curci Trust Digital Strategy.
- Safeguarding with the introduction of the “Safeguard My School” online reporting system.
- Post-Covid 19 engagement by staff and governors.
- English and the continued success of “Little Wandle”.
- Governors were also able to support completion of projects including the refurbishment of the Infant School balconies, new playground markings and external redecoration.

## **Future and Continuous improvement**

On-going and future areas for targeting will include:

- Effective monitoring of the School Improvement Plan, including Covid 19 catch-up funding, using areas of responsibility to feedback and assess impact of interventions and proposed action.
- Evaluate the curriculum delivered at both schools to ensure it remains broad and balanced as well as delivered equally to all pupils.
- Develop greater understanding of pupil progress among all groups of children at Solent Schools, including data scrutiny, to help governors to question and challenge about narrowing the gaps.
- Budget analysis which not only continues to ensure the viability of Solent School but also looks at the needs of both schools in an individual and combined way which also adapts to the current demands within education.
- Specific and targeted use of the Hampshire Governors training programme to develop governor knowledge while improving ways of reporting back to maximise the impact across the schools.
- Participation in development days to provide visibility and a sense of shared vision while developing knowledge and understanding of greater depth in all areas.
- Continue working with the De Curci Trust Chief Financial Operating Officer to scrutinise the budgets on a monthly basis and to monitor and track progress on current Capital Funding Projects including the Infant School balcony project.

Particular focus of the Governing Body in the coming year will be on the following.

- Continued expansion of our engagement with all stakeholders and the wider community.
- Continuing our wellbeing strategy to ensure that all staff are able to understand and best support the mental health of our pupils. We will continue to monitor the wellbeing of staff and pupils and provide resources for pastoral care provision linked to complex behavioural, social and emotional needs.
- Improving communication efficiency.
- The development of The De Curci Trust Digital strategy. In light of this we have created a new Link Governor role which will be filled by Ged McNamara.
- The internet usage filtering and monitoring system now in place in response to new guidance in the DfE document “Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023”.

Specific governor targets for the coming year will be

- Tailoring governor visits to the schools to support their work on their priorities at the time; currently early reading, phonics and writing.
- Safeguarding; maintaining an appropriate culture within the schools and keeping abreast of and fulfilling our statutory duties.
- Supporting and implementing the Trust Digital Strategy and enabling the creation of a dedicated STEM space at the Junior School to give all our pupils the opportunity to become the scientists, technicians, engineers and mathematicians of the future.

### **Arrivals and Departures**

Sadly, Neil McQueen’s increased responsibilities at his work meant he was unable to devote the time he wished to his role as a governor. He brought a keen insight, particularly in the field of IT in education.

His knowledge of GDPR is legendary and he will be much missed.

Happily, a new recruit, Ged McNamara, has joined the team. His IT and business background is already proving of great value. He also has youth on his side.

We are now in the process of recruiting two co-opted governors to complete the set. One vacancy we hope to fill very soon and we will be inviting applications for the second vacancy.

## Current Governing Body at The Solent Schools

### Co-opted Governors

- Karen Howe (Wellbeing Link)
- Ged McNamara (Digital Strategy Link)
- Kath Murriman (Safeguarding Link, Chair of Curriculum and Standards)
- Jon Pugsley (Vice-Chair of Governors, Maths Link)
- John Wademan (Chair of Governors, Health & Safety Link)
- Dee Whitelock (English Link and Chair of Resources)
- Vacancy
- vacancy

### Parent Governors

- Iain Sutherland (SEND, Inclusion and Training Link)
- Sarah Turner (Pupil Premium Link and Early Years Foundation Stage Link)

### Headteacher Governor

- Lucy Wilby (Executive Headteacher)

### Clerk to Governors

- Jean Loy

  
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Chair of Governors

29/9/2023