

Sissinghurst (VA) Church of England Primary School

Common Road
Sissinghurst
Kent
TN17 2BH
Tel: 01580 713895
Fax: 01580 710051



Headteacher:
Mrs Cathy Penfold BSc NPQH
office@sissinghurst.kent.sch.uk
www.sissinghurst.kent.sch.uk

Enjoy, Achieve and Celebrate Together in Faith

BOARD OF GOVERNORS END OF YEAR REPORT 2017 – 2018

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1. Chair's report

This past year has been very full for the Board of Governors at Sissinghurst Primary School, with an Ofsted inspection and a SIAMS inspection on top of our normal workload. Nevertheless, we wholeheartedly welcomed these inspections and were delighted with the wonderful feedback the school received, along with clarity from external sources about the areas for development. In particular we congratulate all the staff and volunteers on the excellent report from the new "short" Ofsted inspection, and for achieving an Outstanding rating from the recent SIAMS inspector. As a Board we have reflected on the outcomes and these will shape our School Improvement Plan for 2018-2019.

In the past year we have welcomed Dr Darren Hanson (Foundation Governor) and Mrs Letty Neil (Parent Governor) to the Board. Both have extensive experience in the education sector and are making a valuable contribution to the team.

A significant decision made by the Board this year has been to adopt a new and more succinct vision for the school. This vision is shaped by a Christian vision of education which focuses on human flourishing, not just knowledge and skills' acquisition. It will feature strongly in the new website and prospectus in the autumn and reads:

We are dedicated to providing an exceptional education in the context of Christian belief. In partnership with parents and the wider community, we are devoted to unlocking every child's potential and valuing each child as an individual.

On behalf of all the governors, I wish to acknowledge the teaching and support staff for their tireless commitment to providing the children with a stimulating and nurturing environment in which to learn and grow. Thank you also to our brilliant PTA (FOSS) who gave hours of their time to help improve the school.

I am acutely aware of how tight school budgets are so your efforts to fundraise and enrich the children’s learning is of great value. Finally, I extend a huge thank you to Mrs Penfold and Mrs Clark. Leading a school requires a high degree of wisdom, energy and the courage to make challenging decisions. I admire you both for your unwavering passion and genuine care for the children and staff.

Personally, it has been a real privilege to Chair the exceptional team of governors at Sissinghurst School for the past two+ years, and I wish the incoming Chair – Bonno De Haan – every success as he takes on this role in September.

Amanda Goodchild, Foundation Governor and Chair of Governors

2. Pupil outcomes and performance data

We congratulate all of the children and their teachers and TAs for all of their hard work this year. They have once again achieved fantastic results. Current achievement of children at our school is:

% Age Expected (% Above Age Expected)	YEAR R	YEAR 1	YEAR 2 Teacher assessed KS1 SATs results	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6 KS2 SATs results	National average KS2 SATs % at age expected
READING	73 (14)	86 (36)	81 (31)	85 (35)	77 (42)	79 (33)	84 (32*)	75
WRITING	73 (9)	77 (36)	73 (15)	70 (35)	76 (38)	71 (13)	90 (32*)	78
MATHS	82 (18)	82 (27)	88 (23)	85 (25)	77 (42)	80 (42)	95 (11*)	76
RWM COMBINED	73 (5)	73 (18)	69 (4)	70 (25)	77 (38)	71 (13)	79 (4*)	64
GPS							95 (58)	78

* Based on 110+ points scored.

91% of the **Reception** children met the Prime learning goals and 73% met all of the Specific learning goals, which means that overall 73% have a Good Level of Development. The national data for this year is not yet available but this seems likely to be in line with or slightly above national (this is a measure where the average national figure has risen gradually from 51.7% in 2013 to 70.7% last year). However, this is a slight dip for Sissinghurst and we will be ensuring that this cohort receive additional support in Year 1.

The **Y1** phonics results are excellent, with 95% passing first time.

The **Y2 / KS1** national average percentages will only be available after the summer but Year 2 seem to have achieved good results, particularly in Reading and Maths. Last year’s national results were Reading 75%, Writing 68%, Maths 75% and Combined 64%, all of which we have exceeded this year.

The **Y6 / KS2** SATs results are outstanding, again. Only 64% of children nationally achieved expected levels in Reading, Writing and Maths combined this year, but at Sissinghurst this was significantly higher, at 79%.

We are very pleased to see that the efforts to address the unexpected dip in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling results last year have paid off. These efforts are being made across the school and have a real impact by Y6. We are also delighted that the focus I mentioned in last year’s report, to improve attainment for the Y5 and Y6 cohorts, has seen such positive results.

Andrew Chandler, Vice Chair of Governors - Chair of Learning and Development team

3. Special Educational Needs (SEND) provision

The key focus of my monitoring role is Special Educational Needs (SEN), Christian Distinctiveness and British Values. For SEN I visit the school three times a year looking at the way the school works with children who have various learning difficulties, I am impressed with the commitment and hard work of the staff involved.

Penny Durie, Foundation Governor - Learning and Development team

4. Curriculum

Having been appointed as a parent governor this year, I am extremely impressed with the Governing body who dedicate so much time in monitoring the school's standards and policies. I now have a great insight into what truly is an outstanding school, if not yet in principle. I still have a lot of learning to do in school governance; I am currently monitoring enhancing the wider curriculum, an action point from the school improvement plan. The teachers are making huge strides in producing more challenging schemes that are cross curricula, so greater links are made, further enhancing numeracy and literacy that will captivate all. From visiting the school I have been really impressed with cultural links already being made and visits to places that are then further discussed and studied in the classroom. Invaluable learning has clearly taken place on the world outside of the classroom. The children all seem engaged and happy.

Letty Neil, Parent Governor - Learning and Development team

5. Finance

The Resources team is responsible for financial controls in the school. This includes setting three-year budgets and monitoring spend against those budgets, and for the implementation of Safeguarding including Health and Safety. It is also responsible for agreeing all pay decisions for the staff. The Resources team at Sissinghurst is focused on ensuring the school gets value for money on all purchasing decisions and that spending is clearly linked to school improvement priorities.

The School felt the pressure of reductions in High Needs Funding from the government, with a one-third reduction in funding receipts compared to the previous year. While some costs were reduced, this resulted in total costs being slightly higher than income:

- The total revenue for the year was £778,741
- The total expenditure for the year was £781,127
- Expenditure exceed receipts by £2,386

The three-year budget forecasts continued financial pressure, along with all government-funded schools. The governors will continue to monitor the financial plans closely to ensure that the school remains financially robust.

Peter Denyer, Foundation Governor - Vice Chair of Resources Team

6. Legislation

You will be aware of the new rules around data protection that came into effect in May. We reviewed the data that we hold and how we use it and have appointed an independent data protection officer, to help us ensure compliance. We have updated the privacy notices telling you how we use data (see version for parents and carers on the website) and have also updated our data protection policy and procedures, our admissions paperwork, our annual data update sheet and consent forms for activities.

Andrew Chandler

7. Engagement with Property Developers

One of my jobs this year has been to engage with a number of companies who are building or are planning to build homes close to the school. Before a development is permitted in Kent, Kent County Council (KCC) looks at the number of school places in the area. If there are not enough, the development will not get permitted unless the developer makes a contribution to improve the situation. However, KCC will not only look at school places in the village, but will also include some of the surrounding communities. So even while there are none to very little places at our school, developers are not asked to make a contribution, as it is KCC's position that there are enough school places elsewhere in the area.

You may understand that, under these circumstances, it is not easy to impress on developers to support the school with money. But we have nevertheless had some success, be it that it is subject to planning being approved and subject to a part of the homes having been sold. I should also mention that I was privileged this year to work with Nathan Clark, a chartered surveyor and parent with children at our school, in drafting a costed preventative maintenance plan for our school building. Nathan's skill, expertise and his generosity in doing this without charge will be very much appreciated for many years (10 to be exact, as this is for how long the plan runs).

Bonno De Haan, Foundation Governor - Chair of Resources Team

8. Christian Distinctiveness

For SIAMS it is wonderful to see the school Christian Values continue to be deeply embedded into the life of the school and to see many children develop in confidence when leading Collective Worship. Some of the Church festivals, the Church Barn Dance, the over 60's Tea Party and the Governors Welly Wanging at the Mayfair are all examples of the School, the Church and the local community coming together, not forgetting the governors after school cake stall. The results from Ofsted and SIAMS inspections were wonderful to hear and a credit to all those who work so hard in the school.

Penny Durie

9. Governor training

Who would have thought being a governor would also require some lesson time back at school; well yes it does! As a Board we encourage personal development that underpins and supports the monitoring we do. This year we have all been on various training from introductory workshops for our new governors, individual focused areas and team collective training. These sessions are always useful and bring new ideas and discussions back to the meetings. Mostly this training supports the board and helps make our visits to the school and work more fruitful.

Scott Martin, Foundation Governor - Learning and Development team

10. Safeguarding

I have been monitoring the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures for the past two years, and was delighted with the Ofsted inspector's observations. She said: *"All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and regularly updated in line with current statutory guidance. Suitability checks on staff, volunteers and all who regularly visit the school are recorded in an exemplary manner. Entry to the site is rigorously controlled. The emotional and physical well-being of the pupils defines the culture of the school and is of paramount importance to all staff."* This concurs with my own monitoring which I will continue next year.

Amanda Goodchild

11. School Survey

A survey was conducted earlier this year which gathered views on the relative importance of different curriculum and developmental areas. Those surveyed included parents, staff and governors, with an overall response rate of 53.5%. 80% of the respondents were parents. While all curriculum areas were close in perceived importance, the categories of “A supportive and nurturing environment” and “Academic progress” were considered most important. Similarly these two areas were considered by the respondents to be the highest areas for development focus. By a small margin, the least important area was considered to be “RE and collective worship”. It must be noted that the difference between the lowest and highest ranking curriculum areas, in terms of both importance and development areas, was extremely small. It was therefore considered by the governors, that the current direction of curriculum and balance of subject should be continued.

Darren Hanson, Foundation Governor - Learning and Development team

Finally, all the governors wish to acknowledge the outstanding work of our clerk, Jane Phillips, from the KCC Clerking service, who keeps us organised and efficient!