



Hardenhuish Governing Body Report to Parents - 2022-23

Introduction

This report to parents reflects the activities of the governing body in the academic year 2022-23. The aim is to provide parents and the wider community with better information about the work of the governing body in providing oversight, support and challenge to Hardenhuish School. It is to ensure governors have been performing their statutory tasks and that they have had an impact in supporting the school.

The report is in three parts. The first explains the structure and function of the governing body, the second reflects on changes to the governing body and the third describes the work of the governors during the last year.

It's been an extremely busy year as governors are hoping to be at the forefront of establishing a multi-academy trust (MAT) which represents our values and aspirations. Our best way of preserving the identity of Hardenhuish is to be involved in setting up this family of schools while there is still the opportunity to do so. This is very much work in progress and more detail will be made available, and feedback sought, as we move through the process. Governors have been involved in a number of additional meetings about the MAT development in addition to the normal meeting cycle.

The school is a popular choice for pupils moving from primary to secondary and a number of appeals have taken place throughout the year.

We say farewell to Senior Deputy Head Robin Bassford who has secured a headship and thank him for his long service to the school and ability to patiently explain progress and results data to the board. Governors took part in the competitive selection process to appoint the new Deputy Head, Jo Glossop.

Part One – Structure and Function

The Governing body of Hardenhuish school is made up of a mix of community, parent and co-opted staff governors. The Headteacher also sits on the board with full voting rights. The governing body has three core functions determined by the Department for Education:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction;
- holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- overseeing and ensuring effective financial performance.

The full governing body meets six times a year at the end of a cycle of Resources, Education, and Community committee meetings.

The Strategy committee met three times this year. The governors also form panels to deal with matters such as admissions, pay, and the Headteacher's appraisal. Outside the meeting cycle, governors visit faculties within the school, attend events, interview potential

staff, and liaise on finance, attendance, equalities, and other areas. There are also governors dedicated to Special Educational Needs, Pupil Premium, Child Protection, and Health and Safety.

Governors work closely with the headteacher and senior leadership team and play a key role in monitoring the school finances with the Chair of Resources actively involved in the audit and preparation of the annual report.

An additional tier of governance provides oversight of the work of the governing body. This tier is comprised of the Members of Hardenhuish School and was established when the school became an academy in 2010. Documents explaining their role more fully can be found in the Governor section of the school website.

Part Two – Changes to the Governing Body in 2022-23

Kirsty Martin was re-elected Chair of Governors with Nicola Wood continuing as Vice Chair.

Parent governor Sally Dellar left at the end of the previous school year and Lisa Titcomb's term ended so elections were held to replace them. More parents volunteered for the board than ever before and Liz Allen and Andrew Wilson were elected. Claire Brown was appointed by the members to join the board and Trevor Eddolls, Kirsty Martin and Viv Vines were re-appointed. All governors serve for four years.

Part Three – Impact Statement

The work of the governing body has been measured against the three core functions of governance and the additional key features of effective governance outlined in section 1 of the Governance Handbook. There is a final section to capture some of the other work governors have undertaken.

CORE FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNANCE
<p>Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction</p> <p>Governors scrutinised the school development plan (SDP) and received updates. The plan is the roadmap for all development of Hardenhuish and contains the core objectives for the school which encompass teaching and learning; pupil progress; wellbeing, leadership and sustainability. Governors attended the Departmental Development Plan meetings, which feed into the SDP, review the year which has passed and look at the challenges ahead. This provides focus to governor meetings with Curriculum and year group leaders.</p> <p>Governors discussed the vision and ethos of the school. The individual governors, the Strategy committee and full board devoted considerable time to the MAT discussion which is clearly the biggest single strategic decision since Hardenhuish became a single academy trust in 2010.</p> <p>A governor action plan was also drawn up and monitored throughout the year.</p>
<p>Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff</p> <p>The Headteacher was appraised by a panel of governors in the autumn and a midyear review was held with the Chair. School Improvement Partner (SIP) reports continued to be presented to the board and our SIP, Peter Rowland, attended a full board meeting to discuss his work and perception of the school. The role of the SIP is key to the governors' understanding of the school as they provide checks and balances in operational areas which are outside governors' scope. They also provide support in areas which need to be</p>

targeted. It should be noted that the SIP considers the school and, on observing a meeting, the governing body to be in a strong position.

The Education Committee monitored progress, and reports on the School Development Plan were also given to the full governing body. Governors reviewed the exam results and discussed any issues within the results. Exam results were scrutinised and the post-Covid catch up provision was discussed. Governors requested presentations on curriculum pathways and intent, art and DT, reading across the curriculum, PE, Yr 10 progress and the Sixth Form. There were discussions about the use of scanners prior to exams and the challenges of transition between key stages.

Governor Sheila Copeman sits on the group ensuring that pupil premium funding is being spent appropriately with the aim of providing the best support to allow disadvantage young people to progress.

Nicola Wood chaired the committee this year and took over as SEND link. She worked closely with the SENCO Debbie Bennett to review provision and reported regularly to the board.

SEND and Pupil Premium remain standing items on agendas and there was considerable discussion and monitoring of both.

The Community Committee held extensive discussions on the exclusions and behaviour report. They also had an update on alternative provision in the Key Centre, considered equality information, the Aspire programme and wellbeing. The school was challenged to improve some comparative data. The committee also hears from pupils in order to learn more about their experience in school. One highlight was hearing from Ellie-May Farr about being a young carer and the support group she had established, with teacher Julie Bush, to support young carers at Hardenhuish. The committee was surprised to learn how many there were and a policy was later approved to support young carers.

The Safeguarding Governor, Sophia Swatton, met frequently with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Jo Glossop. The Safeguarding Audit was scrutinised by the Community Committee. The whole board received updates regarding *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and new governors undertook full training as part of the induction process.

The Strategy Committee has continued looking at parental engagement and key strategic policies but the focus this year has been on the MAT agenda.

Regarding staffing, the Resources Committee examined the staff exit survey, governors took part in appointment panels, approved flexible working requests, discussed recruitment and departure and considered pay awards following staff appraisal. The committee is aware that there are sector-wide recruitment and retention issues due to low volumes of newly qualified teachers and an increase in those leaving the profession. The recruitment cycle has been busy and governors support the leadership in ensuring that early careers teachers receive the support they need, that the CPD programme is effective and that staff wellbeing is considered in all decisions.

Across the year many policies in all have been reviewed and posted on the website. These policies, some statutory, provide the framework for the operation of the school and to help maintain high standards in all areas.

Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.
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<p>The Chair of Governors and Chair of Resources receive monthly budget reports and every meeting scrutinises the accounts. The budget proposal and revisions have been considered by the Resources committee and taken to the full governing board. Due to extremely careful budget management the school still holds a reserve but energy costs, general inflation and pay rises, which have not been matched by central funding have resulted in reserve funds being used in order to ensure the smooth-running of the school. This is a huge disappointment as the board and school have been rigorous about the budget with the intention of setting in-year balanced budgets. This is an added problem because the legal budget-setting timetable does not align with staff pay awards.</p>

<p>The school was the victim of a cyber attack which caused considerable disruption in school. Governors were made aware of the problem at the earliest opportunity and have monitored progress in resolving issues which were thrown up. The school had appropriate insurance cover and governors had previously approved the purchase of two new servers which had not been installed prior to the attack.</p>
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<p>Governors took part in the preparation of the annual accounts and ensured they were provided to the Members and filed prior to the deadline. There continue to be no red flags raised by external auditors. A school resource management self-assessment was completed with positive answers. The Finance Manual was reviewed.</p>

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

People with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity

<p>Kirsty Martin was re-elected Chair of Governors and Nicola Wood as vice-chair.</p>

<p>Governors have undertaken the annual skills audit to identify gaps and training needs and some have undertaken tasks based on their professional experience.</p>

<p>Governors are offered training opportunities to improve the quality of governance. The new governors took part in three LA run induction sessions. The Chair and Head joined regular LA and Regional Director briefings. In addition to routine safeguarding training, some governors followed additional courses such as Ofsted inspection and finance.</p>

<p>An experienced clerk was recruited.</p>
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Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities

<p>The Codes of Conduct which clearly spell out the function of the distinct role of governors and members were signed in September. Governors are reminded that their role is strategic and not operational.</p>

<p>The Scheme of Delegation has been reviewed and revised for 2023-24.</p>
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Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements

<p>The Musts from the Governance Handbook and from the Academies Financial Handbook are subject to rolling governor and staff review and the school risk register is regularly reviewed.</p>
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<p>The Clerk has ensured Companies House has been updated when necessary. The policy review cycle has been checked to ensure statutory policies are all in hand and others are reviewed at appropriate intervals. The governing board is satisfied it is compliant in all areas.</p>
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<i>Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.</i>
<p>This impact statement is an opportunity to evaluate the activity of governors.</p> <p>The Chair has continued as Chair of the Wiltshire Governors' Association and uses this network to provide a benchmark to governance at Hardenhuish. She is leading networking and training through the WGA and continues to host an offshoot group purely for secondary school chairs. She continues to participate in Wiltshire Council-led chairs groups and training as well as numerous National Governors' Association meetings. She was appointed and trained as a National Leader of Governance to conduct external reviews of other schools. Unfortunately, this was short-lived due to funding being pulled but the experience has been useful and enhanced her knowledge. She continues on the board of a maintained primary school and will be supporting another primary during the coming year.</p> <p>By the final meeting of the year there had been elections for chairs and vice chairs for the coming year, committee composition had been reviewed and a revised agenda planner was in place for 2023-24.</p>
<i>Additional items</i>
<p>Governors attended awards and open evenings and continue to be represented on the Hardenhuish Educational Trust.</p> <p>Governor Michael Smyth, who is an external teaching professional, has provided support on Oxbridge applications including helping with mock interviews.</p> <p>In their link roles governors attended events such as the Celebrating Success assemblies and held meetings with leaders in business and social sciences, English, history, MFL, geography, maths, science, SEND, ICT, art and DT, music, Yr 7, KS3, KS4 and 6th form.</p>