



ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR USWORTH COLLIERY NURSERY SCHOOL 2017/18

Dear Parents/Carers,

As another busy academic year draws to a close, it is my job to provide you with information regarding the governance of our school this year. For details of the members of our Governing Board (GB), the committee structure we employ, the remit of these committees and our attendance records, please visit our website: www.usworthcollierynursery.org.uk/our-governing-board

The Government require all Governing Boards to fulfil three core functions:

1. To ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
2. To hold the head teacher to account for the educational performance of the pupils and the performance management of the staff.
3. To oversee the financial performance of the organisation and make sure its money is well spent.

It is with these functions in mind that I report on our work this year. However, before beginning my report, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued involvement in our nursery. It has been lovely to see so many of you attend the various events across the year: journal days, craft events, class assemblies, sports day, to name but a few - all have been a great success and enjoyed by children, staff and families alike. Many of you will be staying with nursery in September; some of you will be moving on to primary education. However, all of you have contributed to the community of Usworth Colliery Nursery this year in many different ways - thank you for your support and have a safe, fun-filled summer break.

The Governing Board welcomes suggestions, feedback and ideas from parents and carers. If you have any comments you wish to make, please contact the Chair of Governors via the school office.

Best wishes,

Amanda Robson

Chair of Governors



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VISION, ETHOS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION

We believe our school is at the heart of our community and that we work closely with our families to enable our children to get the best possible start to their learning journey. Our vision is to be the first choice for families when choosing nursery education and childcare. As a Governing Board, we return to our vision statement regularly to ensure it is still fit for purpose and reflects our aspirations for the school.

Our ethos is reflected in our core values: to be a happy, safe and caring nursery school; to provide a stimulating, challenging environment; to encourage respect, support and co-operation for all and to help everyone reach their full potential. Governors ensure the ethos of the school is reflected in all policies and practice; we review policies with the ethos in mind, ensuring they support our values. Governors also ensure the ethos of the school is reflected in daily practice, which they observe during both formal and informal visits across the year.

In order to achieve our vision, we need to plan strategically, year on year, to ensure we remain on track. Development priorities are informed by a range of information such as self-evaluation and monitoring, external viewpoints (for example, from Ofsted or school improvement partners) and reviews of governance. The priorities for school development in 2017/18 were:

1. To improve progress and attainment in literacy, particularly focusing on developing early reading and the use of books in school.
2. To develop well-being in school and managing feelings and behaviour outcomes for children.
3. To ensure planned activities are consistent in the challenge they present to all key groups of children (particularly in the areas of learning for understanding the world and expressive art and design) so that more children can make faster progress and exceed expectation.
4. To use more measurable targets against which governors can check the impact of the school's work more precisely.

These targets were reviewed at meetings of both the full GB and of the Curriculum, Progress and Attainment (CPA) committee. They were reviewed at both the mid-point of the year (to highlight any areas of strength or weakness to be addressed) and at the end of the year to inform future target setting. Targets were broadly met, and in the case of specific numerical targets relating to pupil progress and attainment, they were largely exceeded. Examples of the measurable targets used to allow governors to monitor impact more precisely can be found in the tables below, which show the school's performance in relation to the literacy and well-being targets outlined above. The planning of challenging activities across all areas of learning was monitored through lesson observations by the head teacher and the monitoring of outcomes for these areas of learning by governors.



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TARGETS FOR PROGRESS (HOW FAR THE CHILDREN HAVE COME FROM THEIR STARTING POINTS)

AREA OF LEARNING	PROGRESS TARGETS (% of cohort)	ACTUAL PROGRESS WETLANDS	ACTUAL PROGRESS WOODLANDS
Reading	90% to make expected progress	92% made expected progress	89% made expected progress
	10% to make above expected progress	78% made above expected progress	75% made above expected progress
Writing	90% to make expected progress	92% made expected progress	89% made expected progress
	10% to make above expected progress	84% made above expected progress	81% made above expected progress
Managing Feelings & Behaviour	90% to make expected progress	89% made expected progress	74% made expected progress
	10% to make above expected progress	89% made above expected progress	74% made above expected progress

TARGETS FOR ATTAINMENT (THE STAGE THE CHILDREN HAVE REACHED)

AREA OF LEARNING	ATTAINMENT TARGETS (% of cohort)	ACTUAL ATTAINMENT WETLANDS	ACTUAL ATTAINMENT WOODLANDS
Reading	50% to reach expected levels	87% reached expected levels	83% reached expected levels
	10% to reach above expected levels	62% reached above expected levels	47% reached above expected levels
Writing	50% to reach expected levels	100% reached expected levels	57% reached expected levels
	10% to reach above expected levels	77% reached above expected levels	30% reached above expected levels
Managing Feelings & Behaviour	80% to reach expected levels	96% reached expected levels	83% reached expected levels
	10% to reach above expected levels	96% reached above expected levels	48% reached above expected levels

The breakdown of percentages has allowed governors to very precisely monitor the impact of the school development plan and has shown very clearly that the doubling of time for pupils now accessing 30 hours has led to a huge increase in children reaching above expected levels of progress and attainment. As a result, these targets will be increased next year to ensure they remain challenging for both pupils and staff.



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PUPIL PERFORMANCE AND STAFF MANAGEMENT

Although the full GB receive information relating to the performance of both pupils and staff, the responsibility for in-depth analysis of pupil data has been delegated to the CPA committee. Similarly, it is the remit of the personnel committee to scrutinise evidence relating to staff performance management targets and report this back to the GB in an anonymised form.

The CPA committee has met each term to receive pupil data, showing the baseline figures at the start of the year, through the mid-point of teaching and learning, to the final progress and attainment data in the summer term. Governors have been rigorous in their challenge of the data presented and, when necessary, have requested further information be given or presented in a different way to ensure clarity of monitoring for different pupil groups. These requests have consistently been met by the head teacher and extremely thorough data has been provided. Through these meetings, governors are assured that the majority of pupils are progressing and attaining in line with expectations while a considerable number have exceeded expectations. For any pupils below expectations, reasons have been sought for this and all explanations explored thoroughly.

Both teaching staff and support staff have undergone performance management cycles. The personnel committee have met twice during the course of this year - firstly in the autumn term and again in the summer term. The first meeting allowed the head teacher to present evidence from the previous year as well as make recommendations related to movement on the pay scale as a result of performance against these targets. Governors reviewed all evidence thoroughly and approved pay awards as a result. New targets for this year's cycle were also set in the autumn term. Governors then met again after the mid-year review period, again to review evidence and ensure all staff members were on track to achieve their targets. Any areas showing less progress than expected were identified and support to be given was highlighted.

The head teacher is also performance managed by the chair and vice chair of the GB. We met with the external school improvement partner (SIP) in the autumn term to discuss the evidence available to show previous targets had been met. An extremely detailed document was presented to show all the actions that had been taken to meet the targets from the previous year and new targets were set as a result of the successful completion of the previous cycle. A mid-year review meeting has recently taken place between the head teacher and SIP and the outcomes of this meeting will be reviewed by the governors responsible for the head teacher's performance management before the end of the term. This information will, in turn, be fed back to the rest of the GB at the next meeting.



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FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The resources committee has the delegated responsibility for financial oversight of the school budget; in turn, this committee makes recommendations to the full GB regarding approval of budgetary matters.

In the current climate of cuts to educational funding, careful budget management is vital to ensure the nursery can continue to operate effectively on a day-to-day basis. Nursery has faced many extra costs in the form of increased national insurance contributions, increased superannuation payments, higher business rates and an apprenticeship levy but without an increase to its level of funding. As a result, the budget for 2017/18 was closed with a final year end position of an in-year deficit. However, through the use of reserves a balanced budget was achieved. The head teacher is proactive in seeking out a range of income streams and the GB are fully supportive of this; income from the Garden Room, wrap around care and the mentoring of students all contribute to additional funding for the budget.

The resources committee also consider and approve a three-year capital investment plan. The projects on this plan result from either essential work (identified through premises tours), priorities on the school development plan or health and safety issues. This year, approved and completed projects include:

1. Refurbishment of the children's dining area to ensure it is fit for purpose and able to cope with increased demand from families for children to stay for lunch.
2. Re-modelling of the staff room/kitchen to increase available meeting space.
3. Replacement of emergency lighting in the main building to address health and safety.
4. Training and refurbishment to offices to ensure compliance with GDPR regulations.
5. A new telephone system due to the existing BT Featurenet system no longer being available.
6. Refurbishment to Meadow class bathroom area to improve privacy and comfort for children.
7. Replacement and extension of Wetlands class carpet to improve the space and comfort for pupils which has impacted upon concentration levels and focus.

SELF REVIEW

The GB is committed to reviewing its own performance and impact and has undertaken self review activities to address this. Each governor has completed a skills audit to enable them to be matched to the most appropriate committee and link role. The audit also identifies any gaps in skills across the GB as a whole and is used when recruiting new governors. In addition to this audit, a RAG review (red/amber/green) has also been completed to identify which areas of governance are embedded as good practice, which areas are in place but are inconsistent and which areas have practice which is not yet in place. These ratings will be analysed over the summer break and an action plan drawn up for September to address the findings.